



“Walk Worthy of the Calling to Which You Have Been Called”

Ephesians 4:1-16

Main Idea: God has called and equipped the saints to operate as one body, with Christ at the head.

As followers of Christ, we should exhibit Christ-like characteristics (4:1-3).

Paul urges the saints at Ephesus to walk worthy of the calling to which they are called. Paul then provides a description of what that should look like. First, it is important to understand what calling Paul is talking about. At first glance, we may think Paul is talking about our call to salvation: God’s invitation to repent, place our faith in him as Lord and Savior, and receive eternal life through his sacrifice on the cross for our sins. However, we know from Ephesians 2:8 that “by grace you have been saved through faith...; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no man may boast.” Based on Ephesians 2:8, it is apparent that we cannot be worthy of salvation. It is the gift of God to those who receive him. Paul is urging the saints (those of us who have put our faith in Jesus Christ and are now members of the family of God) to look like it! In Paul’s second letter to the church of Corinth, Paul writes “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; all things become new.” We are new creatures in Christ! We are no longer of this world! The characteristics that Paul describes are not characteristics that we are born with. Rather, they are characteristics that we develop as we mature in our Christian walk. These are characteristics that we are only capable of exhibiting through the Holy Spirit living in us.

1. Read and discuss each characteristic that Paul describes. Is it “natural” to display these characteristics? Is it possible to display these characteristics?
2. If so, how? What does “eager to maintain unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” mean? How can we all be different and yet maintain unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?

There is only one body and one Spirit (4:4-6).

There is one body. Those of us who have put our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior are members of that one body. We are the saints of God, and we jointly represent the body of Christ. Just as there is only one body, there is only one Spirit, Jesus Christ our Lord! Paul reminds the saints that there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. The church of Ephesus was subject to the same temptations and deceptions in Paul’s day that we are: false teachings; the belief that there is more than one way to heaven; the belief that truth is what you make it to be; and the belief that there are no absolute truths. Lord forbid! Jesus said “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one shall come to the Father except by me” (John 14:6).

1. Did you know that we Christians represent the one body of Christ? Based on Scripture, what does that mean? Should that realization affect the manner in which we interact with other members of the body of Christ? With non-believers?
2. What is the one hope that belongs to our call? Is there anyone you can share that hope with this week?

Grace was given to us according to the measure of Christ's gift (4:7-10).

In God's infinite wisdom, he has given each of us gifts, and these gifts help us to operate as the body of Christ that God intended, exhibiting the godly characteristics that Paul described in verses 2 and 3. Paul quotes Psalm 68, which states "when he ascended on high He led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." Paul then reminds the church that Christ not only ascended into heaven, but first came to earth in the form of man, subjecting himself to the same temptations and sins that we are, yet remaining blameless. Christ ascended into heaven, but first he bled, he suffered, and was crucified on a cross on our behalf. Praise be to God!

1. What host of captives did Christ lead away when he ascended into heaven? Reference scripture with your answer.
2. What gifts has Christ given to us? Reference scripture with your answer.
3. What does it mean "that he might fill all things?"

Christ gave leaders to the church to equip the saints for the work of ministry (4:11-14).

In verses 11-14, Paul describes gifts that were not given to us individually, but rather were given to the body of Christ. He gave us our church leaders to equip the saints (those of us who have put our faith in Jesus Christ) for the work for the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all obtain unity, knowledge, maturity, and fullness of Christ. Why? Why is it so important that we allow our shepherds (also properly translated as pastors) and teachers to help us "attain" these qualities? Paul tells us that it is so we may "no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine due to human cunning and craftiness in deceitful schemes." Ultimately, our church leaders help us to "walk worthy of the calling to which we are called" as Paul describes in verses 2-3.

1. Do you think of our church leaders as gifts from God?
2. Look over the spiritual qualities referenced in verses 12 and 13. Are you
3. allowing our church leadership to help develop these qualities in your life? How?
4. Discuss how we as the body of Christ can more effectively allow the gift of our church leaders to mature our walk with God.

We are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ. (4:15-16)

Paul begins verse 15 with the word "rather." Rather what? Rather than being as children, we are to speak the truth in love that we may grow in every way in Christ. The manner and motivation by which we speak truth to each other is important. The truth, delivered in love, promotes positive change and growth in the Lord. Conversely, the truth delivered in the absence of love is likely to fall on deaf ears. Paul ends his edification to the church in verse 16 by drawing an analogy between the human body and the body of Christ. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 12:20 "there are many parts, but one body." When each part is working properly, the whole body (the church) builds itself up in love. Praise God for giving us the gifts necessary to operate as one body, with Christ at the head.

1. Do you ever speak the truth in a manner other than love? Discuss.
2. Are all the parts of the body of Christ important? Discuss.
3. Pray for each other today, that we may help each other individually and as the body of Christ to walk “worthy of the calling to which we have been called.”