

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. Paul has told us who we are in Christ

- A. We have been chosen by God and given spiritual life even when we were dead in sin
- B. We have been adopted, brought into God’s own family and made citizens of heaven
- C. We’ve been redeemed and forgiven
- D. We have been given incredible purpose –brought into his divine plan
- E. We have been given the Holy Spirit as a down payment guaranteeing we will be with our Lord in glory
- F. We have a power that is holding us – to get us there – the same power that raised Christ from the grave
- G. We have been told how God wants to bless us now before we get into glory
 - 1). He wants us to experience his love that is so great it’s beyond human understanding
But because the Spirit is involved we can grow in that experience and understanding
 - 2). He wants us to know what it is like to walk through this earth filled with him
- H. And this is all by grace – unmerited favor
 - 1). It is not based on our merit but on Christ’s – not our perfection but his

Eph 2:8–9 (ESV) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁽⁹⁾ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

2. He transitions now to the reasonable response to this kind of kindness

Eph 4:1 (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,

- A. What have we said about the word “Therefore?” – always ask what it’s there for
 - 1). It is always a bridge word that connects back to what went before
Therefore – since you are recipients of this incredible divine blessing
It is reasonable that your life would reflect what you’ve become
It is reasonable to want to bring glory to the one who has been so gracious to you
- B. Watch how Paul works this out in Romans 12

Rom 12:1 (NIV) Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

 - 1). Chapter after chapter of incredible theology regarding the sinners salvation and security
 - 2). Finally “Therefore” in view of the great mercy God has shown you in your salvation
It is reasonable that you would commit your life entirely to him
 - a). Then notice – This is your spiritual act of worship
 - b). Our life is to become an act of worship to our Savior who has been so kind
 - 1a). Our surrender is born out of devotion not drudgery

Reminder: Some thoughts on why right doctrine is necessary to understand

- A. Right doctrine is essential to holy living

John R. W. Stott: The secret of holy living is in the mind.
Erwin W. Lutzer: The difference between worldliness and godliness is a renewed mind.

 - 1). Do you think you can overcome the constant pressure of this world to compromise?
Stand against the relentless attacks of the devil who wants to devour you with emotions?
 - a). You will crumble under the weight – you will give into sin
You will live in indifference and apathy = always the result of conceding to the flesh
 - 2). The truth accurately understood will give you the strength to stand in purity - holiness

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- a). Why Paul spends so much time on it before the call to live the Christian life out
 - B. Right doctrine is essential for you to enjoy access to God
 - 1). There are some days I wake up so filled with joy – Good morning Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit!
 - a). I can't wait to pray – fellowship with God - awesome
 - 2). There are some days I wake up and I don't feel saved at all
 - a). I haven't sinned – I don't know what's wrong – There's a black cloud hanging over me
 - 1a). I don't feel like I can go to God – I don't know why – but I feel I can't
 - 3). I must preach the gospel to myself – truth opens the door to God's presence

“Father it doesn't matter how I feel right now. I come to you on the basis of your son's perfection. I thank you that I am accepted in him. I thank you that I am righteous in him. I thank you that he has gained access to you for me. So, Father I come to you, knowing you accept me. I come to you knowing that your Son has opened this door for me. Thank you.”

 - a). As I preach the gospel to myself my spirit begins to lift – I enter God's presence joyfully
 - C. Right doctrine is essential to prepare you for death
 - 1). I have seen it again and again – the attack while on the death bed
 - a). Satan bringing up every sin – every failure – you think YOU will get into heaven
 - 2). I've watched the most wonderful saints struggle – be terrorized
 - a). They were trying to convince themselves emotionally they were fine
 - b). The way to stand is doctrine

“Satan my trial took place 2000 years ago on a wooden cross on a Judean hill. My Savior bore my sin and paid my penalty. My record of transgressions. All those things you have reminded me of were blotted out of the book. There is nothing left. There is now no condemnation for me because I'm in Christ.

Satan you are so right when you say I have sinned. I will admit I have done every one of those things. But I'm not accepted because I am perfect, I am accepted because my Lord is perfect. God has nothing against me now. I have been declared to be “Not guilty.” I stand before God clothed in Christ's righteousness. Jude 24 says that Christ will present me to the Father holy and without blame. So clear off! Case closed”
 - 3). I am reminded of Richard – dying of lung cancer – terrorized by the devil
 - a). Got a call from the hospital – Richard needs to see you
 - b). I listened – then said “Richard let's go back through our theology....
 - 1a). What happened to all of your sin? Jesus paid for it
 - 2a). What is left on the books? Nothing
 - 3a). How do you stand before God? Clothed in Christ righteousness
 - 4a). What does justification mean? I've been declared to be not guilty
 - c). We had a mini- theology class in that hospital room
 - 1a). I saw truth defeat lies – a look of peace came over his face

He said “You can go now. I'm fine” – He died shortly after in victory
- Transition:** So Paul has given them great doctrine – based on what God has done
- A. Now calls them to walk worthy of that kindness and mercy – live a life that yields to him
 - B. Let's dig in and see what God is calling us to through the pen of Paul
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I. PAUL A PRISONER OF THE LORD

Eph 4:1 (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,

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord”

1. Why does Paul bring this up? I think it's to remove any objections

- A. To those who will hesitate to live out the Christian life because of what it might cost
"Paul do you understand the repercussions of what you're calling us too?"
- B. So Paul prefaces his instruction by saying "I know the cost. I'm in chains because of it"
"I am not asking you to do anything I am not willing to do myself"
"I am not asking you to take risks when I'm not taking any"
- C. But Paul was the living proof that surrender to Christ is always worth it
 - 1). He was in chains and he was blessed – he was enjoying Christ
 - a). He was experiencing all those blessings of Ephesians chapter 3
 - b). Christ was manifesting himself and his love to him
 - c). He was enjoying the fullness of God
 - 2). His life showed that even prison and chains were not strong enough to ruin the believers joy
 - a). No matter what consequences are brought into your life for living for Christ
The joy – peace – satisfaction of walking with God was greater
 - a). Paul was that contented sheep lying in green pastures in that prison cell
- D. So Paul do you know what this is going to cost? – Yes I do
 - 1). But knowing God in a personal, intimate way – walking in his presence
Having his touch upon your life is more than worth any cost there is

"I therefore, urge you"

1. Urge in the Greek = a strong, intense pleading

Question: Why was he so intense about this?

- A. For God's glory
 - 1). Paul wanted his readers to bring God glory with their life
See this in: 1 Co 10:31 (ESV) So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
- B. For their own joy and satisfaction
 - 1). To live for God's glory is the life that also brings the greatest joy
 - 2). You'll never truly enjoy your Christianity if your trying to cling to God and your own ways

Transition: What is Paul urging them to do?

...to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

1. Walk – refers to daily conduct – day-by-day living

- A. This is the theme of the last three chapters

2. Worthy – in the original refers to balancing the scales

- A. What is on one side of the scale should be equal in weight to what is on the other side
 - 1). A person worthy of his pay was one whose day's work corresponded to his day's wages.
- B. Here the believer who walks *in a manner worthy of the calling with which he has been called* is one whose daily living corresponds to his high position as a child of God
 - 1). His practical living matches his spiritual position.

3. The calling with which we've been called

- A. It would be that divine, sovereign call of God to salvation
1 Th 2:12 (ESV) we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you *to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.*

- B. It is also a call to holiness

2 Tim 1:8-9 (NIV) So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, (9) *who has saved us and called us to a holy life*

- 1). This call to holiness is a call out of the world

2 Cor 6:15-17 (NIV) What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? (16) What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." (17) *"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."*

Point: This calling calls us to God in salvation and out of the world in sanctification

Transition: So Paul urges us to live a different way – in verse 2 he moves into specifics

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORTHY WALK

Eph 4:1-3 (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.

Humility

1. He begins with humility because it is a foundational characteristic

- A. Humility is where everything starts in our growth in grace

John Flavel: When God intends to fill a soul, he first makes it empty. When he intends to enrich a soul, he first makes it poor. When he intends to exalt a soul, he first makes it sensible to its own miseries, wants and nothingness.

2. Humility is the opposite of pride

- A. The proud think lofty thoughts about themselves

- 1). They expend so much energy trying to tell others how great they are
a). Directing every conversation to their achievements – who they are

- B. Not all pride is wrong – there is a healthy pride

John C. Maxwell: There are two kinds of pride, both good and bad. 'Good pride' represents our dignity and self-respect. 'Bad pride' is the deadly sin of superiority that reeks of conceit and arrogance.

- 1). Nothing wrong with having pride about your work – that drives you to excellence
2). But there is something wrong when you have to shove yourself into the middle of everything
When everything becomes about you – when you are so concerned with exalting yourself

- C. Pride and joy cannot co-exist – to many things steal the joy of the proud

- 1). The proud cannot see God the source of joy – they are too busy looking at themselves

C. S. Lewis: A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down you can't see something that is above you.

- 2). The proud cannot learn the truths of God that bring joy

- a). In John 9 Jesus heals a blind man - Pharisees of course freak out – it was the sabbath
1a). These religious – legalistic hypocrites have no joy that a blind man can see
They are too upset because their little traditions were not kept

- b). The man who was healed tries to tell them that Jesus must have come from God

Listen to the pride: John 9:34 (NIV) To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

- 1a). Arrogance shuts off learning – "YOU tell me anything! Right!" - right after a miracle

- 2a). There is no room for God in a man or woman who are full of themselves

- 3). Others success steals a proud person – they can't stand to hear another praised

- a). The humble want to help others succeed – the proud want to see them fail
 - 1a). Anything to exalt themselves – even the falling of another
- 4). The proud will suffer the agony of defeat

Prov 16:18 (NIV) Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

- D. One of the scariest scriptures in the Bible – showing how there cannot be joy for the proud

Jas 4:6 (ESV) “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

- 1). The proud live with God against them! They are resisted by God himself!
- 2). That is what Nebuchadnezzar discovered – He’s striding around Babylon “Look what I’ve done”
 - a). God humbled him big time – Bovine boy – eating grass in the fields for 7 years

His words after his recovery: Da 4:37 (ESV) Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; *and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.*

- 1a). I guess – it is a frightening thing to have God against you

Mt 23:12 (ESV) Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Transition: I suggest we be praying about this – asking the Lord to point out areas of pride

- A. And enable us to put this monster to death – to replace it with humility
 - 1). So that God himself is not opposing us but rather blessing – helping – lifting up

3. Humility defined

- A. NOT going around down cast - bad mouthing self – I’m nothing – can’t do nothing – lousy at everything
 - 1). That can be pride – your proud of how humble you sound – it’s play acting

- B. My favorite definition of pride

William Temple: Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people, nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. *It means freedom from thinking about yourself at all.*

- C. Humility is being so caught up in Christ and his majesty we fade into background in our own mind

- 1). We don’t go around demeaning ourselves – we’re too busy exalting him
- 2). We’re no longer at the center of everything – He is!
- 3). We are concerned about his glory and not our own

Jn 3:30 (ESV) He must increase, but I must decrease.”

- D. Here’s humility – it’s all about God

Col 3:17 (ESV) And whatever you do, in word or deed, *do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Transition: It’s always good to flesh this out – see somebody living it

5. Example of John the Baptist

- A. John was enjoying incredible popularity

Mt 3:5 (ESV) Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him,

- 1). Let’s see how he conducts himself

Jn 1:19–22 (ESV) And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ⁽²⁰⁾ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ⁽²¹⁾ And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” ⁽²²⁾ So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

- A. Know what he could have said?

"You want to know who I am - FINE - I am the son of Zacchaeus the priest, born through a miraculous intervention by God. I've been filled with the Spirit since birth, I am a prophet raised up by God and sent to Israel to proclaim the coming Messiah. That's who I am! Oh and by the way, who are you?"

- 1). He could have said that but didn't - that would have brought the attention back upon him

Jn 1:23 (ESV) He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

- A. He says – you need something to tell them about me – *I am just a voice pointing people to another!*

- 1). No interested in celebrity – a voice can't even be seen
- 2). He didn't want to talk about himself – his achievement – he wanted to talk about Christ

- B. I'm just a construction worker who is making the paths straight for the Lord

- 1). Something they'd do for kings – Pharaohs – when they would visit
 - a). They'd fill in all the potholes – make the way straight
 - b). I worked as a road worker – we filled potholes – never had a group stop and look
"Oh it's a roadworker – must be nice!" No! I was no big deal at all
- 2). John is saying "I'm not the big deal here – I'm not going to waste my time talking about me
 - a). I'm just a voice proclaiming the greatness of another
 - b). I'm just a road worker preparing the ground for one who is following me

Jn 1:25 (ESV) They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

- A. If you're a nobody – why are you doing something so important?

Jn 1:26–27 (ESV) John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ⁽²⁷⁾ even he who comes after me, *the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.*"

- A. We'd be "Speaking of baptizing – know how many I baptized last month!" We'd be all over that

- 1). But John chooses to identify himself with the lowest position possible in the peoples thinking

- B. Two traditions concerning the sandal thong give us insight into John's thinking

- 1). They wore sandals – walking all day on dusty paths – feet would sweat, get caked with dirt
 - a). Customary when entering a house – first courtesy offered was wash feet of guest
 - b). Was considered to be so degrading was assigned to lowest slave in the house
- 2). There was also a custom between students and Rabbi's
 - a). To help the Rabbi have more time in the books and with the students
The students would help take care of some of the more menial chores
 - b). But an interesting regulation was discovered which read
"Every service which a slave performs for his master shall a disciple do for his teacher,
EXCEPT the loosing of his sandal-thong"
 - 1a). The one thing considered to degrading to expect any student to do

Point: John picks up this duty and makes a powerful point with it

- A. Why spend time talking about me (the lowest of slaves) when Jesus is on the scene

- 1). Compared to His greatness I'm not even worthy to untie His sandal

- B. That's humility – refuses to put us in center of everything – points to Christ – brings great blessing

Mt 23:12 (ESV) Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Transition: So how do we get there? This beautiful virtue of humility that brings so much blessing into our life

HOW DO WE GET THIS HUMILITY?

How Phyllis Diller got there: You know what keeps me humble? Mirrors!

1. A better way: Go to the Bible with a thirst to seek out what Jesus Christ was like

- A. He was the prototype Christian – the model – the example

- 1). See how holy – loving – perfect he was

Then measure yourself against the true standard – see how you stack up

- 2). See what is left to be proud about

Sinclair Ferguson: Humility is not simply feeling small and useless -- like an inferiority complex. It is sensing how great and glorious God is, and seeing myself in that light.

- a). We don't want a false humility – we just want to be rightly put in our place
 b). This is who we are – this is how far short we fall

Thought: Now please get this – we don't do this to get depressed – to ruin ourselves

- A. We see it – it removes any bragging boasting – self-exaltation
 B. Then we turn to the truth that we are God's children – totally accepted because of his perfection
 "Okay. I see who I really am. I have nothing to boast about. Great! Now I can stop wasting my time thinking about me. Now I can spend my time thinking about him and talking about him!"
Thomas Watson "The poor in Spirit are divorced from themselves"
 C. As soon as those divorce papers are signed – the blessings will start to flow
 1). Now you'll be open to hear from God and go his way
 2). Now you'll find his grace flooding into your life
 3). Now he can begin to exalt you – start to give you success rather than oppose you
 a). Now you're freed up from the weight of you
 It's hard to carry your ego – one of the greatest freedoms is freedom from self
 b). Now it's freedom NOT TO REACT at every slight – so what!

2. This is going to take the Spirit's power – pride doesn't die easily

- A. Why Paul prayed this before he said this (No chapter breaks – flow of thought)
Eph 3:16 (ESV) that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
 1). Our flesh loves to be exalted
 2). The devil wants us to exalt ourselves – it stops God's work in our life

Transition: Hopefully you see why you want to do this.

- A. Let's turn to communion – see one who truly did humble himself

COMMUNION

Phil 2:5-11 (NIV) 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! (9) Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, (10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1. We have our whole study in that passage

- A. Jesus Christ humbled himself – lived for God's glory – put the Father at the center
 1). What happened – he was exalted

2. Jesus Christ came to earth – what a step down – what a humbling

- A. He could have held onto his position – "I'm God. Bow or die!"
 1). But he humbled himself – to do the Father's will
 2). He left glory to die on a wooden cross so we could be rescued
 B. Almighty God chose humility – chose to cast down his own glory – position

