

# What Makes a Church Grow?

*Life in Christ: Wealth, Walk, Warfare (Ephesians) – Part 97*

*Ephesians 4:16*

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And He Himself gave the apostles, and the prophets, and the evangelists,<sup>1</sup> and the pastors and teachers,<sup>2</sup> to the equipping of the holy ones for the work of service, for the building up<sup>2</sup> of the body of Christ,<sup>3</sup> until we attain — all of us! — to unity as to the faith and as to the full knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,<sup>4</sup> in order that we should no longer be infants, being wave-tossed and

carried about by every wind of doctrine, in the trickery of men, in cunning, for the strategy of error;<sup>5</sup> but, by being truthful in love, let us grow into Him in all respects, who is the Head — Christ,<sup>6</sup> from whom the whole body, being fitted together and held together through every supporting connection,<sup>3</sup> by virtue of<sup>4</sup> the working<sup>5</sup> in measure of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for building itself up in love.

*[Ephesians 4:11-16 DJP]*

## **Introduction:**

### **I. The Main Con\_\_\_\_\_ : the Body**

#### **A. Note: The \_\_\_\_\_ ...**

John\_\_\_\_:5

#### **B. ...Is Also the \_\_\_\_\_**

Romans \_\_\_\_:36

Col. \_\_\_\_:16

### **II. The Con\_\_\_\_\_ of That Body: \_\_\_\_\_**

#### **A. In What Way?**

1. ...like a \_\_\_\_\_ (*being fitted together*)

Ephesians \_\_\_\_:20-22

1 Peter\_\_\_\_:5

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<sup>1</sup> Which is to say *tellers of the good news*.

<sup>2</sup> Gk *oikodomē*, rendered “house-building” in 2:21.

<sup>3</sup> Or *joint*. Literally *connection* [or *joint*] of the support.

<sup>4</sup> Or *according to*.

<sup>5</sup> Or *activity, exertion, operation*.

2. ...like a \_\_\_\_\_...plus! (*being...held together*)  
Col. \_\_\_\_:19

**B. By What \_\_\_\_\_?**

**III. The Com\_\_\_\_\_ of That Body: \_\_\_\_\_**

**A. Causation**

1. One ultimate \_\_\_\_\_er: <sup>15</sup> ...*Him ...who is the Head — Christ,* <sup>16</sup> *from whom...*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Through many \_\_\_\_\_: *the whole body... causes the growth of the body for building itself up*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. By one \_\_\_\_\_ation: *in love*

**B. Application:**

# Consumerist Versus Loving-Servant Attitudes

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Matt. 16:24-26; 20:25-28; Acts 2:42-47; 13:48-49; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Thess. 1:2-10; Heb. 13:12-17; James 1:22-27; 4:4

<u>Christianoid Consumerist attitude</u>	<u>Biblical Servant attitude</u>
<b>General Demand:</b> I require a church that is ready to give me everything I want, and love and serve me the way I prefer, when I walk through the doors.	<b>General Requirement:</b> I require a church that gives me the straight-up Word of God, pastoral oversight and accountability, people to love, and opportunities to serve.
<b>General Complaint:</b> Something about this faithful, soundly Biblical, Christ-centered, Bible-teaching-and-preaching church doesn't suit me. <b>General Solution:</b> I'll go find one that does suit me.	<b>General Solution:</b> I'll evaluate my complaint Biblically. If it's a trivial personal preference, I'll let it go. I'll praise God for putting me in this church at this time, and for richly feeding me all I need. If I can do something to help, I will volunteer my service to the elders. If I can't, I will build the church up by joyously serving in every way I can, and will give myself to outreach and evangelism, praying that God might bring in those who can supply what is needed.
<b>Complaint:</b> This church doesn't already have ministry X. <b>Solution:</b> I'll go find one that has ministry X.	<b>Solution:</b> Let's talk to the elders, and see if I can get Ministry X started.
<b>Complaint:</b> This church doesn't already have {people like me—age, ethnicity, education, etc.}. <b>Solution:</b> I'll go find one that already has them.	<b>Solution:</b> Then God's made me the first! Praise God! I'll reach out in love with the Gospel and Word, and bring some in – plus everyone else I can reach!
<b>Complaint:</b> This church doesn't already have my style of music. <b>Solution:</b> I'll see if I can form a coalition of others who feel the same. If nothing gets done, I'll go find a church that already has my style of music.	<b>Solution:</b> I'll see if change is a possibility. Until then, I'll focus on what the Bible actually does emphasize: singing with grace in my heart to the glory of God and others' edification, and putting others' needs ahead of mine.
<b>Complaint:</b> This church doesn't already have professional-grade music. <b>Solution:</b> If complaining to other people doesn't get the results I want, I'll go find one that does have professional-grade music.	<b>Solution:</b> That would have meant everything to me before I was saved. Now that God's Word sets my priorities, I care that it be Christ-centered and doctrinally rich, and that I sing with all my heart. I will focus on evangelism, outreach, service and fellowship. Maybe the Lord will bring more musicians!
<b>Complaint:</b> This church building and premises are kind of run-down. <b>Solution:</b> I'll go find a fancier, newer, shinier church.	<b>Solution:</b> The world cares a lot about flashy appearance. I mustn't. The Bible says exactly zero about church property. I'll rejoice that the <i>real</i> sanctuary – God's people – is alive, healthy, and growing, will focus on growing, and will thank God we have <i>any</i> place to meet freely!
<b>Complaint:</b> This church building and premises look neglected and uncared-for. <b>Solution:</b> I'll go find a fancier, newer, shinier church.	<b>Solution:</b> If the condition of the property is a poor witness to our stewardship, and doesn't serve the people well or reflect their health, I'll share my concern with the elders, and volunteer to find affordable ways to improve the church buildings. I'll find folks in the congregation able and willing to give money or talent towards approved projects, and I'll get to work.
<b>Complaint:</b> The worship seems to be dull and spiritless. <b>Solution:</b> I'll see if I can form a coalition of others that	<b>Solution:</b> I'll evaluate my feelings Biblically. Is the Word preached faithfully? Is Christ exalted? Are the

<p>feel (or will feel) the same way, and spread my unhappiness. Eventually, if things don't change to suit me, I'll find a church that feels more lively, and makes me feel the way I want to feel.</p>	<p>songs doctrinally-rich? If so, then I'll find a mirror, and see how much of the problem is <i>me</i>. I'll be sure that I am well-rested, and fully-invested in the worship, arriving early to prepare myself and staying after to encourage and serve others.</p>
<p><b>Complaint:</b> We don't have enough fellowship opportunities geared to my preferences. <b>Solution:</b> I'll go find a church that does.</p>	<p><b>Solution:</b> I'll talk with the elders, and listen, making sure I'm looking at this Biblically. I'll see if there's a way I can serve to create more opportunities, if that's best for the church.</p>
<p><b>Complaint:</b> Most of the people in this church are older than I. <b>Solution:</b> I'll ignore them and wait for my kind to come; or go find a church with more young people.</p>	<p><b>Solution:</b> I'll praise God for the storehouse of maturity and experience I've hit on. I'll reach out and try to learn from them. I'll see if there are ways I can invest my youth and health in serving them. I'll reach out to more young people to come enjoy the treasure-trove I've found.</p>
<p><b>Complaint:</b> Most of the people in this church are younger than I. <b>Solution:</b> I'll do nothing to make them feel welcome or incorporated here; or I'll go find a church with more mature people.</p>	<p><b>Solution:</b> I'll praise God for the opportunity to develop Christ-like graces of patience and kindness, and reach out to create relationships where I can teach, help, encourage, and benefit others as God has blessed and taught me.</p>
<p><b>Complaint:</b> I don't think this church is growing. <b>Solution:</b> I'll go find one that is.</p>	<p><b>Solution:</b> I'll make growth a matter of urgent personal prayer, and constantly bring it before God at the church prayer meetings. I'll learn to be more earnest in evangelism and outreach. I'll find ways to reach out, and ask the elders for guidance.</p>
<p><b>Complaint:</b> Things aren't just-right for my children. <b>Solution:</b> I'll distance our family from what my church is doing for younger folks, until they do it my way; or I'll find a church where they are already just-right.</p>	<p><b>Solution:</b> Instead of teaching my children the world's orientation (everything should always be done to serve me), I'll show and teach them the Kingdom orientation of seeking first His kingdom and righteousness, and learning to be servant of all. I'll train them, by word and example, that it is more blessed to give – sacrificially – than to receive. If the church is teaching the Word, and I'm doing my job at home, they'll be fine.</p>
<p><b>Complaint:</b> I don't agree with a decision made by the elders. <b>Solution:</b> I'll form a coalition of likeminded discontented folks. If we can't make the leadership do what we want, or <i>miser</i>y them out, I'll find a church where the elders do what I want them to do.</p>	<p><b>Solution:</b> I'll apply Hebrews 13:17 and Proverbs 12:15. If the elders aren't obviously and clearly sinning, I will let them know of my disagreement directly, see if I've missed or misunderstood something, and in the final analysis submit myself to their leadership cheerfully and in trust of the sovereign God who paired me with them.</p>
<p><b>Complaint:</b> The people I bring have un-Biblical, consumerist priorities, so they won't stay. They find a church they like better, and invite me. <b>Solution:</b> I'll go to their church.</p>	<p><b>Solution:</b> I'll try to do like Priscilla and Aquila, explain the way of God to them more accurately, and be a winsome, persuasive, godly influence by word and example.</p>