

October 19/20, 2024

**All of Us Together**  
*Salvation is a Life: A Study in Ephesians*  
**Ephesians 4:1-16**  
Pastor Bryan Clark

When I turned 50, which was about 15 years ago, it seemed like a pretty significant birthday. So since I'm a big hobby person, I thought, "I want to try something new. I want to learn something different. I want to do something really different than my other hobbies." So I kind of put together a list of options, and I finally settled on, "I want to learn to play the cello." So, over the years, people have asked me, "Why the cello?" Well, there's a couple of reasons, but one of the primary reasons had to do with a story I had read that just kind of captured my heart. It's a true story called *The Cellist of Sarajevo*.

It goes back to the early 90s during the war. Most of the stores and the restaurants had run out of supplies and food. The city was just basically a disaster. But there was one particular bakery that still had supplies and was still making bread for the people. So on this particular day, it was May 27, 1992, at four o'clock in the afternoon. The people were lined up outside the bakery to get their bread—men, women, and children—and a mortar shell landed right in the line, exploding and killing 22 men, women and children. Not far away lived a classical cellist that was part of the Sarajevo opera called Vedran Smailović. He said something snapped inside of him when that happened, and he couldn't just do nothing. So the very next day, at exactly four o'clock in the afternoon—the hour when the bomb went off—he put on his formal tuxedo, and armed with a chair and his cello, he entered the street. He set up his chair right next to the crater that the bomb had made, and for the next 20 minutes, he played a classical piece of music. Witnesses said the sound just echoed through the streets. Pretty soon the shooting stopped, and for about 20 minutes, there was peace. He said it was his cry for humanity. So then, every day at four o'clock for the next 22 days in a row—one day in honor of every person that had been killed—he set up his chair next to the crater, and he played music. And for a very small amount of time, there was peace in the city.

I found myself thinking that that's a beautiful metaphor for what we're called to be as the church: to take the sweet music of Jesus out into the streets, into a world full of despair and chaos and noise, and at least bring some degree of peace in the midst of the chaos. So that's actually what we want to talk about this morning. If you have a Bible, turn with us to Ephesians, Chapter 4. Last week, Ryan reminded us the way Ephesians and a number of these epistles are organized is they tend to be front-loaded with a lot of doctrine and theology, and kind of back-loaded with, "Okay, now what does this look like lived out in real life?" So the **therefore** in chapter 4, verse 1, I think captures all that we've learned so far in chapters 1, 2 and 3. Paul says:

**Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you** (It's really strong language, and could easily be translated, "I beg of you") **to walk (or to live) in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,** (\*NASB, Ecclesiastes 4:1)

So the idea of a **calling with which you have been called** is everything we've learned in chapters 1, 2 and 3. As a matter of fact, the Greek word that's often translated "church" in your New Testament is the Greek word *ekklesia*—"called out ones". So this is who we are in Christ, therefore, live like it. When it says **in a manner worthy**, that word **worthy** is an interesting word. It literally means *to balance the scale*. So, basically, the truths of chapters 1, 2, and 3 are on this side of the scale; **therefore** how we live should bring balance to that. It should balance out the truth that we've learned. That's what he's saying.

Starting then in verse 2, he gives us five character qualities that should just naturally flow out of us if we really understand and believe what we've learned in chapters 1, 2, and 3.

**...with all humility.** It's important to understand in the first century Greek culture, humility was not considered a virtue. As a matter of fact, this was a derogatory term. The Greeks were all about selfish ambition. They were all about exalting self. Humility, to them, was a sign of weakness. But it was Jesus, in the New Testament, that really recaptured this word for good. So think of it this way. With all of the Greek gods and with all the Roman gods, the landscape was littered with all these gods in their temples. It was the one true God that humbled Himself to send a Savior. Paul says in Philippians 2, "*He humbled Himself to come to earth and death and even death on a cross.*" So He's the ultimate model of humility. Therefore, if that's the basis by which we have been saved, that same humility should define us, not selfish ambition, not exaltation of self, but thinking of others as more important than ourselves.

**...and gentleness** is a word that means *strength that's been brought under control*. It was often used to describe a horse that had been broken to a bit. It's this idea that now, with this truth that we understand who we are in Christ, we have this great strength, but it's a strength that's been brought under control. In other words, we shouldn't be caught up in all the anger and all the fear and all the anxiety and all the offenses of the culture. Now, based on what we know is true of us in Christ, it's a strength that's been brought under control, and it should be obvious in how we live our lives.

**...with patience** is the third one. The word is literally *long-suffering*. Actually I like that that is a definition for patience. It's just realizing, "Hey, we're all a mess, and we're all strugglers, and we're all trying to figure this out, and let's have a little patience." Let's suffer with one another, instead of being offended by everything, instead of everything creating conflict. We can never really be a church if that's the case. Let's learn to be patient with one another. Think of it this way. Whether you're talking about your family, whether we're talking about where you work, whether talking about a church, there's certain people, every time they walk into a room, everybody tenses up because everybody knows it's just a matter of time until there's some sort of conflict. But there's other people, when they walk into a room, it's the opposite. Everybody sighs a sigh of relief, because there's a sense when this person is in the room, everything's going to be safe. Everything is going to be quiet; everything is going to be okay. That's the idea of long-suffering. It's that we bring some level of safety and quiet to every environment we're in.

**...showing tolerance for one another** is the next one. This is an interesting word in our culture today. So if you go back away, the King James translated this Greek word *forbearance*. But over time, there was concern with the translators, that nobody knows what that word means. So most of the more modern translations use the word **tolerance**. But now we live in a culture that is so

convoluted, the definition of tolerance almost feels like we need to go back to forbearance, because tolerance is so misunderstood. Tolerance in our culture basically means that we're okay with everything. That's not tolerance; that's just indifference. The word means forbearance. It means we bear with one another. Again, we're back to this idea that we're all a work in progress. We're strugglers. We don't have the same opinions. There's all kinds of stuff going on. Can we just bear with one another, struggle with one another, in order to come together and to be the church?

**...in love** is the last one. It's the Greek word *agape*. It's not an emotional love. It's a commitment of our will to think of others as more important than ourselves. Verse 3:

**...being diligent** (*all that's necessary, be diligent, be zealous is what the word means*) **to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** (Vs. 3)

So, to be zealous to preserve the unity. It's very important to see in verse 3, we don't create the unity. The Spirit of God creates the unity. Our assignment is to preserve it. It's to guard it. It's to live like it. We are unified, whether we choose to live that way or not, because of the supernatural connection through the Spirit. Now this is really interesting to think about. The moment anyone trusts Jesus as Savior, you automatically receive the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is impossible to be a Christian and not have the Holy Spirit. Therefore, whether you're talking about somebody that's 10 years old, somebody that's 80 years old, whether you're talking about a male or female, rich or poor, whether you're talking about whatever the color of your skin, whatever your story, whatever your background, whatever nation you live in...if you've trusted Jesus as Savior, every believer has the same Spirit of God within them that supernaturally connects us together as one people. That's what he's saying. That is true, whether we act like it or not. So what he's saying is, "Live that way. Guard it, preserve it, because this is a supernatural connectivity."

So he says, in **the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**. **Peace** is a word we've seen before. It's the Greek version of shalom. So, it's the Spirit of God that binds us together to make it possible to flourish together. That's what he's saying. Then in verses 4 through 6, he kind of lays the foundation. It's a review from chapters 1, 2, and 3. This is the truth that's at the foundation of who we are as the church. So, verse 4:

***There is one body and one Spirit...***

This is Paul's favorite metaphor for the church. It's the **body**. All these different members and pieces coming together to flourish, to function as one body. It's always good to remind ourselves that, at the end of the day, all the labels come off. Just in Lincoln alone, Christians all over our city will attend different churches, but if you've trusted Jesus as Savior, at the end of the story, all labels come off, and we're one people. We're one body in Christ, **one body and one Spirit**.

**...just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;**

So **hope** carries this idea of the future, the return of Christ, of what lies ahead for us. I always think this is kind of funny to think about, because we're one body, united through one Spirit. There is a reality we are going to spend forever together, every Christian around the world. So if that's true, we really should act like it now, because that is going to be true forever. Verse 5:

**...one Lord** (*that means Christ*), **one faith**, (*which is a reference to our doctrine*) **one baptism**,

At the end of the day, there's one body of truth that we have in common. It's not true that all roads lead to God. There's one core fundamental truth that defines us. **One faith, one baptism**. It could be water baptism, could be Spirit baptism. If it's water baptism, it's the idea that it's the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus that we have in common that binds us together. If it's the Spirit's baptism, it's at the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit dwells in us and identifies us as a member of the body of Christ.

**...one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.** (Vs. 6)

Ryan talked about this last week from chapter 3. We have one Father, which makes us one family together. So this is true in verses 4 through 6. The only question is whether or not we're going to live in light of this truth together.

But sometimes when we talk about unity, it can be misunderstood as uniformity. So I want to change the imagery a little bit. Starting in verse 4, instead of **one body**, I want to use the imagery of an orchestra. So we are **one orchestra**. Every person is called to play their instrument, to do their part, to make the beautiful music of Jesus together. So there's one conductor. That's Jesus. There's one piece of music, and there's the Spirit of God that pulls it all together. And our assignment, then, is to play the sweet music of Jesus into the streets in a dark and needy culture. But just imagine an orchestra where everyone played the same instrument and everybody played the same melody line. It's like, that would be a very boring orchestra. So what creates the beauty, what creates the majesty of the music, is the different instruments, the different parts...everybody making their contribution to something that's bigger and more majestic and more beautiful than any one instrument alone. So we go from every one to each one,

**But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.** (Vs. 7)

So when I read verse 7, if you've been around the church, any church, for a long period of time, especially going all the way back to like the 80s and the 90s, there was a lot of conversation around what was called spiritual gifts. It was a really big deal in the 80s and 90s, and in my opinion, it just created a lot of unnecessary confusion, because it was really misunderstood. The idea was that the moment you trust Jesus as Savior, you get some sort of supernatural ability. You supernaturally learned to play the instrument and join the orchestra. But that's simply not what it means. When you think of a spiritual gift, the spiritual part of that just means this is empowered by the Spirit of God. And the gift part of it is actually a form of the word *grace*...is God's gift to His church. It's God's gift to us that we've been called, on the basis of His grace, to be part of something that will actually matter 10,000 years from now. So, if you understand that definition, which we've been teaching for a couple of decades now, then verse 7 fits that perfectly. To each one of us, grace was given in order to be part of this orchestra. So, to each one of us has been given the invitation or the opportunity.

It's easy to get confused in our thinking, and to think whenever we're serving the body of Christ, we're doing God some big favor. Or it may be that, because I've been saved by grace, this is the

least I could do for God. It's kind of this idea that this is an obligation. "It's the least I could do, after all, because of what Jesus has done for me." Both of those completely miss the point. The point is we're not doing God some great favor. He's the one who has done us the great favor of inviting us to be part of something that will matter forever. It's only on the basis of His grace that I even have the opportunity to be part of this grand orchestra. So what does he mean **according to the measure of Christ's gift**? We'll define gift here in just a second. Verse 8:

**Therefore it says,  
"When He ascended on high,  
He led captive a host of captives,  
And He gave gifts to men."**

So this is a quote from Psalm 68. Paul changes the wording just a little bit here. But Psalm 68 is a psalm about a victorious king who has won the battle, who has ascended to the top of the mountain, and he brings with him the spoils of victory and the captives, the enemies that have been captured as part of the spoils of victory. Paul is identifying Jesus as the conquering king. So Jesus is the One who's won the victory. He's the One who is ascended. He's the One who has the spoils of victory. So two questions arise out of that, "Who are the captives?" and "What are the gifts that are given?" So, it's possible the captives could be the rulers and authorities and dominions and powers that we learned about in chapter 1, when Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, over all the rulers and authorities and dominions and powers. That is possible. I don't think that's correct. I think the captives are us. Paul, twice now, has identified himself as a prisoner of the Lord. He's the captive of the Lord. The idea is, at one point, according to Paul in Romans 5, we were enemies of God. We were at war with God. But now, based on His death, burial and resurrection, He has defeated sin and death, which now He has conquered. We are His captives. He has captured us. We are now prisoners of the Lord. The result of that is, I think we're the captives. The result of that is, He turns around and gives us as captives back to His church in order to serve a dark and needy world, in order to serve the people. So the basic idea is, we're the captives that He has now captured through His victory, and He turns around and gives us back to a dark and confused world to be the church, in order to bring light to a dark and needy world.

Now starting in verse 9—verses 9 and 10 should be in parentheses in your Bible—this is like a little commentary, a little aside to explain something.

**(Now this *expression*, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)** (Vs. 9-10)

Okay, here's what he's saying. "If God is at the top of the mountain, how could God ascend when He's already at the top?" Answer, "Well, He had to first descend to earth before He could ascend back to the Father." A few of the early church fathers thought that this was a reference to the idea that between Jesus' burial and His resurrection, He went down into hell—that the lower parts of the earth refer to hell—and He did something there. It really makes no sense, and there's nothing in this text that would indicate that's the case. It also ties in with 1 Peter 3, and a confusion about that text. So that view is really not widely held today. What it means is simply that, in order to ascend, He had to first descend. It's His incarnation. He had to come to earth as a man. It could

even include His burial. This is almost word for word what Jesus said about Himself in John, chapter 3, when He was having a conversation with Nicodemus. He said to Nicodemus that He first had to descend to earth in His incarnation to be the Savior of the world, before He could ascend back to the Father. So I think that's simply what it's referring to. So, take verses 9 and 10—this little commentary—and move it off to the side, and recapture the flow of thought, which I think then supports the conclusion that the captives and the gifts are us.

So going back, at the end of verse 7, **according to the measure of Christ's gift**. What is the gift? Well, He led a host of captives. I think that's us. Then He turns around and gives us as gifts to the world. Verse 11,

**And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers.**

So **apostles**, I think he's talking about the original apostles. It's a fairly official title. And the **prophets** are the New Testament prophets, through which divine revelation came before there was a New Testament. So he used both of these that way in chapter 2, verse 20, so certainly he's using it the same way here. **Evangelists** isn't exactly what we think of as an evangelist. I think it's more like a missionary or a church planter. It's someone that goes into an unreached area, preaches the gospel and ultimately pulls together and plants a church and moves on. And then the last category, **and some as pastors and teachers**. Grammatically, it's probably pastor-teachers, shepherds who are teachers. And what is their job? Verse 12:

**...for the equipping of the saints (*that's you*) for the work of service, (*to do the job*) to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all (*together*) attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, (*or a complete man*) to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.** (Vs. 12-13)

So that's a bit of a mouthful. It basically goes back to what Ryan explained as Paul's prayer for us at the end of chapter 3: that we would actually experience the answer to Paul's prayer as we come together to be the church, to become the complete man, to be the full orchestra that God's called us to be. Sometimes, when people introduce me out and about, they'll say, "This is Bryan, and he's a minister." Technically that's not true. I'm not the minister. I'm the equipper. You're the minister. That's what the text just said. It's my job as a pastor-teacher and the other pastors on our staff to be the equippers. You are the ministers. You're the ones that are supposed to go out and do the job to be the church. That's what he just said.

So, again, let me change the metaphor and go back to the idea of the orchestra and reread this. *He gave some as music teachers for the equipping of the musicians to play the music, to be the orchestra that God's called us to be.* That's essentially what he just said, using different imagery. The result of that, verse 14:

**As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;**

The concern with children is they're easy to deceive. They're easy to lead astray, because they're not mature enough to really know a lot of things. So this is an imagery of Christians that aren't grounded. As a result of that, they're just tossed here and there by every wind of doctrine. They chase this trend, and then they chase that trend, and they read this book, and then they read that book, back and forth, being tossed back and forth like the winds of the sea. As a matter of fact, the Greek word that's translated **trickery**, literally is a word that means *to throw the dice*. So it's kind of the idea that, "Let's believe this." "Oh, let's believe this." "What should we believe?" "I don't know; throw the dice. Let's believe that." One of the things that's concerning about so many Christians in the day in which we live, is you have way too many Christians that have very strong opinions about very important matters that have no idea what the Bible actually teaches about those matters. It's as if the Bible's irrelevant to my opinion on that matter. That's what he's talking about. "What do you believe?" "I don't know. I'll believe this...I'll believe that. Let's roll the dice. That'll work. I'm going to believe that." We shouldn't be that way anymore. That's the point he's making. We come together to be the church, to learn and grow together. So that isn't us anymore. So who are we? Verse 15:

**...but speaking the truth in love,**

What's really interesting about that phrase is the verb is actually the word **truth**. So it isn't actually speaking the truth in love. It's truthing. That's the verb. Truthing in love. The emphasis of this passage is not so much speaking, but living it out...truthing in love...but...

**...we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, (in other words, to be like Jesus) from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, (everyone playing their instrument) causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.** (Vs. 15-16)

So what he's saying there is, we should come together, everyone playing their instrument, everyone doing their part, everyone contributing to the music, to be this grand orchestra that God has called us to be. The word that's translated **supplies**, is an interesting word. It's the word from which we get our English word **chorus**. But it was actually used to describe a benefactor. Maybe we would use the word *producer* that would provide everything necessary to pull off a theatric production. This is the person that would provide the resources. This is the person that would provide the musicians, provide the script, provide the music, provide everything necessary for this grand production to take place. It's why I like the imagery of an orchestra, because what the text is saying is that Jesus is the benefactor. He's the producer. He supplies everything necessary for us to come together and play this beautiful music. He's put together the orchestra. He conducts. He determines the tempo. He provides the music. He's the one that provides everything necessary for us to come together and make beautiful music to a very noisy world.

When I first started learning to play the cello, for the first five years I took lessons. I took lessons every week. I practiced at home. I can assure you, the sound at home was not pleasant, but that's how you learn. But I played at home, and I worked and tried to get better. But the first time I played with the Christmas orchestra, I learned two things. This is way harder, because when I was at home, I could just do my thing. If the pitch was off a little bit, "Who cares?" I could make up my

own rhythm. I could make up my own notes. If I got lost, I could start and stop and start and stop. I mean, I was the conductor. I was running the show. It's pretty easy at home. But the first time I played with the orchestra, I was completely overwhelmed, because all of a sudden that didn't work. I had to play the same rhythm. I had to play the right notes. If I got lost, no one was stopping and starting over again. And it was all pretty overwhelming to me. Was it harder? It was way harder! But the second thing I learned is the music was dramatically more glorious. You really don't want to hear me playing at home. Even today, you don't. But to make a small contribution to the music of the orchestra, to be part of something that sounds so glorious, honestly, for me, it was like a dream come true. It's like I can't believe I'm making a little contribution to something so beautiful. Was it harder? It was way harder. But I learned and I grew, and it was absolutely glorious.

One of the sad things about the reality of the culture in which we live, is far too many Christians have decided to just play their instrument at home. They really just stay home and play for themselves. They pick their own music. They're their own conductor. They play by their own rules. They don't really grow. They don't really learn. They're just kind of playing by themselves. To me, that's a very sad thing, because they're missing the invitation to be part of something bigger than themselves, to make their contribution to something that will be far more beautiful than anything any one of us can do by ourselves...and to be part of something that will matter forever! But it also makes me sad for us, because we're far less of an orchestra than we could be, because all the musicians aren't participating; they're not all playing their part. We're missing part of the music, and we're less than we could be because of that. What an amazing thing that God has invited each of us to be part of something that will matter forever. The reality is, every person that's trusted Jesus as Savior, you have been called. You can obey; you can disobey. That's up to you. But we've all been called to be part of picking up our instrument, playing our music, being a part of something beautiful...to take the sweet music of Jesus into the streets to a loud, chaotic, despairing culture. We can do this...all of us...altogether!

*Our Father, we're thankful that You have graciously called us to be part of something that will matter forever. Lord, I pray for each of us, that when we would take up our instrument, that we would make our contribution, that we might take the sweet music of Jesus into the streets for a lost and dying world. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

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## Introduction

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In this passage, Paul turns a corner from telling the Ephesians who they are in Christ to beginning to explain how being in Christ changes everything about how we live. He speaks of maintaining unity and appreciating diversity as each person serves others in the body of Christ and thus move one another towards experiencing maturity in Christ.

**We invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group. Some people even use these questions to take notes during the sermon. The questions are meant to stir your thinking and prompt open discussion, and we do not expect you will cover every question each week.**

## Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

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- 1) What is something you thought you would never be able to do, but now have done it?
  
- 2) Did you try one of the Personal Spiritual Exercises from the last few weeks? If so, how did God use it in your life?

## Getting Started

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Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
  - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
  - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
  - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you
- 2) Choose someone to read the passage aloud for the group.

## Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

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- 1) Chapter 4 begins with “Therefore...” which tells us what Paul is about to say is based on everything he has said in the previous 3 chapters. **Look back through chapters 1-3 to determine what Paul means by “the calling with which you have been called”, (look specifically at 1:4-10, 2:4-5, 10, 12-13, 19).**

Based on the truth of chapters 1-3, Paul entreats (begs, pleads) believers to “walk in a manner worthy” of our calling. The word “worthy” means to balance the scale. In other words, to live in such a way that it balances the scale with who we are in Christ from the first three chapters. In other words, our walk should match our wealth in Christ. **In practical terms, what do you think this means? How do the 5 qualities in verse 2 relate to this?**

- 2) Verse 3 states that we are to work very hard to guard the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” It’s important to realize we don’t create unity, Christ has already done that. Our calling is to preserve it. Compare those words with Jesus’ words in John 13:34, 35 and 17:11. **What is unity? What makes unity a vital aspect of a thriving community?**

**What do verses 4-6 say about the foundation of our unity?**

**How do the 5 qualities in verse 2 relate to our unity? Which of these 5 qualities do you struggle with the most?**

- 3) Verses 8-10 are loosely taken from Psalm 68. Christ as the triumphant King gives gifts to His people as a celebration of His great victory. **According to verses 11-12, what are these gifts and why did Christ give these gifts?**

**Do you see yourself as a gift given to the body of Christ (or in a smaller fashion to your Life Group)? Why or why not?**

**What would the church be like if we all saw ourselves as gifts given to the body of Christ? (vv. 14-16)**

- 4) Verse 13 alludes to the fact that we need each other to become complete or “mature” in Christ. The truth is that we are filled with the fullness of Christ (Eph. 1:22,23). However, to walk worthy of that truth we must serve and be served in the body of Christ. Then we will attain ... to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. **Why do you think we can only really grow to completeness in community with one another?**

**According to verse 14-15, what is the difference between a mature (complete) person and an immature person?**

**Remembering Bryan’s orchestra example, how might God be calling you to use your gifts and abilities to serve others in the body of Christ?**

## Personal Spiritual Exercises

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Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts. **Next week in Life Group, take a few moments to share how the Lord may have used this exercise in your life.**

**Scripture Focus:** At least three times this week read *Romans 12:1-21* as another description of the body of Christ functioning well. Considering reading it aloud to yourself. As the words fall upon your ears, listen for what the Holy Spirit may want to emphasize to you about how you are to use your gifts to serve others.

**Prayer Focus:** As a first step in serving others, pray this prayer each morning, “Lord, bring someone into my life or across my path today that I can serve and influence for you.” As you go about your day, look for how God might be answering this prayer and step into it!

### Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

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A significant part of “coming together” is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say “Amen” aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?