

## SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

May 3, 2026

Unpuzzled

“Time to Grow Up?”

Ephesians 4:14-16

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Can you believe we are just a few weeks away from the end of the school year? It felt like this school year went by so fast. Graduation is this weekend for our college students. Since K-12 students will soon be out of school for summer break, here are some brutally honest notes that elementary-aged students wrote to their teachers.

*Dear Mrs. Munn,*

*You were a good teacher this year but not my favorite ever. Not even close. Bye, Brian*

*Dear Miss Stephens,*

*I'm sorry your cat died but at least you won't smell like cat anymore. Michael*

*Miss Mandy,*

*You can move my seat anywhere and I will still talk a lot. Just think about that this summer. Stacey*

*Mr. Michaels,*

*You made second grade fun. I know you will enjoy the bars this summer. Love, Kristin.*

Kids can say some of the wildest things! We should expect children to say such things sometimes since they are still learning and growing. Yet, such brutal honesty might not be the best way to live into adulthood. The Apostle Paul challenges us today that it's time for us to grow up as followers of Jesus. Let's continue with our Bible Study of Ephesians with Ephesians 4: 14-16.

**Ephesians 4:14-16**

***Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.***

Paul encourages us to no longer be immature like children. It is beautiful how God welcomes us into the new family of Jesus when our faith like a child. However, God expects us to grow into spiritually mature people. As we grow up into mature disciples, we should not easily be swayed by false teaching, cunning people, and new theological fads. We need to test what people claim to be true with God's truth revealed in Scripture. Sometimes people will twist the truth of Scripture so that it sounds true; however, even the best intended people have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We must always go directly Scripture and let the Scripture speak for itself.

Peter Scazzero is a pastor and Christian leader who has done much work in the area of *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship*. He has develop different courses and written several books around the relationship between emotional and spiritual health. Peter contends that we will only grow spiritually mature as we grow emotionally mature. Our emotion health and spiritual life are linked together. Here are four different stages of stage of our emotional development from *Emotionally Health Discipleship* (pages 33-34). You are invited to consider your own stage.

**Emotional infant** - I look for other people to take care of me emotionally and spiritually. I often have difficulty in describing and experiencing my feelings in healthy ways and rarely enter the emotional world of others. When trials, hardships, or difficulties come, I want to quit God and the Christian life. I sometimes experience God at church and when I am with other Christians, but rarely when I am at work or home.

**Emotional child** - When life is going my way, I am consent. However, as soon as disappointment or stress enter the picture, I quickly unravel inside. I often take things personally, interpreting disagreements or criticism as a personal offense. I often end up living off the spirituality of other people because I am so overloaded and distracted. My prayer life is primary talking to God, telling him what to do and how to fix my problem. Prayer is more a duty than a delight.

**Emotional adolescent** - I don't like it when others question me. I often make quick judgements and interpretations of people's behavior. I withhold forgiveness from those who sin against me, avoiding or cutting them off when they do something to hurt me. I sometimes find myself too busy to spend adequate time nourishing my spiritual life. I attend church and serve other but enjoy few delights in Christ. My Christian life its still primarily about doing, not being with God.

**Emotional adult** - I respect and love others without having to change them or becoming judgmental. I value people for who they are, not for what they can give me or how they behave. I take responsibility for my own thoughts, feelings, goals, and actions. I can state my now beliefs and values to those who disagree with me - without becoming adversarial. I am able to integrate doing for God and being with God. My Christian life has moved beyond simply serving Christ to loving him and enjoying communion with him.

The stage of our emotional health is not necessarily linked to our age. It's much more directly linked to our spiritual maturity. Doesn't being a spiritually emotional adult sound so good? We have to first acknowledge where we are before we can grow. In each stage of development, we have excellent potential to grow. Do you really want to grow? The key is growing in holiness - God's ongoing work of sanctifying grace in our life. This is the very heart of what it means to be a Methodist Christian. We need to find strong rhythms of spending time with God through worship, reading Scripture, small group discipleship, praying, and serving others. As we follow the example of Jesus, we grow more and more into the very holiness of Jesus. If we will commit to these rhythms, we will move from shallow Christianity to deep transformation.

As our spiritual maturity increases, our capacity to love God and love others will also increase. The Apostle Paul makes the point that speaking through truth in love is a way we grow more and more like Jesus. I love the way J.D. Walt described speaking the truth in love in our Bible study through Ephesians.

**When we speak the truth in love we can say hard things in softening ways. - J.D. Walt, *Unpuzzled: A Bible Study on the Letter to the Ephesians* (page 90).**

Too often we avoid difficult conversations. We want people to like us. When there is conflict, we are tempted to avoid it. We enjoy it when everyone is nice to each other. Sometimes we wonder why we can't we all just get along? Speaking the truth in love is a balance of truth and grace in how we engage in relationships with each other. Addressing difficult situations well requires kindness to avoid unnecessary pain. The ultimate goal in these difficult conversations is to build each other up and not tear each other down.

Sometimes we are tempted to speak the truth without much love. It's like we are the hammer, and we see a nail that needs hammering. We are searching for confrontation. When truth is harsh or angry, the other person cannot hear or apply the message. It emphasizes our self-righteousness rather than caring for the other person. On the other hand, sometimes we are tempted to speak love without much truth. We are tempted to say "it's OK" or look away when people struggling with issues that require repentance. Being clear and telling people the truth is God's kindness in action.

Speaking the truth in love is full of clarity, faithfulness, kindness, and forgiveness. We should not compromise the truth in an attempt to make people love us. That doesn't help the church community to grow like Jesus. We also cannot fully love each other if we are not willing to share the truth together. Here is another pearl of wisdom from J.D. Walt.

**We must learn to take off our masks and meet one another in our places of our weaknesses rather than our strength. - J.D. Walt, *Unpuzzled: A Bible Study on the Letter to the Ephesians* (page 90).**

This kind of vulnerability requires a spirit that is both bold and humble. Building a relationship first is essential. It's easier to be vulnerable with people who know us and love us. The truth is better received when there is trust. When we meet each other in our weaknesses, we acknowledge that we are imperfect humans who fall short of God's glory, and we are all sinners in need of God's grace.

In the last verse of today's passage in Ephesians, the Apostle Paul calls us to embrace the unity and function of the body of Christ. The church is described as a body where every person fits together perfectly. By using their own unique gifts, the entire body builds itself up. It is simply impossible for a Christian to grow up into a mature disciple when they are not part of a community of believers. Each of us are an important part of the Body of Christ here at Killlearn. When you are disconnected from our church family, there is a piece missing from us. It's like trying to put together a jigsaw puzzle when some of the pieces are missing.

So who is a person that you need to speak the truth in love? Maybe there is something that needs to be addressed with this person, but you have been trying to avoid that difficult conversation. The vast majority of conflicts can be resolved with one or two direct conversations. Biblical conflict resolution focuses on reconciliation, humility, and direct communication to restore relationships rather than just winning a debate. Here is a great way to enter into a truthful and loving conversation.

#### **Go Privately (Matthew 18:15)**

Address the issue directly with the person to avoid gossip and protect their reputation.

#### **Love Goes First (1 John 4:18-20)**

Do not wait for others; make the first move to seek reconciliation, even if you are not entirely at fault.

#### **Remove the Log First (Matthew 7:3-5)**

Before addressing someone else's fault, examine and repent of your own contribution to the conflict.

#### **Forgiveness is Central (Ephesians 4:32)**

Jesus has forgiven us and invites us to forgive other.

#### **Gently Restore (Galatians 6:1)**

When confronting sin, do so humbly with the goal of restoration rather than condemnation.

#### **Involve Others if Necessary (Matthew 18:16-17)**

If a private approach fails, involve one or two others, and finally, church leadership.

#### **Glorify God**

Focus on honoring God through the process rather than defending your own rights.

I encourage you to check this process against the truth of Scripture. These steps reflect how Jesus was committed to speaking the truth in love. Shortly before the time of his death, Jesus gathered his closest friends and followers for the Passover meal. Right after Jesus called out Judas for the betrayal he was about to commit, Jesus gave the disciples a new commandment: Love each other. Just as Jesus had loved the disciples, the disciples should love each other. Our love for one another will prove to the world that we are disciples of Jesus (John 13: 34-35).

**SUGGESTED RESOURCES:** (Books marked with \* are available to be checked-out in the Asbury Discipleship Resource Center)

- *The Holy Bible* (Several FREE copies are available in the DRC)
- *Unpuzzled*, J. D. Walt \*
- *Knowing God*, J. I. Packer
- *The Gospel According to Jesus*, John MacArthur
- *The Peacemaker*, Ken Sande
- *Respectable Sins*, Jerry Bridges
- *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Donald S. Whitney
- *The Pursuit of Holiness*, Jerry Bridges
- *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship*, Peter Scazzero

### **Icebreaker Questions**

1. What's something you believed or did as a child that you later "grew out of"—and what helped you mature?
2. Which is harder for you personally: speaking truth when it's uncomfortable, or showing love when it's undeserved?

### **Sermon Discussion Questions**

1. Paul calls believers to "no longer be immature like children." What are some signs of spiritual immaturity today, and how do we recognize them in ourselves?
2. The sermon connects emotional health with spiritual maturity. Which of the stages (infant, child, adolescent, adult) do you most relate to right now and what might your next step of growth look like?
3. Why is it important to test teachings and ideas against Scripture rather than simply trusting what "sounds right"? What are some practical ways to do this?
4. "Speaking the truth in love" requires both clarity and kindness. Which side do you tend to lean toward (truth without love or love without truth), and how can you grow in balance?
5. Paul describes the church as a body where each part contributes to growth. How does being actively connected to a church community help you mature and what happens when people disconnect?
6. What impacted you most from the sermon? How might you apply this week's sermon to your life?
7. How might this group pray for you this week?