

Ephesians 4:1-6

"The Character Of A Worthy Walk"

From our spiritual *wealth* to our spiritual *walk*. That's the transition Paul makes as he takes us into Eph Ch 4. *Out of* the "principles" & *into* the "practicals" of Christian living.

& The word that clues us in on the transition is the 2nd word of the 1st Vs, Paul saying, "I, *therefore*". Whenever you see the word "therefore" in your NT, as a general rule it's serves as a hinge that swings a door open, leading you *out of* a principle observation *into* a practical application. It takes us from doctrine to duty, from what we *believe* to how we *behave* in the light of what was just communicated. They're directly connected.

What we believe directly impacts & influences how we behave. So Paul spent considerable time laying the foundation, sharing w/us revelation & insight into the enormous spiritual wealth we've been given & entrusted w/in Christ. Now that we have a grasp these various principles, he begins to develop what the Christian life looks like in the practical.

Vs 1

Paul says, "I, therefore (the prisoner of the Lord) *beseech* you (or beg you) to walk (or live a life, move forward in a manner) worthy of the calling w/which you were called."

2 Questions; #1 What is this "calling" & #2 "What does it mean to walk 'worthy' of it?"

Well, we'll get to that but before we do allow me to point something out. It can be kind of difficult to follow the flow as we break the scriptures down week after week. But it's important to see here that the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul is placing a sense of urgency upon us (He beseeches us) to live for the glory of God. But it's only *after* He's spent considerable time laying the groundwork, or establishing a firm foundation for us regarding what God has done for us 1st. Here's what I'm saying. *We don't live for the glory of God in order to merit His favor, gain His grace or earn His love. We live for the glory of God in response to the fact that He's already given us His favor, He's given us His grace, He's lavished us w/His love...*

Most Christians have imposed upon themselves the sad misguided notion that they need to initiate goodwill toward God. That if they could just pray enough, read enough, do enough & be enough, that God would love them & bless them. So they try to walk worthy in order that God might be gracious to them, but sooner or later they fail & many simply throw in the towel.

But the bible makes it clear in no uncertain terms, *God* is the Initiator, *we* respond.

The Christian walk isn't something we do to try & earn God's love or merit His favor. It's a response to the immeasurable love, goodness & grace He's already *given* to us in Christ! The apostle John put it plainly, "*We love Him because He first loved us.*"¹ You & me, we *need* to live for the glory of God. But not in order to *gain* God's favor, but because He's already *given* us His favor in Christ. That understanding makes all the difference.

"Walk worthy of the calling w/which you were called." Ok, what "calling" is he talking about? It's a reference the sum total of everything he's been explaining to us in the 1st 3 Ch's. Everything that God has done for us in Christ Jesus. We were dead in trespasses & sins, yet God has made us alive together w/Christ & seated us together *in the heavenlies in Christ*. He's blessed us w/every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. He's woven you into the very fabric of His eternal plan of the ages, even instructing angels in His manifold wisdom according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord through your life... Ladies and Gentlemen, anyway you want to look at it, that's a high calling!

Now, live in light of that, walk *worthy* of that. Listen, others may not tell you this but I will, those people you work with, go to school with or workout with, they're watching your life. & They're evaluating you, what you say means very little, how you live means everything. You can *say* you're a Christian all you like, but can you *show* them you're a Christian by the way you lead your life? Are you walking "worthy" of the calling w/which you were called?

"Well what does that mean? To 'walk worthy?'" It means that our lifestyle should accurately correspond to our position (who we are) in Christ. Picture a balance scale w/2 trays & a measurement of weight on one side of the scale. *That weight is represented by your belief (everything we've learned in these 1st 3 Ch's, [the highlights of which we just rehearsed]).* On the other side is your life, (how you behave) how do the scales balance out? *Our belief & our behavior should balance out.*

& A great place to begin is by simply getting along w/other believers. That's what Paul is going to point to here, maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. To the Philippians Paul put it like this, "*Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*"²

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Jn 4:19). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Php 1:27). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Jesus said, *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*³ Walk worthy of the calling w/which you were called... (Vs 2)

Vs 2-3

What does a walk that's worthy look like? It begins w/all lowliness & gentleness. "Lowliness" or "humility of mind" is the flagship of all Christian virtues. Again, in his letter to the Philippians Paul said, *"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself."*⁴ This is the mind (Paul said) that was in Christ Jesus. Who being in the form of God, not considering it robbery to be equal w/God, made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Question. Did He do that because He was thinking of Himself 1st? No, He placed our needs above His own.

Jesus said in Matt 11, *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart,"*⁵ Perhaps you recall there at the last supper, supper being ended, Jesus laid aside His garments, took a towel, girded Himself & washed His disciples feet. When He was finished He said, "Do you know what I have done to you?" He said, "You call Me Teacher & Lord & you say well, for so I am. He said, *"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."*⁶ There's no task too low for the child of God; humility is shaped through serving one another.

Lowliness & gentleness. These are characteristics that mark a worthy walk. It's not marked by a pushy desire to defend our own rights & advance our own agenda. But by lowliness, we don't have to be "in control". & Let's be honest, some people haven't reached that point in their Christian walk just yet. They can only be happy when they're steering, when *they're* at the helm. God says, "No", the Christian life is earmarked by *lowliness, gentleness, happiness & contentment* even when you're not the one behind the wheel.

Now we're not speaking about *weakness*, but *meekness*. No need to be harsh or rude. To be meek is to bow oneself to the will of God regardless of the cost. Family, these are huge keys in maintaining *unity* in the body of Christ.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 13:35]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Php 2:3]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Mt 11:29]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 13:14-15]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Humility & gentleness will unite us, pride & self-assertion will divide us... He goes on, "W/longsuffering (or patience), bearing w/one another in love."

Again, huge keys. Btw, I suppose we should acknowledge this while we're at it. When Paul starts talking about keeping the unity of the Spirit, the characteristics of the worthy walk being lowliness, gentleness, bearing w/one another patiently in love... We should see that those words presuppose that there will be conflict amongst believers. Sometimes I think that we feel as though (when there's conflict between us & another bro or sis in the body) that it's the end of the world... Man, this is *terrible*, how can this be? & Though in many respects it *is* terrible (unfortunate & probably unnecessary in many cases) I suggest to you that according to what we read, more than anything... it's normal!

We'll eventually arrive at a place where we all get along & the sin nature & self-assertion is no more, but that's called heaven. In the meantime, it's inescapable, conflict will occasionally arise. That's why we need these Christ like characteristics at work in our lives (lowliness, gentleness, patience & the like). These things nurture reconciliation & unity. Pride (on the other hand), pushiness, impatience & a hairpin trigger that explodes in fury at the slightest provocation bring about conflict, contention & division.

Patience is that quality that's exhibited in self-restraint that doesn't automatically retaliate a wrong. It's the attribute that has the *power/ability* to take revenge, but never does... & I think we would all grow in our patience toward others if we really stopped to try & understand how incredibly patient God has been w/us... You know you, would you continue to put up w/you if you were God? 😊 I'd have probably blasted me a long time ago! 😊

So as we think of *His* patience toward us, how He continues to put up w/us, we should be patient with others. Extending mercy, & grace freely.

You know, prophetically there's nothing left that needs to happen to prevent Jesus from coming for His church. There's only one reason (that I'm aware of) that He hasn't yet. Patience. Peter said this; he said, "*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*"⁷ The reason Jesus hasn't raptured His church is because God is "longsuffering". He's patient w/people, He wants them to come to Christ, He could've wrapped this whole thing up a long time ago, but I'm so glad He didn't... Where would I be?

⁷ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [2 Pe 3:9]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Where would you be? 5 yrs, 10 yrs, 25 yrs ago? We're so grateful, for the "longsuffering" of the Lord... Of course now that we're in we're ready to get the show on the road ☺! But God desires all men everywhere to repent, so He waits patiently. Oh, He'll fulfill His word, but we're grateful for His grace, His patience. That He "bears" w/us, puts up w/us in love.

This is what we're charged to do... To walk worthy of the *calling* of God we must reflect the *character* of God. "Endeavoring (Vs 3) to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Btw you should know that there's energy & effort that's packed away in this word "Endeavoring", there's exertion in view here. It's probably not going to come easy, more than likely it'll take work. "Endeavoring" is a word that speaks of striving to achieve w/a serious determined effort. Let me put it this way, unity requires *work*.

Now, we don't need to "create" the unity. God has already done that, did you notice that? It's not a "structural" unity, or a "denominational" unity, it's a "spiritual" unity. It's the unity of the "Spirit". God has *created* it, (Paul pointed this out in Vs 14-16 of Ch 2) we're to keep it. You don't need to manufacture it, simply maintain it.

We should also say that unity is not the same thing as "uniformity". Unity comes from w/in, it's a work of the Spirit of God between believers regardless of ethnicity, nationality, denomination, language barriers or economic status. *Uniformity* is the result of man-made structure, rules, regulations & pressure from the outside to conform to certain standards imposed by a hierarchy. Unity is spiritual & comes from within, uniformity is structural & is the result of pressure from without.

So, how then are we to maintain this unity, what's the bond (the cement) that holds it all together? "Peace," your desire for peace & my desire for peace will act as a catalyst that promotes all these characteristics in our lives. Because we're eager for peace we'll walk in lowliness, because we want peace we'll act in gentleness & patience, we'll bear w/one another in love... Even when we have differences.

You know, you look around & you think... "Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Non-denominationals... that seems like a lot of differences... Perhaps, but we have way more in common than you may've stopped to consider. As a matter of fact, the fact that there are so many different nuances under which the church gathers (to me) isn't a negative thing, it's a positive thing.

It keeps the unity spiritual, not structural. But we have plenty in common w/our Baptist bro's & sisters, or our Pentecostal family or anyone else who meets w/Christ as their Head, regardless of what name they place on their building. Paul lists 7 things right here that all believers hold in common. You might think, "this" is different, & "that's" not the same, but here's the truth.

Vs 4-6

Ladies and Gentlemen, regardless of which church building you meet in, there's only 1 body. The body of Christ universal. You're either in & apart of the body of Christ or you are not. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians he said, *"Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"*⁸ They're rhetorical questions. Christ isn't divided, there's no other sinless Savior who was crucified for you, there's only 1 body. & One Spirit. Again, *"Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His."*⁹ **There's not more than 1 Holy Spirit. There's only 1 whom every believer shares in common. & There's only 1 hope of your calling. We all share a common hope (the guaranteed certainty, the unrelenting reality of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord). Christ in you, the hope of glory...**

One Lord, the Lord J.C. who has loved you & given Himself for you. There's one faith. Now there's a little debate here as to what this word "faith" is in reference to but to me you can see it either way, there's room for both understandings here. (Hey, no need to divide over it☺). Some see "the faith" as the message of the gospel, there's only 1 way you're saved. Believe on the Lord J.C. **For if you confess w/your mouth the Lord Jesus, & believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. That's the message, 1 faith. There's not more than one gospel... & That's true. Others understand "the faith" to be the cannon of scripture in its entirety. & The bible uses the term in this way as well, that we're to contend earnestly to keep "the faith" once for all delivered to the saints. However, you want to see this, I'm fine w/it, they're both true.**

One baptism. Again, 2 views, both true. Some see the baptism as the baptism into Christ as by the Holy Spirit. Meaning, you've either been born again (baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit) or you have not. Others see this as a reference to literal water baptism. Keeping the context that Paul is speaking of the unity between Jews & Gentiles in Christ.

⁸ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [1 Co 1:13]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
⁹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ro 8:9]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

There's not one baptism for the Jews & another for the Gentiles. Water baptism is the outward demonstration of the inward transformation of the heart. It's our public identification w/the death, burial & resurrection of J.C.

Some churches won't recognize the fact that you were baptized through the ministry of Calvary Chapel. If you want to join their church, you have to be baptized by them. That's not scriptural, we're not baptized into a denomination, we're not of Paul or of Peter, we're all of Christ. We're baptized (immersed) into J.C. in the name of the Father, the Son & the Holy Spirit (the fullness of all that God is). There's only 1 baptism.

One God & Father of all (not of all mankind, but of every believer). God is your Father... He's also the Father of every believer in the church down the road & across the world. Every believer belongs to the household of faith.

So we have 7 elements/components of unity rooted in the Tri-unity of God (1 Spirit, 1 Lord, 1 God & Father of us all). & These areas of oneness are greater than any potential difference.

Write it down & read it later Ps 133. There's a vital connection between unity & the work/anointing of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Let's not deceive ourselves so as to think we're going to be operating under the Spirit's anointing & power if we can't even get along w/others in the body of Christ...

Unity brings times of refreshing to our souls, perhaps you've picked up in the past the fact that division can bring dryness to your walk. Reconciliation will refresh you.

People are watching our lives, let us walk worthy of the calling w/which we were called... In humility; gentleness & patience, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit... in the bond of peace. Jesus never said, "Blessed are the peace-breakers" but blessed are the peacemakers... for they shall be called the sons of God. Amen? Amen.

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for Your Word. How You speak right down into the reality of where we live. We want to walk worthy of Your calling & accurately reflect Your character. Help us not to resist the work of Your Spirit in our lives, but to receive it willingly/gladly for the sake of Your glory. & God if there's something in our lives that needs to be reconciled, as much as depends upon us, may we live peaceably w/all men. Have Your way & we'll give you praise.

Being at peace w/others is important, being at peace w/God is essential. We have peace w/God through the blood of J.C. believe on Him today & be saved.