

LET US WALK IN UNITY!

Part 1: Ephesians 4:1-6

Ephesians 4:1-6 begins the practical section of this epistle which discusses the godly conduct that should characterize the life of a Christian and of the local church. Throughout chapters 4 to 6, Paul repeatedly uses the imperative verb “walk” as he exhorts the church to live a life of godliness. Paul implores believers to walk in unity (4:1-16); in holiness (4:17-32); in love (5:1-6); in light (5:7-14); and in wisdom (5:15-6:9). As we reflect on Paul’s opening exhortation, we will consider the first two ways by which we as a church must walk and live together in unity.

1. We must live a life _____.

With a pastor’s heart, Paul urges his readers to “*walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which they have been called*” (Eph. 4:1). The term walk pertains to the believer’s whole manner of life. Our Christian walk signifies our Christian conduct. Paul implores us to live a life worthy of or suitable to our calling. This calling refers to God’s sovereign and gracious call to salvation (John 6:44; 15:16; Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:4). Our manner of living must correspond to our high and lofty calling in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Living a life worthy of our calling entails demonstrating change and growth in our character and increasing maturity in our attitudes and behaviors that prove the reality of our salvation (Eph. 4:22-24).

2. We must manifest _____ to the family of God.

After issuing the general exhortation to live a life worthy of God’s call, Paul identifies the specific virtues that must characterize our Christian walk. Paul includes humility, gentleness, patience and forbearance in his list of qualities which are all attributes of Christian love (Eph. 4:2; 3:17; Col. 3:14). Living our calling in Christ means loving the family of God. Walking together in unity entails loving our church family. Christian love which produces unity begins with humility. Humility is not only essential to Christian salvation (Matt. 18:3-4; Psalm 149:4). Humility is also essential to church unity. When humility permeates our hearts, our church will enjoy a life of harmony. But when sinful pride dominates our hearts, even a petty disagreement could disrupt our unity (Prov. 13:10; Phil. 2:3). When Paul calls us to a life of humility, he summons us to be like the Lord Jesus (Phil. 2:5-8). Jesus is the perfect embodiment of humility and lowliness of mind. Because of Jesus’ humility, we are united to God and enjoy saving peace with Him. Our conflict with God has ended because Jesus humbled Himself. Our conflict with others will also end when we begin to humble ourselves. The biblical solution to every relational conflict is Christlike humility.

Loving the family of God also involves the virtues of gentleness, patience and forbearance (Eph. 4:2). Gentleness is the heart attitude that refuses to insist on one’s personal rights. It is the direct opposite of self-assertiveness (Matt. 26:51-53). Christlike gentleness consists in being tender, calm, gracious and kind in the midst of opposition, criticism and every mistreatment (1 Pet. 3:8-9). Patience means enduring annoyances, grievances and offenses over a long period of time without anger or frustration. Patience then is best displayed by bearing with one another in love. In order to walk and live together in unity, we must never give up on our fellow believers who cause us problems and pains. Instead, we must love and honor them just as our God in Christ treats them with so much love and grace (Matt. 5:46-47; Psalm 103:8-11).
