

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 5TH - 6TH, 2022 // BOOK OF EPHESIANS

WALK WORTHY (EPHESIANS 4:1-6)

"Therefore": Paul is basing his exhortations in this next section on the doctrines taught in the first three chapters.

- Chapters 1-3 focused on our wealth and identity as believers, and now, Paul shifts the focus to our "walk" as followers of Jesus.
 - He urges us as believers to "walk worthy of the calling we have received" (vs. 1).
- Walking "worthy of our calling" doesn't mean we're to earn our salvation by our behavior.
- It simply means to have a lifestyle that actually fits with the identity we proclaim.
 - There's often a difference between what a person says about themselves and what they actually do.
 - A worthy walk is defined by consistency, sincerity, and authenticity in our lifestyle. It means what you say you are, you actually are!

"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." -1 John 1:6

- How do we see sincerity, authenticity, and genuineness in a believer's walk? In how they treat and live with other people.

HUMILITY AND GENTLENESS (VS. 2A)

Having humility means seeing yourself as God sees you: with infinite value but with no more value than anyone else.

- Pride and arrogance prevent us from displaying the character of Jesus.
- Gentleness is the opposite of being pushy to defend our own rights and promote our own agenda: it's controlling our power and yielding our rights.

PATIENCE AND FORBEARANCE (VS. 2B)

Patience is quite literally the ability to endure discomfort and being willing to wait.

- It's being willing to endure the flaws in other people, waiting on God, and trusting His timing.
- Patience is a characteristic of a mature person.
- To "bear with one another in love" means to be willing to put up with an aggravating person because of our love for them.

UNITY WITH OTHER BELIEVERS (VS. 3-6)

Sincere, genuine believers who are walking consistently in their profession as a follower of Jesus "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (vs. 3).

- That means we are to be deeply committed to maintaining spiritual unity between believers.
- Why? Because of the unity between the Father, Son, and Spirit in the Godhead (vs. 4,5,6).

We have more in common with other true believers than that which divides us.

- For all those who are truly in Christ, we have the same hope, faith, body, and baptism.
- Unity doesn't mean doctrine doesn't matter or beliefs about God don't matter.
- It also doesn't mean that every believer in every church will agree on absolutely everything.

True unity is agreeing on what is essential Christian doctrine and showing patience, humility, and understanding toward other believers on what is nonessential.

- There is a standard for truth. But once someone is inside the bounds of Christian truth and orthodoxy, there's a lot of diversity and flavors of believers!
- Do we "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit"?

GIFTS (EPHESIANS 4:7-16)

Unity would be easy if we were all the same! Paul now moves on from what all Christians have in common to how Christians differ from each other (vs. 7).

- God has given each believer at least one spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:1-12) to be used for the unifying and the building up of the Body of Christ.
- The basis for God's distribution of spiritual gifts in the Church is grace—no one deserves or has earned spiritual gifts.

In verses 8-10, Paul quotes Ps. 68:18, which describes a military victor who returns to His people with gifts of plunder.

- Paul connects this Psalm with Christ's victory over sin, death, and Satan.
- Our great victor, Christ, has returned victorious from battle and given spiritual gifts to His people.
- Some of the gifts God gives for the Church are listed in vs. 11.

FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY?

- View #1: These are all offices within the church, with the apostles and prophets being listed first because they are to govern and lead the church spiritually.
- View #2: These were all offices within the church, but the first two (apostles and prophets) have ceased, and now we just have the last three.
- View #3: These are spiritual gifts (vs. 7) of leadership that God gives within His church (not necessarily governing offices, "...elders direct the affairs of the church" 1 Tim. 5:17). All of these gifts are still available for today.
- Biblically qualified elders *should* have some of these spiritual gifts, but just having a spiritual gift doesn't make someone qualified to be an elder and lead the church.

"SOME APOSTLES..."

- The word means, "one who is sent with a commission." The apostles in the early Church had a unique calling and office, but someone with an apostolic gift today might be a church planter or missionary.

"SOME PROPHETS..."

- The gift of hearing and communicating revealed truth. Someone with a prophetic gift hears revelation from the Lord and shares it with the church.

"SOME EVANGELISTS..."

- Evangelists are given a unique burden for the lost and the unique ability to effectively communicate the gospel to others by the Holy Spirit.

"SOME PASTORS/TEACHERS..."

- In the Greek, these two words are joined to describe a person who shepherds the flock of God

primarily through teaching the Word of God.

The purpose of these gifts of leadership within the church is very clear—it's so God's people might be equipped for the work of ministry, and the body of Christ might be expanded and strengthened (vs. 12).

- The desired goal of God's work through church leadership and equipped saints is unity and maturity (vs. 13), stability (vs. 14), balance (vs. 15), and growing dependence on Christ (vs. 16).

PUT ON THE NEW SELF (EPHESIANS 4:17-24) THE CHARACTER OF THE OLD SELF (VS. 17-19)

If we are truly in Christ, we should no longer live in the way the world around us lives.

- That way of life and manner of thinking is "futile": it leads to dissatisfaction, confusion, chaos, and nothingness (vs. 17).
- A godless lifestyle reflects a darkened understanding of God, an ignorance of God's law, and a hardness of heart (vs. 18).

To become "callous" is to become unable to feel guilt or conviction over things that should make us blush.

- It's the moral condition where we call what is wicked "good" and what is good "wicked."
- That callousness is usually reflected in sexual sin, where gratifying our desire overrides any sense of what is right or wrong (vs. 19).

PUTTING ON THE NEW SELF (VS. 20-24)

But that's not who we are anymore if we are in Christ (vs. 20).

- That is assuming we actually are in a real relationship with Jesus and have heard about Him and have been taught by Him (vs. 21).
- An indication that we do truly know Jesus is that we've committed to "take off" our former way of life—our "old self" (vs. 22).

What is the former way of life that belonged to the old self? Our old habits, behaviors, mindsets, and attitudes.

- Those things were corrupted by "deceitful desires": we were once walking in darkness and untruth about who God is and what actually matters in life (vs. 22).
- But we've been given a new self!

The work of the Spirit of God in making us new begins in our minds: We are to be renewed in the spirit (attitude) of our minds.

- What we think about matters. If we're not behaving as we should be, we can discipline our thoughts to think on truth and goodness (Phil. 4:8).
- We're to put on the new self, the new creation that was created at conversion (2 Cor. 5:17).

DON'T GRIEVE GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT (EPHESIANS 4:25-32)

Putting off the "old self" and putting on the "new self" isn't some mystical, ethereal process that begins each day with affirmations in the mirror.

- It's committing to grow in our Christian character through choosing to STOP certain habits, behaviors, and attitudes that are un-Christlike.
- We are masters at making excuses for our poor character. Christian maturity means we grow up, take ownership, and start living right.

LYING (VS. 25)

The "new self" in Christ tells the truth.

- The motive for telling the truth is because we are "members of one another": Lying hurts other people, especially in the Body of Christ.
- Forms of deception may include exaggeration, not telling the whole truth, little "white lies," withholding needed information, or manipulating the truth. All of these forms of lying are sinful.

ANGER (VS. 26-27)

Sometimes a Christian may legitimately become angry, just as Jesus did (Matt. 21) and Paul did (Gal. 1).

- But when we hold onto our anger and allow it to control us, our anger becomes sinful.
- Our anger should be short-lived and controlled.
- Holding onto anger gives the devil an opportunity to influence aspects of our lives.

THEFT AND LAZINESS (VS. 28)

The "new self" in Christ doesn't steal. Instead, he/she does honest work with their own hands.

- Getting paid to not really work is a form of theft, and theft is not something true Christians do.
- Working hard brings financial blessings not just to ourselves, but also to those around us as we work so we can share with those in need.

FOUL LANGUAGE (VS. 29)

The speech of a Christian is different from the world.

- A truly converted person who is new in Christ will not only avoid obscene vulgarities, but also won't slander or gossip about other people.
- They'll speak about what is good for the building up of others and what gives grace to anyone who hears them speak.

When we don't live according to our true identity and put the new self, we grieve the Holy Spirit, our seal for identification and protection (vs. 30).

- Angry, bitter, combative, and malicious attitudes shouldn't characterize us as Christians (vs. 31).
- We're to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving people because we've been forgiven much by Christ (vs. 32).

We are often masters at making excuses for our poor Christian character.

- Christian maturity means growing up, taking ownership of our shortcomings, and living right.
- When we fail to do this, it grieves the Holy Spirit. It makes Him sad, breaks His heart, and causes Him emotional pain.

WALK WORTHY

1. Be sure you truly know Christ and have been made into a new creation.
2. Pride, arrogance, self-righteousness, and an obsession with always being right, never creates unity anywhere.
3. Stop making excuses. Take off the old self.
4. Love must become our motivation in the Christian life.