

# The Goal of Communication: Oneness

Family Talk #1 - Pastor Gary Combs - July 20, 2025 - Ephesians 4:1-3; 15-16

**INTRO:** Good morning church! We're beginning a new 4-week sermon series called: "Family Talk." It's a study of the apostle Paul's teachings on family communication found in Ephesians 4. This is a teaching for both your family and for our church family.

**Series Theme:** Ephesians 4:15 (ESV) <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ

**Need:** We often think of good communication as just getting our point across or being heard. But God's vision is bigger: He wants our communication to lead to oneness. In both our families and our church family, the goal isn't just to express ourselves—but to grow together in Christ, building unity through our words and attitudes. Yet so often, our communication leads not to unity, but to division. Why is that? What would it look like if our conversations were shaped by the gospel?

**Trans:** Good communication for the Christian is more than hearing and being heard, it's being at one with the Lord and with one another. Hearing and being heard is good start, but being at one is better. That's the real goal of communication: oneness.

**BODY:** In the apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he called believers to pursue oneness in the Lord as the goal of their communication. We can pursue oneness in the Lord as the goal of our communication. How can we pursue oneness in the Lord as the goal of our communication? The text gives three ways we can pursue oneness in the Lord as the goal of our communication.

**Read text:** Ephesians 4:1-3; 15-16 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ... <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

## PURSUING ONENESS IN THE LORD AS THE GOAL OF COMMUNICATION...

### 1. We can bear with one another in love.

**EXP:** (1-2) Take note of the 3 times the phrase "in love" (2, 15, 16) occurs. The 1st time is: "bearing with one another in love" (2). This instruction gives us the right **tone** ("bearing with") and **motive** ("in love") of communication that pursues oneness. This means there are some things we won't speak about. As Paul urges the Ephesians to walk worthy of their calling to oneness, he identifies 4 essential character qualities: "humility, gentleness, patience, and love" (2).

**"Bearing with one another" (2)** (ἀνέχω, *anéchō*) - (figuratively) to put up with:—bear with, endure, or tolerate graciously. This is not passive tolerance—it's active, self-denying, love-sustained endurance.

**"In love" (2, 3x)** (ἀγάπη, *agapē*) - affection, good will, love, benevolence; unconditional Godly love

**"Prisoner for the Lord" (1)** (δέσμιος, *desmios*) - bound, in bonds, a captive, a prisoner. Paul was under house arrest in Rome (see Acts 28:16, 30–31). He was allowed to live in a rented home but was chained and constantly guarded. However he did not see his imprisonment as being under Rome but for the Lord.

**"Urge you" (1)** (παρακαλέω, *parakaleō*) - to admonish, exhort; to beg, entreat, beseech; to urge.

**"Walk" (1)** (περιπατέω, *peripateō*) - to walk; Hebrew metaphor for "way of life."

**"Worthy" (1)** (ἀξίως, *axiōs*) - suitably, worthily, in a manner worthy of

**"Calling ...called" (1)** (κλήσις, *klēsis*) - a calling, calling to, invitation. That calling is oneness:

Ephesians 4:4-6 (ESV) <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

**"All humility" (2)** (ταπεινοφροσύνη, *tapeinophrosynē*) - having a humble opinion of one's self; a deep sense of one's (moral) littleness; modesty, humility, lowliness of mind.

# The Goal of Communication: Oneness

Family Talk #1 - Pastor Gary Combs - July 20, 2025 - Ephesians 4:1-3; 15-16

“Gentleness” (2) (πραότης, *praotēs*) - gentleness, mildness, meekness.

“Patience” (2) (μακροθυμία, *makrothumia*) - patience, longsuffering. Christ calls us to have a long fuse.

**ARG:** Jesus teaches that the source of our words is our heart, our character.

Luke 6:45 (ESV) “Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

**Godly communication flows from a godly character:**

Colossians 3:12-14 (ESV) <sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another... <sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

**Putting up with one another in love means listening is more important than speaking.**

James 1:19 (NLT) Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.

**ILL:** Imagine a family dinner where one child spills a drink, another won't stop talking, and another won't stop whining. Mom seems distracted. Dad could snap—or he could respond with humility and patience. His response sets the tone. A home filled with humility, gentleness, patience, and love is a place where unity can flourish, even in the messy chaos of family life.

**APP:** What kind of tone fills your home? Is it sharp or gentle? Short-tempered or long-suffering? Remember: love puts up with people. Don't expect perfection. Give grace. Put up with one another in Christ Jesus. Neither the family nor the church are a gathering of perfect people, but a fellowship of the forgiven. In Christ, we can bear with one another in love!

## 2. We can speak the truth to one another in love.

**EXP:** (3; 15) Take note of the 2nd time “in love” occurs: “speaking the truth in love” (15). Love continues to be the **motive**, but now we see the right **content** of our communication: truth. Paul says we should be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (3). That unity is kept not by silence or avoidance, but by speaking the truth in love. Truth without love is harsh. Love without truth is hollow. But speaking the truth in love is healing. It transforms.

“Eager to maintain” (3) (σπουδάζω, *spoudazō*) - to make haste; to exert one's self. Eager to protect, to guard, to take care of. Christians should be eager to guard others, not gossip and tear them down.

“Unity of the Spirit” (3) (ἐνότης, *henotēs*) - unity; unanimity, agreement

“Bond of peace” (3) (σύνδεσμος, *sundesmos*) - that which binds together, bond. Paul calls himself a prisoner (*desmios*) and calls us to bonds (*sundesmos*) of peace, held together by the Spirit in peace.

“Speaking the truth” (15) (ἀληθεύω, *alētheuō*) (PAP) - Lit., “truthing.” to speak or tell the truth.

“Grow up in every way” (15) (αὐξάνω, *auxanō*) - to cause to grow, increase, to mature.

“Head...Christ” (15) - Christ is the head of the church. We used to have a plaque in our kitchen that read: “Christ is the Head of this House the unseen Guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation.”

**ARG:** Love tells the truth even when it hurts, not in a harsh way, but a healing way.

Proverbs 27:5-6 (NLT) <sup>5</sup> An open rebuke is better than hidden love! <sup>6</sup> Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.

**Love and truth are not enemies, they belong together.**

1 Corinthians 13:6 (ESV) [Love] does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

# The Goal of Communication: Oneness

Family Talk #1 - Pastor Gary Combs - July 20, 2025 - Ephesians 4:1-3; 15-16

**ILL:** A husband says nothing when he's hurt, hoping it'll go away, but instead, it builds resentment. A wife finally says, "You never listen to me!" and an argument begins. But what if one had said earlier, "Can we talk about something that's been bothering me? I want us to grow together." That's truth in love.

**APP:** So don't avoid the hard conversations, but don't forget to do it in love. Ask yourself, Is what I'm saying true? Is it helpful? Is it loving? And when others offer correction to you, listen with the same eagerness to preserve unity. We have a saying: "Building a bridge of trust that will bear the weight of truth." If they trust us, they are more apt to listen. Love builds trust. Truth without love is harsh. Love without truth is hollow. But truth in love is healing. It transforms. In Christ, we can speak the truth to one another in love.

## 3. We can build up one another in love.

**EXP:** (15-16) Now, take note of the 3rd time "in love" occurs: "builds itself up in love" (16). The **motive** of our communication is always to be in love. We've seen the **tone** ("bearing with"), the **content** ("truth"), and now we come to the **means**: to "build up" one another in love to greater oneness and maturity in Christ.

"**Joined and held together**" (16) (συναρμολογέω, *sunarmologeō*) - to join closely together; to frame together: like the parts of a building or the members of the body.

"**Equipped**" (16) (ἐπιχορηγία, *epichorēgia*) - contribution; supply. By the fivefold gifts to the Church.

"**Each part working properly**" (16) (ἐνέργεια, *energeia*) - efficiency (energy); strong, (effectual) working.

"**Builds itself up**" (16) (οἰκοδομή, *oikodomē*) - (the act of) building, building up; metaphor for edifying, edification; the act of one who promotes another's growth in Christian wisdom, piety, happiness, holiness.

**ARG:** Words can either tear down or build up.

Ephesians 4:29 (ESV) Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (ESV) Therefore encourage one another and build one another up...

**ILL:** Research shows that kids who eat meals regularly with their family perform better in school and are emotionally healthier. Why? Because regular communication in a loving environment builds security. The same is true spiritually: *families (CGs, churches) that build each other up in love grow stronger together.*

**APP:** Ask yourself: Do my words build up or tear down? Words can either tear down or build up. When each family member uses their voice to edify rather than criticize, to encourage rather than attack, the whole body grows in health. This is true in both the home and the church family.

Make it your goal this week to speak one sentence a day that builds up each person in your household or church family. When Christ is the head, and love is the motive, the church doesn't just grow numerically, it matures. It becomes stable, unified, healthy, and holy. In Christ, we can build up one another in love.

**CONCLUSION:** The world says the goal of communication is to be heard. But God's Word says the goal is oneness. Are you pursuing oneness in the Lord as the goal of your communication?

Are you answering His call to...

- 1) Bear with one another in love?
- 2) Speak the truth to one another in love?
- 3) Build up one another in love?

Let's make oneness the aim of every conversation—whether in our homes or in our church.

No, let's pray and ask God to help us speak not to be heard, but to love. Not to control, but to grow. Not to divide, but to unite.