

A Worthy Walk

As we begin our study of Ephesians 4, we notice that the Apostle Paul says, “I therefore...” Obviously he is going to build on what he said in the previous three chapters. In chapter 4 we begin Paul’s study of the Christian ethical life, which is built upon the profound relationship that we have with the Triune God. Let’s take a look at these first verses:

Ephesians 4:1-6

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 and 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 and 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 and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

I. Our walk must be worthy of our calling (vs. 1)

In the first half of Ephesians there are 66 verses, but only one command. In the second half of Ephesians there are many commands to live a lifestyle commensurate with the gospel. Paul often writes this way. For example, in Romans and Galatians we see the same sort of pattern. In verse 1 Paul speaks of living in a manner “worthy” of our calling. The word “worthy” is a word that referred to scales in the first century. If we place our calling on one side of the scales, then on the other side our lifestyle must be of equal weight. What a challenge!

II. Our walk promotes the unity of the Church (vs. 2-6)

A. We promote Church unity through godly love (vs. 2).

In order to promote the unity of the Church, our loving behavior toward one another is essential. Look at the qualities described in verse 2 and see how challenging Church unity really is!

B. We promote Church unity through zealous effort (vs. 3)

In John 17, in Christ’s High Priestly prayer, we can observe His zeal for Church unity. His zeal must be our zeal. Paul says that we must be “eager.”

C. We promote Church unity through faith in the Trinity (vs. 4-6)

In these verses we find the word “one” 7 times. Paul is teaching us that Church unity is based on the very character of God. Therefore, it is a guaranteed reality. Paul says in verse 3 that we must “maintain” the unity of the Church, not “create” the unity of the Church. This is greatly encouraging to us. John Stott said in his comments on this text: “There can be only one Christian family, only one Christian faith, hope, and baptism, and only one Christian body, because there is only one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You can no more multiply churches than you can multiply gods. Is there one God? Then He has only one Church. Is the Word of God inviolable? Then so is the unity of the Church.... It is no more possible to split the Church than it is to split the Godhead.”

Discussion Questions

1. What does Paul mean by the phrase “walk worthy of the calling?”
2. Why is the promotion of Church unity the first ethical issue that Paul raises?
3. Why is Church unity so difficult?
4. In verse 2, of all the qualities listed which contribute to Church unity, which are the most difficult for you?

Going Deeper

1. What changes can you make in your own church life to promote Church unity?