

Eph 4:1–6 (ESV) I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ⁽²⁾ with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ⁽³⁾ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁽⁴⁾ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁽⁵⁾ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁽⁶⁾ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

1. Every organization we join has certain standards

- A. You want to join a gang – you will discover there is a way they expect you to act
- B. The ministry we’re involved in on Friday nights has a standard of morality they expect you to keep
 - 1). You look it over and if you agree you sign it – and proceed
- C. It is the same with the church isn’t it
 - 1). We see in Ephesians 4 the standards God is given – what he expects from his people

Thought: I really think we need to return to these truths in today’s Christianity

- A. It seems many want the security they believe the Gospel gives them
 - 1). Without any responsibility to live like the Gospel commands
 - 2). They want to be known as one of God’s people without living like one of his children
- B. But here we see the balance – first 3 chapters of Ephesians is the believer’s position
 - 1). Paul speaks of how we were saved and all the blessings of being a child of God
 - 2). But the last three chapters Paul gives the obligations and requirements of being God’s child
 - a). Chapters 1-3: The child of God has been brought from spiritual death to life
 - Chapters 4-6: This is what that life looks like

2. Last time we got into verse 2

Eph 4:1–2 (ESV) I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ⁽²⁾ with all humility...

- A. “Therefore” = links us back to the first three chapters of doctrine/theology
 - 1). The grace of God in choosing us – adopting us – forgiving us = securing us
 - 2). The grace of God in giving life to those who only wanted to satisfy their flesh
- B. Now he moves to the practical – “Therefore. Since that is true now this is your logical response”
 - 1). Live like that is true of you – live like who you are in Christ
Live in a way that brings the one who has done so much for you glory
- C. We looked at humility – the opposite of pride
 - 1). This is a key to this whole passage – proud people don’t care about unity
 - a). Everything is about them – they don’t care about others
And they are so easily upset with others – every little thing sets them off
 - 2). We saw the way to biblical humility is not to measure ourselves by others
But by the true standard – what we’re supposed to be like – Jesus Christ
1 John 3:2-3 (NIV) Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. (3) *Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*
 - a). You fall short – like I do – we all do – there is no room for boasting
 - 1a). We are all sinners who have been shown grace – who boast in God’s goodness
 - 3). We saw the beauty of humility is a forgetting about ourselves
 - a). The proud are always trying to be the center of the conversation
When somebody else gets praised it irritates them – they are supposed to be the focus
Bernard Bailly: When science discovers the center of the universe, a lot of people will be disappointed to find they are not it.
 - b). But humility enables us to rejoice with those who rejoice – to celebrate their being lifted up

Transition: This week we’ll through verse 6!

I. THE WORTHY WALK CONTINUED

Eph 4:2 (ESV) with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

Humility

The second attitude that characterizes the worth walk

GENTLENESS (or meekness)

1. Humility always produces gentleness or meekness

- A. I am going to use meekness – it is more impactful with what this word means

2. Meekness defined

- A. In modern dictionaries it is defined as “timid” or “a deficiency in courage”

- B. That isn’t even close to the biblical meaning

- 1). A good definition is “Power under control” – mild-spirited
 - a). It would be the opposite of being vindictive and vengeful
 - b). The opposite of the “get even” mentality of our modern culture
- 2). Jesus called himself “Gentle” in Matt 11:29 – there was nothing weak about him
 - a). But his power was subjected to the will of his Father

1 Pet 2:23 (NIV) When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

- 1a). The humble – gentle individual doesn’t need to strike back

That’s not because they are weak – but the use of their power is subject to God’s will

- 3). The proud get even – the gentle person considers how getting even would affect their testimony
 - a). The proud person – it’s all about them
 - The humble – gentle person – it’s all about God

- C. The example of this meekness (gentleness) - Jesus’ at his arrest

- 1). Matthew 26 the soldiers come to arrest Jesus in the garden

Peter pulls out a sword – cutting off the ear of the high priests’ servant

- a). Jesus rebukes Peter and says

Mat 26:53-54 (NIV) Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? (54) But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

- b). Jesus had the power to stop this arrest – he had calmed the waves and sea

He could call 12 legions of angels – 1 killed 185,000 in a night

- 1a). But he gently says “I must do the Father’s will – the scriptures must be fulfilled”

- 2a). He calmly steps into the events of the cross

- 2). You see this again as he’s hanging on the cross in front of mocking crowds

- a). Did he say “That’s it. It’s time for a little angel action. You’re done!”

Lk 23:34 (ESV) And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

- 3). That is our example – yet we feel we have the right to have these little petty fights in church

- a). Ask yourself “am I being like Christ?”

- b). The only one who was absolutely pure – yet submitted himself to the Father’s will

- 1a). Don’t just react – ask yourself what is the Biblical response – what would God want

- D. David displayed this characteristic when he refused to kill King Saul in the cave near Engedi

- 1). From a human standpoint he had every right to end Saul’s life – innocent yet chased mercilessly

- a). Why? Because Saul was proud – couldn’t handle David taking the spot light

- b). David was meek – Therefore he was more concerned with God’s will then vengeance

Transition: Let’s look at some balance here

3. Meekness (Gentleness) doesn’t mean a complete absence of anger

- A. It is just an anger directed correctly – when God’s Word or name is maligned
- 1). Jesus cleansed the temple – driving out the offenders
 - a). I like what Chuck Smith said “Gentle Jesus meek and mild – NO – Jesus Mafia”
- B. Paul says it’s possible to be angry but not sin in Eph. 4:26 – it just has to be the right anger
- 1). The meek person isn’t vengeful – they don’t get even when others offend *them*
 - 2). But they do get angry when others are hurt – treated unjustly
 - a). I see those girls on the streets on Friday night – dressed in negligees I think God gets angry and I think its not improper for us to be angry – to do something about it
 - 3). What I see in Scripture – when the offense is against us – we don’t retaliate
 - a). We don’t go around speaking against those we feel have slighted us
 - b). We don’t try to get even – because “Who do they think they are”
 - 1a). We entrust ourselves into the hands of God – seek to learn from the situation
 - 2a). I’ve discovered when I get angry at others – God’s usually try to teach me something
There is something in my character he is trying to get at
 - 3a). Jesus didn’t seek revenge – he handed the situation over to the Father – trusting him
 - 4). But there are times to be angry – when God is maligned and others are being hurt

Thought: This will take being sensitive to the Spirit – how to act when

- A. Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit which grows in life submitted to the Spirit
Haven’t you notice – when you are walking in the Spirit – your anger is under control
- 1). In relationships – he’s like the oil that keeps the friction down – stops it from heating up

Humility – Gentleness (Meekness)

The third attitude that characterizes the worth walk

PATIENCE

1. Literally means to be “Long-tempered”

- A. The patient person endures negative circumstances without giving into despair - bitterness

2. It is a patience (long suffering) with God’s way and timing

- A. Have you noticed that God doesn’t move as quickly as you want him too? Or in ways you want him too
- B. James tells us that the OT prophets were great examples of patience

What James says: Jas 5:10 (ESV) As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

- 1). Jer. 1:5-19 - God calls Jeremiah to proclaim his message
 - a). Then said he would be hated – abused - persecuted
 - b). Yet Jeremiah had long-suffering – He never gave up – kept serving faithfully
 - 1a). Even though he never saw a convert
 - c). We learn from Jeremiah – success in God’s eyes is simply being faithful - plodding
 - 1a). He was rewarded as much as the prophets who had many converts
- 2). Isaiah was called to proclaim God’s message in Isaiah 6
 - a). Then was told that the nation wouldn’t listen to him or turn from their sin
 - 1a). Yet he preached faithfully – with so little fruit
- 3). Abraham was told he and Sarah would have a son – 25 years later they were still waiting

- a). Yet Abraham never wavered in his faith -Sarah did but he didn't
- b). He believed God and patiently waited for the fulfillment of his promise
- B. We don't serve then quit because it doesn't go the way we thought it should
 - 1). We serve because God has called us

John MacArthur: The patient saint accepts God's plan for everything, without questioning or grumbling. He does not complain when his calling seems less glamorous than someone else's or when the Lord sends him to a place that is dangerous or difficult. He remembers that God the Son left His heavenly home of love, holiness, and glory to come to earth and be hated, rejected, spat upon, and crucified—without once returning evil for evil or complaining to His Father.

- a). For some like Jeremiah and Isaiah – Abraham and Sarah – it will take patience
 - 1a). Because God has a timing that is not ours
 - 2a). He is concerned with the minister's development as much as the ministry

3. It is a patience with one another

- A. This will be impossible if we think everything is about us
 - 1). But if we are humble – and just THINK about what has happened to us
How God has forgiven us and been patient with us – then it becomes easier
- B. How can I be impatient, judgmental, critical with you
 - 1). When God hasn't been that way with me
Through my failures I have forced him to be very long-suffering

Thought: Since patience is a fruit of the Spirit – it is an indicator of how Spirit-filled you are

- A. This fruit – Christlikeness – grows naturally when we are surrendered to the Spirit's leading
- B. I hear older Christians who get cranky – excuse it – I'm just getting old!
 - 1). True – and if you're walking with the Lord you should be getting better not crankier
You should be becoming more and more like him
Pr 4:18 (ESV) But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.
 - 2). Older Saints should be bringing more glory to God than the younger ones

Humility – Gentleness - Patience

The fourth attitude that characterizes the worthy walk

BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE (STEADFAST LOVE)

1. So essential if were going to get along

- A. This is a love that is able to overlook the failures of others
1 Pe 4:8 (ESV) Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, *since love covers a multitude of sins.*

- 1). This doesn't mean we excuse sin – anything goes kind of deal
 - a). There are some sins that need to be confronted – and corrected
 - 1a). It would be those sins that hurt a church – hurt those in the church
 - 2). But most sins are temporal failures like we all have – therefore we choose to overlook them
 - a). We treat that person like we would want to be treated when we fail
Pr 10:12 (ESV) Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.
 - b). Again this is built off of how God has treated us

Col 3:12–13 (ESV) Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ⁽¹³⁾ *bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

- 1a). When I am honest with my weakness – what God must bear with me

How dare I not bear your weaknesses – that would just be hypocritical

Thought: If we're not humble, gentle, long-suffering and willing to bear one another in love

- A. We will never be able to live out the next section of walking the worthy walk
 - 1). These are the building blocks for unity – the ultimate outcome of having these is unity

UNITY

Eph 4:3 (ESV) eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

1. Eager = Be diligent – be zealous – be dedicated to unity in the church

- A. This is to be the constant concern of every believer
 - 1). Because this brings glory to Christ
 - a). I googled “Church fights” – found fist fights that went from church to the street
Covered by network news – Think God is pleased with that – Little brats!

Transition: We are united to one another by the Spirit – He has done this – produced this unity

- A. But notice we are responsible to preserve or maintain this unity

2. We are responsible for this – we are called to preserve this unity

- A. We are called to humble ourselves and forgive so we can
We are called to die to our own rights – so unity can flourish
Phil 2:3-8 (NIV) Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. (4) Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. (5) *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:* (6) Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, (7) but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. (8) And being found in appearance as a man, *he humbled himself* and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!
 - 1). To the extent we live that out – to that measure we are walking in a way that’s worthy of God’s calling
 - 2). To the extent we do this – is the measure we will be magnifying Christ to a watching world
 - a). We will be accomplishing what the world attempts and fails at
 - b). The world makes laws – signs treaties to try to have peace
 - 1a). But every treaty is broken
Is 48:22 (ESV) “There is no peace,” says the LORD, “for the wicked.”
 - 2a). As long as self is on the throne – you will lack the humility – gentleness – patience and love that true peace is built upon
 - 3a). Therefore when we are united – when we love each other - our difference shines
AND THAT will open the door to the Gospel

3. The application – Let’s get practical for a moment

- A. These truths should be directing our choices – if we call ourselves Christians this is how we are to act
 - 1). Somebody does something against you – you can choose bitterness
 - a). And you will shrink and shrivel and fail to bring glory to God
 - 2). Or you can choose Christlikeness – I choose to honor God by responding humbly – gently – patiently – lovingly
 - a). I choose to forfeit my precious little rights for the sake of unity and God’s glory
- B. This is the way the Christian is to live in every situation
 - 1). We don’t just react – we stop – what is the Biblical response
What is the response that would bring God glory

Transition: Paul now points out the incredible unity that is built into Christianity

- A. We could not have more in common – more to be united over

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- 1). Here Paul shows us how we are united through the Spirit, the Son, and the Father
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III. THE CAUSE OF UNITY

Eph 4:4–6 (ESV) There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁽⁵⁾ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁽⁶⁾ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Unity in the Spirit

Eph 4:4 (ESV) There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—

1. We are all part of the same body

A. We may be black, white, Hispanic, Asian, or Middle Eastern

- 1). But superseding all of that is the truth that we are Christians – brother and sisters in Him

2. We all have the same Spirit residing in us

A. Therefore we are all being pointed in the same direction – to fulfill the purposes of God

3. We all have the same hope we've been called to

A. We are all rejoicing in the same hope – we are fellow pilgrims on the same journey

- 1). Heading towards glory where we will live together for all of eternity
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Unity in the Son

Eph 4:5 (ESV) one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

1. We all have the same Lord

A. We are all living to bring him glory in everything we do

- 1). One of the primary ways we do that is by loving each other – a distinction of our Christianity

Jn 13:35 (ESV) By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

2. We all have the same faith

A. This is not the act of faith that saves us – this is the body of revealed truth found in the word

- 1). We all are submitting to one Lord who leads us through one truth

B. If we'd all just say the Bible is my authority – I will follow it's teaching – unity wouldn't be a problem

3. We all have been baptized with the same baptism

A. Water baptism – where the believer publicly confesses Christ as their Lord and Savior

- 1). We've all proclaimed to one another and the watching world

That we are leaving the old life behind to follow Christ as our Lord

Point: We all love the same Lord – have the Same Spirit in us directing all that we are towards him

A. We all have the same purposes

B. We have all declared to the world we have left our old ways behind to follow him

Unity in the Father

Eph 4:6 (ESV) one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

1. We have the same Heavenly Father

A. The one who is over all – sovereignty – absolute ruler

The one who is through all – omnipotent – all powerful

The one who is in all – omnipresent – all present

Point: Our oneness couldn't be more complete

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- A. In the NT writers minds the idea of division made no sense when there is so much to unite over
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CONCLUSION

1. Application is obvious – how are you doing with unity?

- A. See how that links to God's glory and walking in Christlikeness – walking worthy of you call