



# Walking Together

Ephesians 4:1-10

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIRST THOUGHTS .....	2
EXPLORE THE TEXT .....	2
WALKING WORTHY .....	2
LIVING UNIFIED .....	3
ENJOYING VICTORY .....	4
SUMMARIZE & CHALLENGE .....	5
PERSONAL CHALLENGE .....	5
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	6

## FIRST THOUGHTS

It does not take one long to look at our culture and realize that we live in a very divided culture. Left vs right, liberal vs conservative, rich vs poor, and Islam vs Christianity. It seems that the nation is about to come apart at the seams. There is even division in the church today that has caused it to lose its effectiveness.

As divided as our nation seems, it is not unlike the what the church at Ephesus would have experienced. There was division and conflict in the time that Paul was writing. Jew vs Christian, rich vs poor, pagan vs Christian. The believers that Paul wrote to were in conflict with their culture and each other.

Paul began his mission in Ephesus by speaking for three months in a synagogue ([Acts 19:8](#)). However, he experienced tremendous opposition from those Jews and ended up preaching in a lecture hall nearby ([Acts 19:9](#)). Some of the recent converts in Ephesus were Jews, so how was Paul supposed to foster unity with the new church?

In the first three chapters of Ephesus, Paul had enumerated the blessings that were theirs in Christ because of God's gracious offer of salvation. To begin the next half of the letter, he emphasized the unity that was there through the Spirit and His presence in the church. Unity could rise out of diverse backgrounds to bring even more glory to God.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### WALKING WORTHY

[Ephesians 4:1–3](#) (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,* <sup>2</sup> *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,* <sup>3</sup> *eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

#### **Why does walking worthy require walking together?**

Paul's drawing attention to his physical presence in prison bore a double meaning. He was in a real prison. But he would have considered himself a prisoner of the Lord even if he had been living in freedom. In other letters he called himself a bond servant of Christ. Paul was willing to give up his freedom to follow Christ. He is calling us to do the same.

After God calls us to be his children, and in response to that unspeakable gift, we should endeavor to do everything in our power to live lives that are worthy of our calling. Paul says we are to walk worthy of our calling with all humility (*see ourselves as God see us*), gentleness (*power under control*) and patience (*waiting on God*). This will require us to show tolerance to one another in love. It is the duty of every believer to work to persevere the unity of the church.

We are to "walk", live our lives in a manner that tells ours that we have been called by God to be His children. This will be demonstrated through our humility, gentleness and patience with others. This can happen if we

are committed to peace with one another and are operating in the power of the Holy Spirit, we are then held together in unity.

## LIVING UNIFIED

Ephesians 4:4–6 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup> *There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—* <sup>5</sup> *one Lord, one faith, one baptism,* <sup>6</sup> *one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

### **Why is it so important that God's people live in unity?**

Paul cites what was probably an early Christian creed. Paul points out seven "one" statements to emphasize the oneness we share in the gospel.

- **"One Body"** - refers to the total number of believers from Pentecost to the Rapture. Believers may meet in many places, speak different languages, and live in different cultures. None of this separates them. They remain Christ's one body. Believers are diverse in background and gifting, but they are united as one body. There is no denominational, geographical, ethnic, or racial body. There is no Gentile, Jewish, male, female, slave, or freeman body. There is only Christ's body, and the unity of that body is the heart of the book of Ephesians.
- **"One Spirit"** - refers to the Holy Spirit who baptizes each believer into the body of Christ. We share a common origin in the Holy Spirit's work. The Spirit is the One who creates unity and empowers us to maintain it. The work of the Holy Spirit is to unify believers in Christ.
- **"One Hope of your calling"** - refers to the goal set before all believers. They will be taken out of this world into the presence of Christ. This is the blessed hope ([Titus 2:13](#)). Believers share a common hope in Christ. Formerly, we were "without hope" ([Eph 2:12](#)) until we were called to Christ. Now we have hope, and we must live in a manner worthy of our calling.
- **"One Lord"** - refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. His lordship over believers brings into existence the unity of the church. Believers confess and proclaim, "*Jesus Christ as Lord*" ([2 Cor 4:5](#)). When the early Christians said, "*Jesus is Lord*," they were saying, "*Caesar is not lord.*" When Jewish Christians said this, they were boldly identifying Jesus with the God of the Hebrew Scriptures ([Deut. 6:4](#)). So, this was not merely an empty creedal affirmation for early believers. This confession could cause you to lose your head.
- **"One Faith"** - refers to the body of truth called the apostles' doctrine ([Acts 2:42](#)). The crucified, resurrected Lord is the object of that faith. To confess Jesus as Lord is to express the faith of the church and to unify oneself with all members of that church. There may be many manifestations of that faith, many debates about the content of that faith, but ultimately there is only one apostolic faith which has been delivered once and for all.
- ***One Baptism*** - has reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is real baptism. Ritual baptism is by water. Water baptism is a symbol of the real baptism of the Holy Spirit by which believers are actually made one. Believers enter the baptismal waters once to confess the one faith and become

a part of the one body. This baptism identifies the believer as belonging to Christ and distinguishes the person from all who do not confess Christ. Thus, baptism is the unifying mark of believers.

- **One God and Father** - refers to God's fatherhood of believers. Since there is only one Father, He is not the Father of unbelievers. Sonship can come only through Christ. The unity of believers produces a sharp distinction between believers and unbelievers. He is Father of all who are His by regeneration.

Because we're all in this together and are all recipients of our Father's grace and kindness, there's no room to say, "We're better than they are," or, "I'm more holy than he is." Rather, there's one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. There's no room for dividing, for splintering, for saying, "We're more spiritual than you." No, we're to walk in unity.

## ENJOYING VICTORY

[Ephesians 4:7–10](#) (ESV)

*<sup>7</sup> But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup> Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high, he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." <sup>9</sup> (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

Verse 7 introduces the subject of our spiritual giftedness. In so doing the emphasis turns slightly from the church's unity to individual diversity. Each of us received a spiritual gift by the grace of God. That grace has not been apportioned equally. Rather Christ has chosen how to divide grace to each member. Each is distinct and different. All believers have spiritual gifts. Each one of us are gifted differently depending on our calling.

Each believer is given a gift so that he may function in the body of believers in a particular way. When each believer does this, the body functions. That is where we find the unity of the Spirit. Along with the gift it says every one of us is given grace to exercise that gift in the power and fullness of the Spirit of God. When each believer functions in his peculiar gift, it produces a harmony, as does each member of the human body. However, when one member of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. This means that if you do not exercise your gift in the body, you throw the whole church all out of tune.

Paul at this point leads on to a new thought. '*The measure of Christ's gift*' is that of the ascended Lord who in the days of his flesh promised such abundant bestowal when he returned to the Father's presence ([John 14:12–14](#)).

Jewish Rabbis interpreted [Psalm 68](#) in light of Moses' ascent of Mount Sinai to receive the law. Paul applied [Psalm 68](#) to the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Jesus first descended to the lower parts of the earth. This is a reference to His incarnation, when the Word became flesh and dwelt among men ([John 1:14](#)). After living a perfect life but dying a sinner's death, Christ ascended to heaven in victory. This verse is a reminder that Christ came all the way down to earth ([Phil. 2:5–8](#)) and ascended all the way back to heaven ([Phil. 2:9–11](#)). The victory of the unified church was accomplished not through human means but through the

obedience of Jesus to His Father. Jesus ascended into heaven to send the Holy Spirit who would fill all the believers, uniting them together in Christ.

## SUMMARIZE & CHALLENGE

### ***How can believers walk worthy of their calling?***

- The call to follow Christ is a call to walk together with other believers in loving relationships. Our attitudes and actions should reflect the excellency of that calling.
- We can walk together because we have so many fundamentals in common—the same Lord, Spirit, and Father.
- Focus on what we have in Christ (all the spiritual blessings Paul enumerated) rather than what irritates or angers us in other Christians.

## PERSONAL CHALLENGE

If the unity and peace of our church were dependent upon your attitudes and behavior, how much unity and peace would we have? What steps will you take this week to walk together in unity with Christ's body?

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