

Ephesians, Part 7

The second half of the letter to the Ephesians emphasizes the Christian's walk. In the first half of the epistle, we were shown the glorious grace of God and what the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished in us. Now we are called to live a life worthy of the calling we have received that will bring glory to God in the church.

The Christian life is compared to a walk because it starts with a step of faith, involves progress, balance and strength.

We are told how to walk or live...

- Ephesians 4:1 ...worthy of your calling
- Ephesians 4:17 ... not like the world
- Ephesians 5:2 ... in love
- Ephesians 5:8 ... as children of light
- Ephesians 5:15 ... be careful

Hebrews 12:1-2 tells us to “throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us **run with perseverance the race marked out for us.**”

Ephesians 6:11 NIV84 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

A progression of spiritual growth is shown by the words walk, run, stand. If we do not learn to walk, we will never be able to run or stand in the battle against the adversary.

Practical Christian living (4:1–16)

Ephesians 4:1 NKJV I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

Walk worthy of your calling, (v. 1)

Paul described this high calling or position into which we have been lifted by grace in chapters 1–3. These instructions for how we are to walk are very practical. The vast riches of Christ and our participation in them have been revealed to us and show our position in Christ. Through Jesus Christ, God provided perfect righteousness, a Substitute to bear our punishment, deliverance from death, a new life full of love, joy, peace, and power in the Holy Spirit, and absolute assurance. God could do no more for us than what He has done.

Now we are to walk or live worthy of our calling.

How can the believer walk worthy? What must we do to walk worthy of God's great calling so that we bring honor to the name of Christ and His church? This deals with practical Christian living. How does our position in Christ work

itself out in our lives? How does Christ help us deal with the trials, problems, difficulties, and sufferings of day to day living?

Our daily WALK is the subject of the remainder of Ephesians.

- Ephesians 4:1-6 — worthy of our calling
- Ephesians 4:7-16 — by using His gifts
- Ephesians 4:17-24 — differently from the Gentiles
- Ephesians 4:25-32 — put off the garments of the old man
- Ephesians 5:1-7 — following God
- Ephesians 5:8-14 — as a child of Light
- Ephesians 5:15-21 — carefully
- Ephesians 5:22-33 — in submission and love
- Ephesians 6:1-9 — under God's authority
- Ephesians 6:10-18 — covered with the armor of God

Ephesians 4:2 NIV84 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Remember that we all have been made partakers of Christ and the things that have divided and separated us have been removed.

Note Christ's prayer about this subject:

John 17:20–23 NET I am not praying only on their behalf, but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their testimony, that they will all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. I pray that they will be in us, so that the glory you gave to me I have given to them, that they may be one just as we are one— I in them and you in me—that they may be completely one, so that the world will know that you sent me, and you have loved them just as you have loved me.

Notice how Christ includes us in the same fellowship with the Father as He enjoys.

Since we have been called into one body, we should seek to walk in unity.

We are to walk worthy of the calling we have from God. This calling from God is to be children of God, to serve Him, and represent Him to the world.

It is a “*high calling of God in Christ Jesus,*” (Philippians 3:14), a “*heavenly*” (Hebrews 3:1) and “*holy calling,*” (2 Timothy 1:9).

Our standing in Christ requires corresponding godly conduct.

Believers are instructed to live up to this high calling of God. We live this way because Christ has done so much for us! We are the redeemed of the Lord.

Colossians 1:10 ESV ...walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to

him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Ephesians takes us from our heavenly standing in Christ into the life that we live daily.

Part of what unifies us is the connection we share with Christ in the heavenly places. We must cultivate this unity in the church, purity in our lives, harmony in our homes, and stability against the powers of evil.

Paul does not tell us to manufacture unity, but to maintain the unity that already exists in the body.

This is not organizational uniformity or a “super church.” We have become a living organism. Notice the union and unity of the body. We have been made partakers of Christ, are members of His body, and have been connected together with other believers.

What does it mean to “WALK WORTHY?”

The word “WALK” is found seven times in Ephesians (2:2, 10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15) and it describes a person’s entire lifestyle. This worthy walk or lifestyle is consistent with Christ and the entire “Body of Christ” (the church).

Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, (4:3).

Ephesians 4:3 NIV84 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

The church was established without the division that had previously existed between Jews and Gentiles. In Christ, all prejudicial distinctions are abolished and we all are justified, redeemed and reconciled to God. As a result, everyone can be saved, has equal access to the Father, and enjoys the same promises and benefits in Christ.

The “unity of the Spirit” refers to a peaceful co-existence.

All divisiveness, differences, and prejudices are set aside, and a spirit of love, peace, and unity exists.

The grounds for this unity

Ephesians 4:4-6 NIV84 There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

There are seven reasons for our unity.

Take note of the emphasis on the word “one.”

One body – all racial, nationality, cultural, language and temperament differences are removed.

1 Corinthians 12:27 NIV Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Romans 12:5 NIV so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

- They are given a new birth - (Jn. 1:12-13; 1 Pet. 1:23).
- Made a new creature - (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).
- Given His nature – (2 Pet. 1:4).
- Given His Holy Spirit - (Jn.14:16-17; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20).
- Bear the fruit of the Spirit – (Gal. 5:22-23).
- Placed in a new body – (the body of Christ)

One Spirit – the same Holy Spirit indwells and empowers the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:19; 3:16).

Romans 8:11 NIV And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you."

One hope – The whole church has been called to one destiny.

We are to be with Christ and be like Him. Our one hope is the return of the Lord and those things He has prepared for us.

Titus 2:12-13 NIV It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

One Lord – there is only one Lord over the Church, (1 Corinthians 8:6).

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

One faith – The Christian faith is the body of doctrine that was delivered to believers, (Jude 3).

This faith is the substance of our belief and trust in Jesus Christ.

One baptism – This baptism is the act of the Holy Spirit’s bringing us into Christ’s body

1 Corinthians 12:13 NIV For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to

drink.

Galatians 3:27 NIV For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

One God – Every believer recognizes one God and Father of all the redeemed.

The relation of the Father to all believers is “He is over all and through all and in all.” (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26)

1 Timothy 2:5-6 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

These seven elements are given to unify the body of believers.

- The **one body** of believers is given life by one Spirit.
- We all share the **one hope** that comes as a result of the witness of the Spirit.
- The body is united to its **one Lord** by faith and identity with Him.
- That faith is depicted by **one baptism** by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ.
- **One God** and Father is sovereign and supreme over all.

Gifts of the Spirit for preserving unity, (4:7–11).

The unity of the body of Christ is recognized in the diversity of its members.

Ephesians 4:7 NIV84 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

Each of us have been given His grace to aid in building up the community of believers.

1 Corinthians 12:7 NIV84 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

Romans 12:6 NIV84 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

Although we are encouraged to desire spiritual gifts, all gifts and callings are of God and are a work of His grace in us. Every member is unique and has different functions, but each part of the body is assigned a purpose and is given gifts as Christ has apportioned.

Ephesians 4:8-10 NIV84 This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.” (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

Ephesians 4:8-10 has three possible meanings.

First, Christ Jesus came down to the lower parts of earth from heaven.

This is the incarnation of Christ. He became a man and was subject to the death of the cross. Lower parts of the earth may be translated our sin filled planet and the tomb from which He arose and ascended back to the Father in heaven, (v. 10).

Philippians 2:6-8 NKJV Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Second, Christ Jesus descended into Sheol or Hades.

This text may also refer to the ministry of Jesus immediately after His death and before His resurrection. Sheol or Hades is the realm of the dead. Jesus spoke of this place in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, (Luke 16:19-31). Lazarus was in paradise and the rich man was in hell in torment. These were two chambers of Hades or Sheol.

Acts 2:27 NKJV For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

Acts 2:30-31 NKJV Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, He, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.

When Christ arose out of the grave, *“He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men.”* This is the removal of Old Testament saints from Hades and delivering them into the presence of God, (Philippians 1:23). As a result of paradise being emptied, now when the Christian dies they go immediately into the presence of God, (2 Corinthians 5:6,8)

Third, Christ descended into hell, the place of torments.

This idea is supported by the Catholic, Lutheran and some other churches, but is not supported in Biblical texts. The Apostles Creed was revised in 390 A.D. by Rufinus and later in 650 A.D. to say that *“Christ descended into hell.”* They supposed that he descended into hell, wrestled with the devil, suffered torments during the three days, and defeated principalities and powers. His having the keys of hell and death is attributed to the fact that Christ descended into hell and defeated Satan and death, (Revelation 1:18). Others propose that Christ descended into hell to proclaim victory over every principality and power, and not to evangelize.

1 Peter 3:18–20 NKJV For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient...

There is no evidence here that Christ descended into the torments of hell to suffer and conquer the forces of darkness. According to Christ, He descended to Sheol (Paradise) to release the righteous dead into eternal glory through the Atonement. While on the cross, Jesus spoke to the thief who realized that He was the Christ.

Luke 23:43 NKJV And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

When Christ was resurrected, He had defeated Satan, sin, death, and the grave.

Colossians 2:14-15 tells us that Christ ‘disarmed principalities and powers, making a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in the cross.’ When Christ arose, He had victory over sin, death, and the grave. Satan was defeated through our Lord Jesus Christ.