

Ephesians Chapter 4

Introduction: In chapters 1-3, Paul revealed the doctrinal side of the “*mystery*” of God’s plan (positional truth). The spiritual riches we have in Christ are set forth. He will now address the practical side of how this plan should work out in our lives. The Christian life is not based on ignorance but knowledge, and the better we understand Bible doctrine, the easier it is to obey Bible duties. What you believe determines how you behave!

From 4:1 to 6:9, Paul deals with the walk of faith, which is how we are to invest our spiritual wealth into this fallen world. Then, in 6:10-20, he instructs us in the warfare of the believer, how we can live victoriously on this earth.

Chapter 4 explains how we are to “*walk worthy*” of the Lord. Paul uses the metaphor of walking to illustrate our lifestyle. We walk worthy by maintaining unity (vs. 1-6), growing in maturity and service (vs. 7-16), and in the sanctification of the Holy Spirit (vs. 17-32).

Words to define:

1. walk: *peripateo*, to live deport of oneself, to be occupied with.
2. forbearance: *anechomai*, suffer; bear with; forbear; endure.
3. diligent: *spoudazo*, do diligence; be diligent; be forward; labour; study.

Walking in Unity (vs. 1-6).

I. Walking (vs. 1-3).

1. Paul’s walk is as a prisoner of the Lord (v. 1a).

2. Walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called (v.1b).

3. Characteristics of our walk (v.2). see Galatians 5:22. These graces are necessary to preserve unity. The Spirit generates unity, the flesh-disunity.

a. humility:

b. gentleness:

c. patience:

d. forbearance:

e. love:

4. Working to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (v.3). God has reconciled Jews and Gentiles to Himself in the Body of Christ. Our responsibility is to guard, protect and preserve that unity (Eph. 2:18-22).

II. Seven Pillars of Spiritual Unity (vs.4-6). These are not things we produce, but what the Spirit of God has secured for us all by the new birth.

1. One body (v.4a). Speaks of the Body of Christ made up of all who believe in Him (1 Cori. 12:12-27).

2. One Spirit (v.4b). This is the Holy Spirit who indwells each of us. John 14:16-17; Rom. 8:9-11. ***It is not a feeling, it is a fact!***

3. One hope (v.4b). Hope is our confident expectation of eternal life. Eph.1:13-14; Titus 2:13; 1 Cori. 13:13.

4. One Lord (v.5a). Speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ. John 14:6.

5. One faith (v.5b). Faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father, eternal life. John 14:6.

6. One baptism (v.5b). Baptism of the Holy Spirit placed us in the Body of Christ at salvation. This is not repeatable. Eph. 1:13; 1 Cori. 12:13.

7. One God and Father (v.6). By faith in Christ we enter into the family of God. Gal. 3:26-29.

Application: The unity of the Spirit is a result of the believer walking in the Spirit. Unity comes from within, it is a spiritual grace. It is important for a believer to first know God and who they are in Christ. This is why Paul first laid the doctrinal foundation in Ephesians 1, 2, and 3. Then when the peace of God rules in our hearts (Col. 3:15). Spiritual unity in a home, Bible Study, or church is the responsibility of each individual and the job never ends.

Walking in Growth, Maturity, and Service (vs.7-16).

I. The Gifts for Unity (vs.7-11).

1. No two believers, even having the same gift, will have the same measure of power or effect (v.7). Three lists of spiritual gifts; 1 Cori, 12:4-11, 27-31; Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:11. Consider the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30).

2. Spiritual gifts and natural abilities. A spiritual gift is a God given ability to serve God and other Believers (Eph.4:12). Natural abilities are God given abilities, perhaps in mechanics, art, athletics, or music. In this regard, not all are created equal because some are smarter, stronger, or more talented(v.7).

3. When He ascended (v.8a).

4. He led captivity captive (v.8b). At that time, Jesus took the souls of all Old Testament believers from Paradise (Abraham's Bosom) into Heaven (Luke :16:19-31).

5. And gave gifts to men (v.8c). The spiritual gifts given to believers are described as the spoils of Christ's victory that He shares with men (Psalm 68:18).

6. He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth (v.9). After His death on the cross, the Lord Jesus went into Sheol/Hades, which had two parts; one called “Torments,” and the other called “Paradise/Abraham’s Bosom” (Luke 16:22-26). He released the saints from Paradise and took them with Him into Heaven. Paul tells us that Paradise is now in the presence of God (2 Cori.12:1-4).

7. He who descended is also the One who ascended (v.10a). Christ came down from Heaven to go to the cross for us, then He ascended back to Heaven to serve as our High Priest (Rom. 8:31-39; Hebrews 5, 7-8,10).

8. That He might fill all things (10b). The idea of filling indicates full supply and control, as in the filling of the Holy Spirit (Eph.5:18, Col.1:19; 2:9-10).

9. Apostles (11a). The word means one who is sent with a commission. Jesus had many disciples, but He selected twelve Apostles (Matt.10:1-4). A disciple is a follower or learner, but an apostle is a divinely appointed representative. The apostles were to give witness of the resurrection (Acts 1:15-22), and therefore had to have seen the risen Christ personally (1 Cori. 9:1-2). There are no apostles today. These men helped to lay the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20), and once the foundation was laid, they were no longer needed. God authenticated their ministry with special miracles (Heb. 2:1-4), so we should not demand these same miracles today.

10. Prophets (11b). We commonly associate a prophet with someone who predicts future events, but this is not the primary function. A New Testament prophet is one who proclaims the Word of God (Acts 11:28; Eph.3:5). Early Believers did not have Bibles,

and the New Testament was not completed. There is no new revelation. The Word of God is illuminated by the Holy Spirit (Psalm 119:105).

11. Evangelists (v.11c). Are gifted to win men to faith in Christ. Their strength is in a powerful presentation of the gospel message and foundation laid by the apostles and prophets.

12. Pastors and Teachers (11d). The indication is that this is one office with two ministries. Pastor means shepherd, indicating that the local church is a flock of sheep (Acts 20:28), and it is his responsibility to feed and lead the flock (1Peter 5:1-4, where elder is another name for pastor). The Word of God is the staff that guides and disciplines the sheep. The Word of God is the local church's protection and provision, and no amount of entertainment, good fellowship, or other religious substitutes can take its place.

13. For the equipping of the saints (12a). The purpose of communication and teaching gifts is to bring the Church to spiritual maturity (Heb.5:14-6:1; 2 Pet. 3:18).

14. The Growth of unity is to grow, mature and realize our need for one another (vs.12-16).