



# CANYON HILLS

## COMMUNITY CHURCH

Series: Ephesians

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## Grow Together

Jeff Potts

Amen, thank you worship team. What a great time of worship we had together, what a great rich prayer time we had. That was good, I need more of that. Just a wonderful service so far, getting to see some baptisms, getting to be encouraged with worship. What a time and prayer reminding, being reminded of the faithfulness of God really, I should just pray and wrap up and we should go home, but I only get to do this a few times a year, so I think I'll keep going, whether you like it or not.

Good morning. My name is Jeff. I'm one of the Pastors here at Canyon Hills. I help out with life groups I help people get into real, meaningful, biblical community. And if you are not in a Life group, I'm your guy, one of your guys anyway, to help you get plugged in somewhere, to help you be able to find a place where you can grow in community and grow in your faith. I'd love to see you get to do that. We are going through the book of Ephesians so I'm going to ask you to get into your Bibles to Ephesians Chapter 4. Ephesians 4, we have been going through the book of Ephesians for a while exhaustively as a church chapter by chapter verse by verse line by line, even word by word sometimes. And it's just been a big blessing. And as a reminder, this is how Ephesians lays out, it lays out into two nice sections Ephesians 1 through 3 talks about everything that God has done for us, how he is saved us by His grace, our identity and him, who he has made us to be, the community that we have as a result of what he's done for us. And then Ephesians 4 through 6 is our response, what do we do with this. How do we respond to what God has done for us? How do we worship him, particularly in our relationship with him, and then in our relationship with other people.

And so far in Ephesians for we've looked at the things that make us one. Our faith, baptism, God, hope. Pastor Steve taught on that a few weeks ago. And then last week Pastor Koby taught us about the gifts that we have that make us unique to the body of Christ. And then the takeaway was, you have gifts, you can be useful, so get going with your gifts. Just a great time of worship together last week. And the title of this message today is grow together. Keep learning, keep growing, so that you can keep building the body of Christ whether you are young or old experienced in the faith or brand new you have the call to grow and we do that together. You know the Christian life is a lot like walking up an escalator that's going the wrong way. It's difficult. It's challenging. Life is coming at you. That's hard. The world doesn't want you to succeed. You have to keep going the minute you stop, you just kind of back away, the minute that you want to go the other way, the world is all for you going that direction. It is hard to live the Christian life and yet we are called to do it. God calls us as believers to walk in a manner that's worthy and pleasing of him, Ephesians 4:1. And so we need to strive, and we need to grow in our godliness. And I need your help to do that. I need your prayer. I need your encouragement. I need your truth, to help me follow Jesus. Because I know in principle that I want to follow Jesus and someday I don't really want to do it. And so, I need you and you need me. We need each other to be able to grow.

Ephesians 4 talks about that, so if you were there would you stand with me for the reading of God's word. We're going to look at versus 14 through 16 together. But I'm going to start at verse eleven, so we actually read a sentence. Paul says in Ephesians 4 verse 11, he says *"and he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of faith, and to the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness, and deceitful schemes, rather speaking the truth in love. We are to grow up in every way into him, who is the head, into Christ, 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."*

Father, thank you that you have blessed us with this morning. God, to be able to remember how great you are and how you save people, it has been a treat and a gift. To see people making public declarations of faith in baptism. To hear the body of Christ worshipping your name, and making your name great, remembering your faithfulness, asking for your faithfulness in the lives of people that are

hurting. God you have been good to us this morning, and I pray that we would continue to worship you as we think critically about your word. Thank you for your word, that it is always true, that it's always relevant to our lives, and that we can know your character and who we are called to be as your children. We ask that you'd be with us for the rest of our time together in your name, amen. Alright you guys can have a seat.

Grow together. You and I are challenged in this passage, you and I are pushed in this passage to keep growing, and to do that within the context of community. We need each other to be able to grow into the likeness of Christ. And Paul is bringing up three different areas from this passage he talks about how we need to grow in truth, how we need to grow in love, and how we need to grow in unity. And really, we're just going to look at what the text has to say, it's not an anything special that I've conjured up for you we're just going to look at what Ephesians 4, 14 through 16 has to say and then apply that to our lives.

So, the first thing that we see from this text is grow together in truth, grow together in truth. We do this by standing strong against opposition and by sharing truth in community. Look at verse 14 *“so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine by human cunning by craftiness in deceitful schemes”*. Paul is saying that we have to deal with life and its challenges. And we also have to contend with the lies and schemes of the world. He says tossed to and fro by the waves. That's kind of like saying you're thrown into confusion, you're easily disturbed by life, stuff just throws you off. And this has to do when life brings problems. We are called to be mature in our responses when life is hard or unexpected. And the waves in life are going to come. So, the question is what Paul is challenging us here, is are we going to respond like a child, or will we respond with maturity?

I have four wonderful kids. The Potts family right here. I've got Gabe who's up in the tree, he's 7 Riley he's on my shoulder she's 5. Brady, it's her birthday today, she just turned four. She's standing next to my wife Ashley. And then Beckett is in Ashley's arms he's one, and we have a wonderful time together. They are great kids. They're super cute because they look like their mom. And as wonderful as they are, they are kids. They are children. They are not mature yet. And so, within the first five minutes of seeing them within the day you know how the day is going to go. I'll talk about Brady, within the first five seconds of seeing her, I will know whether this is a day that's going to be great, where she will be happy and dancing around, or whether this is a day where she just needs to go straight to bed for the rest of the day. So she'll come down and kind of our rhythm as a family as I will make breakfast for us and she'll

come down and she'll be like she'll be in one of her moods, and I'll say "good morning Brady" and she'll kind of grunt at me or whatever, and then she'll say finally she'll kind of say "Dad, what's for breakfast?". And I say, "oatmeal is for breakfast." She loves oatmeal. But on this particular day, you would have thought that I had thrown a beehive into her hair. and she's like "oatmeal! I hate oatmeal! I don't want it!" Do some of you relate to this? Parents, can I get in an amen or something? Right.

When life is hard, when life isn't what they want they just get thrown, they get easily disturbed. Why? Because they're kids, they're immature, it's what they do. I am so thankful that I don't have to deal with that anymore, that I don't get disturbed or anything. I've you know I've grown up, to shaving about once a week now, and so really, I'm matured. I'm a big sports guy and I've found that when my team is doing well that I'm very happy, and I am demonstrative in my happiness. I will pound my chest and I will start barking like a dog, because that's the team that I root for. And win that game is not going well, I will do one of two things, I will either get quiet and sulk, or it will be like a beehive has been thrown into my hair and I will, "Not that call! What are we doing?" All that stuff, and I will do that for hours and hours and hours on end. My kids aren't as cute anymore, my wife is not as fun, the food doesn't taste as good anymore, life is horrible.

And when I'm doing that, when I'm doing that, I'm acting like a child. I'm getting tossed and thrown by the circumstances in life. And instead of growing in truth. I just let the world and life dictate how my attitude is going to be for that day. Do you struggle with this? When life doesn't go how you would like, what do you do? Do you do your emotions go up and down? Do you get angry? Do you get overly affected by life and what's happening? We are called as Christians to grow in truth so that we can deal with the different challenges of life. I think it even gets harder in the passage, because Paul says that we also have to deal with lies and schemes of the world. It says, "*carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*" I cared about its kind of the same as being tossed to and fro, it's easily swayed, it doesn't take much to get you flustered. Quick to frustration and by what, by every wind of doctrine but just a breath that a small challenge to truth something that sounds good but lacks substance. By human cunning, a trick, by craftiness and deceitful schemes. We are thrown subtle lies, and half-truths all the time and every day there's some commercial, there's some product, there's some theory, that gets thrown out to distract us and to take our eyes off of Jesus.

And this is nothing new. We have had to battle with this as humans since the creation of the world. I mean back in Genesis 3 Adam and Eve are doing awesome. They're doing great. And then comes the serpent Satan and he deceives Adam and Eve. And how does he do it? With a vein win of doctrine, *"did not actually say that you couldn't eat from any of the trees in the garden?"* Human cunning, *"you will not surely die."* Craftiness in deceitful schemes, *"you know in fact God said that because he doesn't want you to eat the apple because he knows that you will become like him, and he doesn't want that for you. He doesn't want the best for you."*

But it's nothing new. Ephesians, Paul is bringing up the same things. He says it in this passage, but he says it later in the book to Ephesians 6:11, *"put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the scheme's same word schemes of the devil."* We are faced with lies from the world and we are called to combat lies. How do we do that? We do that with truth. Verse 15, *"rather speaking the truth in love."*

And Matthew four, we have the example of Jesus. He was very hungry, very tired, very thirsty after 40 days and nights of fasting. And then Satan comes. And Satan comes with his vein, with his breath of doctrine. with his human cunning. with his craftiness and deceitful schemes. And Jesus had every excuse in the book to say, *"like I just had an off day. I was really tired. I was really hungry."* You know how it goes. And how did Jesus deal with it? He combated lies with truth. He knew God's word, and he was able to recall it even in the midst of temptation. Even when life was difficult, and we're called as followers of Christ to do the same thing. To know God's word so that we can share God's word. We grow together by sharing truth with each other in community so that we can stand strong when lies come and when life is hard. Paul says in Colossians 3 he says, *"let the word of Christ dwell and you richly, teaching and admonishing one another and all wisdom singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God."* I need that, I need that, I need someone to encourage me with truth to share truth with me. Whether that be in the lobby with a verse that someone's been encouraged by, whether that be a text message, an email, someone in life group saying, *"this is how I've been reading, this is how this blessed me I thought of you with this verse"*. I need that and you need that too, and someone needs you to do that for them.

So, question what is one specific way that you need to grow in truth? Is there something that you need to stop doing? Is there something you need to start doing? Who is one person that you could come

around and help them grow in truth? We're called individually to grow in our faith, but we're also called to do that within community. Who needs you? Is it a neighbor? Is it a family member? Is it a life group member? Is a co-worker? Is it your spouse? Who needs you? And what would it look like to engage with them? If we are rooted and growing in truth together, we will stand strong when life is hard. And when the lies come, we will combat them with truth. That's how we're called to live.

So, we want to grow together in truth, the second thing is we want to grow together in love. Grow together in love. We grow together in love by speaking the truth in love and by building each other up. Look at verse 15, *“rather speaking the truth in love we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head into Christ.”* Love speaks the truth. And when Jesus comes first, when we're growing into him, we will speak the truth in love with each other. We do that out of a deep love and respect and admiration for God first, right we want to honor him with everything that we do with our words with our actions. But we also do that out of a deep love for family in Christ. And this can look a lot of different ways some will be easy for us some will be hard for us. I know that it's the true in my life and I came up with a little list. This isn't an exhaustive list. but here are some ways that we are called as believers to speak the truth in love.

We speak the truth in love by lovingly and gently addressing sin in someone's life. Galatians 6:1 says, *“brothers if anyone is caught in any transgression you who are spiritual should restore them in a spirit of gentleness.”* Sometimes we have to say, what you are doing is wrong, what you are doing is sinful. Please stop. I mean sin destroys everything, it's damaging your life, it's damaging the people around you. And if someone in your life is actively sinning, is doing that, what would be more loving than telling them the truth? I am very thankful for people who have been willing over the years to share truth with me. About 15 years ago, I had a conflict where I sinned against a friend of mine and I was talking with another friend about it. So, I sinned against my friend and they were struggling to kind of get back into community with me. It was it was a hard thing for them and so I called my friend D.J. and I talked with him on the phone. I said “Man, I'm struggling my friend is not responding fast, I kind of thought we'd be over this by now, I kind of thought we'd be kind of in a good position”. And he just said in love, because he cared for me, he said, “Potts I love you, you're being real dumb” And he just said, “who are you to decide when your friend gets over this situation? That's not between you, that's between you and the Lord. You are the offender. This is a consequence of your sin against this person. You have no right to tell them when to get over it.” I didn't like to hear that when he shared that with me, but 15 years later I still remember that he loved me enough to say it.

10 years ago, Ashley and I we started attending the church here at just a regular attender, member, serving things like that. And we started going to biblical counseling with Pastor Ben. And we went for an outside issue. We're just looking to get some advice on some stuff and then after a couple sessions like all of a sudden, he started asking a lot about our marriage, and I said, "what are you doing? I've not asked you for counsel on this. We asked for an outside thing why are you talking about me and my wife. How dare you?" And then after a few more sessions so I mean whatever he's a nice guy so whatever. And then after a couple more sessions, I remember it was the end of the session, he goes "Ashley like hey you're doing a great job, I'm praying for you. I don't think that you need to come back any more. Jeff I'll see you next Tuesday at 2:00 p.m." So, what is this? I went outside. You start talking about my marriage and then all of a sudden, it's you and me. And I needed that, I needed that because I had sin in my life, I had personal secret sin and that was damaging my marriage, that was damaging the people around me. I needed to be called out. and I needed someone to speak the truth in love with me. And so, week after week for a few months Ben just faithfully spoke truth in my life in love. And my life is different my life changed, my marriage changed, the way that I looked at others changed. Honestly, I think that that was the thing that set my trajectory to go into the ministry in the first place. And I'm so thankful that he spoke the truth in love with me 10 years ago and now I get the privilege of getting to do that with other people whether it be in counseling, in my garage during mutual ministry, at coffee with a friend. It is a privilege to get to share the truth with someone and we are called to do that together. We are called to care for each other when we notice that someone else is in sin. And we don't do it bluntly, we don't punch him in the face with it we do it gently and lovingly, but we have to do it. We have to do it.

So, another thing we speak the truth in love by confessing sin. James 5:16 says "*confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed.*" How much faster would we grow in our love for one another if we were honest with our sins and we ask for forgiveness? Just to bring sin out into the light with other people. Oh, my goodness that's really hard. Recently I had a buddy do that he came and confessed some sin him saying he asked for prayer, he asked for accountability and help, and it was just such an honor for me as his friend to come around him, to encourage him, to pray for him, to hold his feet to the fire, and hold him accountable, but to be there with him. And praise God that he is beginning to change and I'm so thankful for that. And our relationship is even closer now, it was close before, it's even closer now because he said I've got to bring this out into the light with you. Sometimes it's me,

sometimes it's my sin. Sometimes I need to confess that and bring it out in the light. That's really hard. That's really good.

Another one we speak the truth in love is by asking for help. Galatians 6:2 says *“bare one another's burdens is so fulfilled the love of Christ.* I love this verse because, I'm just like yep get on my shoulders, I'll bear your burdens, I'll walk this with you, no problem let's make it happen. I don't like this verse when I think about it of like oh, I need to ask other people for help. I need to ask other Christians to bear my burdens, so that they can fulfill the law of Christ. We don't have it all together, we need help from other people. And we have to be honest with that when I am vulnerable, and I asked for help I laid down my pride and I allow other people to love me and care for me and bless me. And they get blessed because they're fulfilling what Jesus has called them to do. Is that easy? No. Do I need to do that every single day? I need your prayer. I need your help. I need your support. I need your encouragement. I need truth from you. You need that from me, and you need that from the people that are in your life that are in your community. We need help. We have to ask for it and then we have to be ready and willing to give it when someone else asks.

Last thing on this list not exhaustive but hopefully clear. We speak the truth in love by encouraging one another. First Thessalonians 5:14 *“and we urge you brothers admonish the idol encourage the faint-hearted help the weak. Be patient with them all.”* If you are into memorizing scripture and you don't have this one down, I would say mark note on this one. This is such a good verse for us as Christians, you have to know where someone's at you have to know someone well enough to know. Are they idle? Are they faint hearted? Are they weak? And then you have the formula to be able to help them. If they're idle, admonish them in love and in patience, if they're faint hearted, I encourage them with patience. If they're weak, I help them with patients. Usually, it's a combo of all three, when you really know someone well.

We have to know where someone's at to be able to love and minister to them well. Sometimes someone is just hurting, and they need encouragement. You know someone who I think does that well as is Betty Ford. Betty Ford serves at the food bank with her husband Jerry she's right in the middle setting an exit Susie Disch, our food bank director. And she is in charge of the shoppers. And so, each week she will send out the schedule for the shoppers, the people that are coming to get food on a Tuesday, and she will send them a devotion or just encouraging word from her. And she isn't here at service today as far as



I can tell, because she's finishing up her second round of chemo, so she's going through that. And yet in that she has still sent out her weekly encouragement to the shoppers, just faithfully. Just being an amazing woman and servant, and she has been faithful to love and care for people in a way that builds them up no matter what life is putting in front of her. We want to grow together in love by speaking the truth and that might be hard truth, that might be confessing sin ourselves, that might be asking for help. That might be giving help, that might be giving encouragement and building people up.

So, question for us this morning, is there someone that you need to love with hard truth? You are sinning. Please stop. I am sinning. Please forgive me and help me stop. How would you encourage someone who needs to be built up? Who is that person and what would that look like? Send a text message, is that coffee, is that taking someone for dinner, is that writing him a letter, is that giving him a phone call out of the blue, is that just sending him a gift? What does that look like for you to know, someone for you to love, someone and care for someone, and build them up in that way, what does that look like?

We want to grow together in truth, I want to grow together in love and then we want to grow together in unity. Now, this is the third time that Paul has brought up unity in chapter four. So, there is a third time that hearing about it from the pulpit, you've heard about it from Steve then Koby and now me. And if it was important to God to use Paul to write unity over and over and over again in this chapter, then I think it's important for us to consider how we can be more and more and more unified together. We grow together by holding on to Christ and holding on to each other. Verse 15 *"rather speaking the truth in love. We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head into Christ."* We are called to grow into Christ. Paul says it earlier he says, *"God put all things under Jesus's feet and gave him his head over all things to the church which is his body the fullness of him who fills all in all."* Christ his head. He's Lord. He's king. He gets the glory. He's the leader. He gets the fame. He is our Savior and he is our King. And Paul is saying right here he is our aim. We are to grow up in every way into him. The goal of a disciple is not to become your best you, but actually to put *off* you and to put *on* Christ. And I need other people to help me with that. Because I don't see it all the time. I need people to call me out. I need people to say, Jeff you're acting like you, you need to act more like Christ. I need that. We need that.

We are called to hold the Christ and in that we are to join and hold to each other. Verse 16 says, *"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 grows that it builds itself up in love*". I love that verse. Notice the phrases, join together, held together, equipping each other there's this need for us to work properly there's this call to make the body grow and to build itself up and love. This is biblical community, to put it in Canyon Hills language, this is why life groups matter. One of the reasons we value life groups so much is because of the relationships, because we grow in relationship with each other, but we grow in relationship with Christ because of each other. Paul Tripp puts it like this he says, *"Christian friendships do not simply help us bask in the sunshine of God's grace, they also help us to roll up our sleeves and strive after holiness"*. Isn't that good?

Our world desperately needs growing, faithful Christians. We need people that are living differently, we need people that are not stagnant in their growth, that are not active in sin, but instead striving after holiness. And doing it arm in arm with other believers. So that they can see the church in a way that they've never seen it before. A church full of truth. A church full of love, a church full of unity, so that they can see very clearly that Jesus changes us. And you have an individual call for that, and we have a corporate call to do that with each other. We have to do this. It's our mission. It's our calling and we can't do it alone.

So, Paul is saying we've got to be held together we've got to be joined together. So, question for us what is one specific way that you can grow in commitment to biblical community? Put it more simply, how are you going to commit to your life group? For some of you that's getting one, which we'd love to see you get in one, some place where you can where you can grow in your faith and where you can be loved and cared for by other people. For some of you need to start one so that more people can get in one you. and I are challenged in this passage to keep growing together, in truth love and unity. You know I think about the baptisms that we saw earlier this morning we saw Josh and we saw Brock. And what a blessing to see those guys get baptized. What a blessing also to see Josh with Connor and to see Brock with Corey. What a cool thing to see someone who said you know what I see you, I'm going to love you, and I'm going to bother you, until you come to life group. You know what I see that you're hurting. I'm going to love you and I'm going to care for you and put you into my home. I'm going to care for you. I'm going to take you to church and you're going to hear hope of Jesus. We need more of that.

A privilege for me is to get to oversee the baptism process and so usually I'll get to do the dunking, not today. Someone asked me if I have like rip off pants for and I said no, like someone else to

do it. But one of the privileges that I get to do is after the baptism, we've already moved on to the next song or the next prayer or the service or whatever part is going on, and yet I get to go with the guys or girls, we're dripping wet and I just get to pray with them and pray over him and just say "God, I just thank you so much for this public profession of faith that they made, but God would you change them even more, day by day. God, I pray that six months from now that they would love you far more than they do right now. God that when trials come that they would stand strong. God, that when they are facing temptations that they would obey you. That six months from now that they would look drastically different because they love you more, they want to know you more, they want to serve you with everything they've got." And that's my prayer for you. That's my prayer from me. That's six months from today that we would look so different because we have put on Christ, we have sought him, we have loved him, we have acted like him, to where we look nothing like we do right now. Praise God! And what would happen in our community what would happen in King County, Snohomish County, in your city, at your school, in your context, if all of a sudden individually you grew and corporately, we grew together. The world needs that. We need that. I need that, God calls us to that.

Let's pray. God, we come before you just again so thankful for your word. So thankful that you love us and that you're gracious to us. And God, I pray that you would help us to grow and keep growing. God give us other people that surround us that love, us that care, for us that challenge, us to grow in our faith so that we can honor you with every area of our lives. God, I pray for my friends here that don't know you that today could be the day of their salvation, that they could see how awesome and how faithful you are from the worship and from the baptism. Just hearing how great you are and how you save people. I pray that they would come to faith in Christ today, that today would be the first day of eternity for them. God, I pray for people that are here that are in active sin, that they are running from you. I pray that today would be the day that they stop that they make a commitment to stop. They would find someone and that they would have someone hold him accountable to what they're doing. I pray that six months from now Lord that you would be so honored and so pleased by how we have changed into the image of your Son, so that you can get the glory, not so that we can get the glory, so that you can have a great name in this city, in this county, in this area. God, we love you so much. It's in your name we pray, amen. Amen.

We've got some people up here that would love to pray with you if you have questions about faith. If you have a big prayer request it's coming up, please come up and pray they would be honored to do that with you. God bless. Have a great week.