



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

## Examining the text & our hearts:

“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 & 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 & 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 & Father of all, who is over all & through all & in all. 7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.” (Eph. 4:1-7 ESV)

### I. Look Back and Forward (Eph. 4:1a)

- A. Therefore – a look back
- B. Therefore – a look forward

### II. A Worthy Walk (Eph. 4:1b)

A. “Sit, Bow the Knee, Walk, Stand”—Progression in Ephesians

- God “*seated* us with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:4-6). Because we are seated with Christ, we can walk so as to please him (Eph. 4:1, 17 [etc.]) and we can stand against the Devil (Eph. 6:10-13). But [what] links ‘*sitting*’ with ‘*walking*’ and ‘*standing*’ is ‘*bowing the knee*’ [i.e., prayer]. It is through prayer...” [Warren W Wiersbe, *Ephesians Through Revelation*, p. 31]

B. Walk = live or lifestyle (Eph. 2:2, 10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15)

- “I...urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.” (Eph. 4:1)

- “The tense indicates the believer is to change their conduct from what it was previously.” [H. Hoehner, Eph. p. 504]

1. From a life of sin directed by the evil cosmic powers (Eph. 2:1-4)
2. To a life of God-prepared good works (Eph. 2:10)

#### C. A walk worthy of the calling

1. Worthy = balanced

– ‘Walk...worthy’ (Eph. 4:1) “...the adverb ?????? [‘worthy,’ has] an adjective meaning ‘that which *balances* scales’ & thus the exhortation to walk worthy of the calling suggests a *conduct that balances* or equals the call received.” [James R. Janke, “*An Exegetical Study of Eph. 4:1-16*,” (1993) p. 1.]

2. A life that matches what God has made us to be (Eph. 1-3 + 4-6)

#### D. Walking by God’s power & not by our own strength

#### E. In the context of the Church & Cosmic Warfare

- “The [practical part] of Ephesians [Eph. 4:17-6:20]...is prefaced by an exhortation to maintain the unity of the church (Eph. 4:1-16), & it concludes with an exhortation to put on the armor of God, since believers are engaged in a cosmic struggle (Eph. 6:10-20)...Ephesians views the [Christian’s] moral life against the horizon of *the church universal*, which is engaged in a cosmic struggle.” [Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Ethics*, p. 220]

### III. The Virtues of the Walk (Eph. 4:2-3)

- “Each...of the virtues in 4:1-3 is an instance of participation in God’s attributes.” [Todd Scaewater, *Divine Builder*, p. 19]

#### A. A multi-ethnic, racial, cultural, & social group of believers

- Inter-racial/Inter-ethnic Tensions?
- “Although Ephesians contains few explicit references to conflict between [believing] Jews & Gentiles, a good part of it highlights the author’s attempts to promote harmonious relations between the two communities. Issues of identity, concern about factors that engender strife & the need for unity figure prominently in the letter...The ethical...section of the letter exhorts readers to live out the unity made possible through Christ & to manifest it in interpersonal relations.” [C. P. DeYoung, W. C. Gafney (eds.) *Peoples’ Companion to the Bible*, p. 258]
- “A probable...situation reflecting the Jews’ continuous maintenance of religious superiority & exclusivity, and the Gentiles’ resultant disposition of rejection & inferiority seems to compel the...author to re[define] their role[s]...[to] remind...Gentile Christians of their privileges & responsibilities as equal members of the body of Christ.” [Elna Mouton “...*Functioning of Ps. 68:18 in Eph. 4:8–10?*” (Feb 2014) pp. 6, 8]
- Ephesians’ “message [is] that Christ has created...on the cross, *a new, trans-ethnic people* in the midst of whom God’s presence will dwell as it did in the [OT] physical temple...The central concern...is that this new people of God should function...as [God’s] dwelling place...The other...concerns...for unity, reconciliation, love, and purity...[are] means towards that end...”

[Believers,] Jews & Gentiles alike are called...to participate in the...spiritual temple & body of Christ. If conflict is in view...it's the...potential threat to this unity." [A. Mark Stirling, *TRANSFORMATION & GROWTH*... p. 70]

#### D. Walk with patience (Gal. 5:22)

- "A walk worthy of their call demands humility, gentleness, & patience...These words don't describe an automatic response but one that demands conscious effort [by] the believer who relies on the Spirit." [H. Hoehner, Eph., p. 508]

#### E. Bearing with one another in love

### IV. A Walk that Keeps the Unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:4-7)

#### A. Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit

##### 1. Paul's chief concern

– "Paul's main concern in Eph. 4:1-3 is not the worthy walk per se, but rather the focus of the worthy walk, to maintain the unity created by the Spirit...Since the unity of the church is grounded in God's nature [Eph. 4:4-6], each...of the virtues in Eph. 4:1-3 is an instance of participation in God's attributes." [Todd Scaewater, *Divine Builder in Psalm 68*, p. 19]

##### 2. "Keep the unity," not 'create' or 'produce' it

– "In spite of the differences between the early Christians there was a fundamental underlying unity. It was not necessarily an organizational unity, [nor,] a unity these Christians formed by themselves...*Nowhere does Paul instruct the believers to produce unity.* Instead...Paul told them to maintain the unity that was already there...The church has never been told to create unity... Human beings are unable to produce this...Where does it come from? ...It is the Holy Spirit alone who can create it." [Russell J. Sharrock, *Covenant Theology*, pp. 248-249]

– This unity "is not...a task to be achieved...but a fact, given by the Gospel, inherent in the nature of the church...guaranteed by the one Spirit who inspires it, the one Lord who governs it, the one God who is the source of its life." [George B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, p. 71]

#### B. Modeling the Trinity—included in the 'dance' of the Trinity

- "When Christians say 'God is love,' [1 Jn. 4:8, 16] they mean that 'the living, dynamic activity of love has been going on in God for ever & has created everything else'...The eternal love going on *within the Trinity is like* a complex life ...or *a dance*...personified in the Holy Spirit... 'What does it all matter?...It matters more than anything else in the world. The whole dance...of this three-Personal life [i.e., the Trinity] is to be played out in each one of us...*Each one of us has got to enter...take his place in that dance*...The dance of the divine love indicates that there is room for another dancer to join in." [C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, pp. 151-153]
- "The church's unity reflects the unity within the Trinity (Eph. 4:4-6). The unity of the church is built around the persons of the Trinity: one Spirit, one Lord, one Father." [M. H. Manser (ed.) *Complete Topical Guide to the Bible*, p.]
- "*In essentials—unity; in non-essentials—liberty; in all things—charity [love]*": Peter Meiderlin, 17th century. John Newton said the Apostle "*Paul was a 'reed' [i.e., flexible] in non-essentials; an 'iron pillar' [unyielding] in essentials.*" [Victor Knowles, *Together in Christ: More Than a Dream*, pp. 74-75]

1. One body (Eph. 1:23; 2:16; 3:5-6)

2. One Spirit (Eph. 2:18, 22)

3. One hope

– “Christians don’t have separate ‘hopes,’ but are together called to eternal life & to enjoy God forever in resurrection glory.” [ESV]

4. One Lord

– “There is a profound spiritual unity of all genuine believers who are in Christ...irrespective of denominational differences.” [ESV]

5. One faith—the essentials of the Christian faith (elements of the gospel necessary to believe for salvation)

– “One faith refers to the doctrinal truths Christians commonly confess.” [ESV] Craig Payne reports: “When I’m dealing with those who know little...about Christianity...I boil down the necessary teachings...to only 3 elements:

o Christians believe that God has revealed Himself as a Trinity, God the Father, God the Son & God the Holy Spirit, one God in three Persons.

o Christians believe God the Son became human & was named Jesus, simultaneously fully God & fully human.

o Christians believe that through the sinless life, the crucifixion, & the resurrection of Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sins & the eternal life of God is offered to all those who believe, confessing Christ as their Lord...These are the essential teachings of the Christian faith.”

[Craig Payne, *What Believers Don’t Have to Believe: The Non Essentials of the Christian Faith*, p. 21]

6. One baptism

7. One God & Father of all

– “One God & Father of all, who is above all & through all & in all.” (Eph. 4:6)

– “‘*over all...through all...in all.*’ God is omnipresent. Thus the Christian church is ‘one body’ (Eph. 4:4), wherever its separate congregations may be found throughout the world.” [ESV]

– “...the context is the Church, so...‘all’ as masculine, refers to believers. This...gives strength to the exhortation to unity to which Paul calls the believers in Ephesus...The *church is a habitation of God through the Spirit. It is his temple in which he dwells* & which is pervaded...by his presence. The preposition ???, [‘through’] therefore, [means] that [God] pervades all & abides in all. This is the climax. To be filled with God [3:19]; to be pervaded by his presence, & controlled by him, is...the summit...” [FELIX A. ALLOTEY, “...EPH 4:1-16,” U. of Ghana (2019) p. 43]

– “Many Christians forget—or at least fail to fully appreciate—that the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit work together in perfect harmony to establish our new identity as children of God... The Father is God (John 6:27; Eph. 4:4-6), the Son is God (John 1:1; Heb. 1:8) & the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4).” [C. R. Swindoll, *Insights on James...*, p 157]

– “The Trinity is an integral part of this...unity. The *one body* of believers is vitalized by one Spirit, so all believers have *one hope*. That body is united to its *one Lord* by each member’s *one act of faith*, & his/her identity with him in the *one baptism*. *One God*, the Father, is supreme over all, operative through all & resides in all. All 7 components are united in the trinity. The triune God is the centre & model for Unity.” [Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians*, pp. 520-1]

– “*This unity is not an artificial construct, forced & unnatural*. On the contrary, Paul asserts in Eph. 4:4-6 that unity is the natural outcome of the church’s oneness [organically] (‘one body’), hope (‘one hope’), belief (‘one faith’), & identity (‘one baptism’) & reflect...the oneness of the Godhead

(‘one Spirit’, ‘one Lord’ & ‘one God & Father’). These seven unities of the church...reflect the significant...number 7...& employ the [number] ‘one’ in all three genders in Eph. 4:5: ‘one [masc.] Lord, one [fem.] faith, one [neuter] baptism’.” [Abraham Kuruvilla, *Ephesians*, p. 117]

C. Unity with diversity, not uniformity (Eph. 4:7)

- “...maintain the unity of the Spirit...But grace was given to each one of us according to... Christ’s gift.” (Eph. 4:3, 7)
- In Eph. 4:7-10 “Paul describes *diverse gifts* in the church. These come from the ascended Christ.” [ESV]
- “Paul urges [unity] in Ephesians 4:3–6. But in the verses that follow (Eph. 4:7–12), Paul argues that there should also be diversity...The simple truth is this: Unity is not uniformity.” [John H. Armstrong, *Your Church Is Too Small*, p. 139]
- “Grace produces the diversity. *Unity*, in other words, *is not uniformity*...Eph. 4:11–16 shows how the work of Christ (his grace-gifting) applies in the present context of *unity in diversity*.” [Abraham Kuruvilla, *Ephesians*, p. 121]