

Easy As 1-2-3



Ephesians 4:1-16¹

It's As Easy As 1-2-3

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Overall Understanding

After solid inspirational teaching of doctrine, Paul now turns to instruction about living. The latter cannot be understood without the former. They go hand in hand.

Ephesians 4:1-16²

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

Walking worthy doesn't mean a life of works and spiritual disciplines. The best way to describe it is to consider the opposite, to walk unworthy.

Considering all that Paul has just written, which magnifies who God has made us in Christ and all that He has given us, let your lifestyle reflect this.

Wuest wrote the following:

We come now to an important dividing point in this letter. The first three chapters contain doctrine, the last three, exhortation. This is the proper order, for only in doctrine can one see the sweet

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reasonableness of the exhortations, and obtain the necessary power and technique to obey them. In brief, God says in chapters 1-3, "I have made you a saint." In chapters 4-6, He says, "Now, live a saintly life."

²with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

John wrote, "This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as He loved us." The first three chapters of Ephesians encouraged us to believe in the marvellous accomplishments of the cross. Now, Paul turns to how it is we love one another. Loving one another is not just a feeling. It is demonstrated in many ways, which Paul now demonstrates.

We are to relate to each other humbly, gently, patiently, and in love while endeavoring to keep unity in the Spirit in the bond of peace. Wouldn't the church be a more lovely place if we did the above? Can you picture what it would feel like to be loved and to love in this way? Think about it. How might you contribute to this peaceful unity?

⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Our faith is shared and the same. He is in all of us. Our belief is one.

⁷But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸Therefore He says:

"When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men."

"But" could be translated "moreover." He isn't presenting an opposing view to the prior statement, but adding to it. We are one, moreover, we each have grace gifts to the body of Christ.

My mind pictures Jesus vanquishing His foes, and then as He ascended on high, He distributed gifts to those who believe.

Perhaps my imagination, I seem Him lavishly flinging them upon us with joy.

⁹(Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

Extensive notes are available in the Detailed Study Notes above, which we highly recommend. Scholars have differing opinions as to how to interpret it. Here is the link if you want to quickly check the notes: [Detailed Study Notes](#)

Basically, Jesus died, was buried, rose again, and ascended on high.

¹¹And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

1. Apostles: Messengers
2. Prophets: Inspired preachers, foretellers
3. Evangelists: Preachers of the gospel
4. Pastors: Shepherds of God’s flock (later referred to as “overseers”)
5. Teachers: Teachers of the Word of God

¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

These ministries have an important role in the body of Christ:

1. Equip the saints for the work of the ministry
2. Edify/build up the body of Christ

¹³till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

The word perfected here does not deal with our salvation or perfection in Christ. It can be translated, fully furnished. The gifts in the body of Christ are to equip us in Christ. They are to teach us the faith and the knowledge of Jesus.

¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

The above gifts help us to grow up so that we won't be tossed about with every wind of doctrine.

Sadly, there are those among the body of Christ who use trickery, cunning craftiness, and deceitful plotting. The gifts, when well-ministered, prevent us from remaining like children concerning the things of God.

¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

“Speaking the truth in love” has nothing to do with pointing out the failures of others. The “truth” here is clearly doctrine/teaching. We teach in love so that those who hear us many grown up into Him.

¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

These gifts work together to bring us together unto a common faith and doctrine. This builds up the body of Christ IN LOVE. Again, Jesus told us to love one another. He taught His disciples in love. He brought them together in teaching done in love. He asks us to speak the truth IN LOVE.

Coming Up in Chapter 4

In the rest of this chapter, Paul shows them what love looks like in the body of Christ.