

# Ephesians 4:1-16

Chapter 4 marks a turning point in the letter to the Ephesians, where Paul begins to exhort his readers to live or "walk in a manner worthy" of the calling they have received.

Paul first focuses on the need for believers to walk in love and unity. He then turns to the various gifts and roles given by God in order to equip and build up the body, so that all can be brought to maturity and not be swayed by false doctrine.

As you read these verses, think about the attitudes and commitment that all believers need to have in order for the body of Christ to stand strong.

## Day 1

Ephesians 4:2-3 NAS

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,

3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

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## Walk worthy

1. What should characterize our "walk?" 4:1

- What is the "therefore/then" in 4:1 referring back to? (i.e. What have you learned about your calling so far in this letter that would explain what Paul means?)

### Digging Deeper

Contrast and compare what is said about walking in:

2:2

2:10

**IT'S GREEK TO ME** "worthy" – NT:516 *axios*; appropriately:

"calling" – Strong's #2821 *klesis*; an invitation

"We are now asked to walk in our daily life in such a way that it may be compared with the glorious heavenly calling revealed in the first three chapters of this epistle."  
- Stuart Allen (72)

**Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called:** When we really understand how much God did for us, we will naturally want to serve and obey Him out of gratitude. Understanding *who we are* is the foundation of this worthy walk...We don't walk worthy *so that* God will love us, but *because* He does love us. It is motivated out of gratitude, not out of a desire to earn merit."  
- David Guzik

"Those who have been chosen by God to sit with Christ in the heavenly places must remember that the honor of Christ is involved in their daily lives."  
- F. F. Bruce

2. How did Paul identify himself (4:1)? How does that strengthen his appeal?

Ephesians 4:1-16

3. Underline what our walk is to be “worthy of.”

- Phil. 1:27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; NAS
- Col. 1:10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; NAS
- 1 Thessalonians 2:12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. NAS

4. Underline the phrases that describe the calling we have received.

- Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. NASU
- 1 Corinthians 1:9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. NIV
- 2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. NASU
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. NIV
- 2 Timothy 1:9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, NASU

5. What qualities are in line with the calling we have been given in Christ? 4:2 (*For similar lists see Philippians 2:1-5; Colossians 3:12-13*)

- Why would humility and gentleness flow from what Paul taught in Ephesians 1-3?

**IT'S GREEK TO ME:** “**Meekness** or **gentleness** is far from being an easygoing weakness; it is the property of a mind and spirit kept under due control.”  
- F. F. Bruce

**Patience/longsuffering** NT:3115 *makrothumia*; longanimity, i.e. forbearance or fortitude

- *makros*, "long," *thumos*, "temper" - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

**Showing tolerance/bearing with** Strong's NT:430 *anechomai*; to hold oneself up against, i.e. (figuratively) put up with: KJV - bear with, endure, forbear, suffer.

- “forbearance, long-suffering, self-restraint before proceeding to actions. The quality of a person who is able to avenge himself yet refrains from doing so.” - The Complete Word Study Dictionary (939)
- “We need this so that the inevitable wrongs that occur between people in God's family will not work against God's purpose of bringing all things together in Jesus - illustrated through His current work in the church. Chrysostom defined **longsuffering** as the spirit that has the power to take revenge, but never does. It is characteristic of a forgiving, generous heart.” - David Guzik

Ephesians 4:1-16

6. What qualities did Jesus Christ demonstrate to us? Matthew 11:29-30

7. Underline what the following verses say about patience.

- 2 Timothy 2:24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, NASU
- 1 Thessalonians 5:14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. NIV
- James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. NKJV

8. Underline what should motivate us to bear with one another.

- *Colossians 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.*
- *1 Peter 2:21-23 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously. NAS*

9. When we demonstrate the qualities in 4:2 what happens to fellowship among believers? 4:3

10. Summarize the three petitions (note the verbs) that Paul gave in 4:1,2,3a.

- 4:1 "walk in a manner worthy"
- 4:2
- 4:3a

**Applying the Word:** When you see an inconsistency between what a person professes and how he acts, how does that affect you?  
How would you explain the difference between tolerance and patience with people versus tolerance of sinful behavior?

## Day 2

Ephesians 4:3-6 NAS

3 *being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

4 *There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;*

5 *one Lord, one faith, one baptism,*

6 *one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*

### **Unity of the body**

11. What helps hold this unity together? 4:3b (See also 4:13a)

- What other great bond holds believers together? Colossians 3:14

12. What does the command “*be diligent/make every effort*” 4:3 indicate about this unity? (See Romans 14:19)

### **One Spirit**

13. Underline the work of the Spirit that Paul gives in his letter to the Ephesians.

- Ephesians 1:13-14 Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. NIV
- Ephesians 1:17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. NIV
- Ephesians 2:18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. NIV
- Ephesians 2:22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. NIV
- Ephesians 3:16-17 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. NIV

From these verses, how do you see the work of the Spirit producing unity? (See also Philippians 1:27)

Ephesians 4:1-16

### **One Hope**

14. Underline how our hope is identified or described in the following.

- Colossians 1:4-5 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel NASU
- Colossians 1:23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.
- Colossians 1:27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. NIV
- 1 Thessalonians 5:8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet NIV
- 1 Timothy 4:10(and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe NIV
- Hebrews 6:19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, NASU
- Titus 3:7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. NASU
- 1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, NASU
- 1 John 3:2-3 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. NASU
- 1 Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope, NASU

**IT'S GREEK TO ME: Hope** Strong's NT:1680 *elpis*,...expectation (abstractly or concretely) or confidence:

- "favorable and confident expectation"

- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"Hope in Scripture is not the world's definition of 'I **hope** so', with a few rare exceptions (e.g., [Acts 27:20](#).)

Hope is defined as a desire for some future good with the expectation of obtaining it. Hope is confident expectancy. Hope is the looking forward to something with some reason for confidence respecting fulfillment.

Earlier Paul had prayed for enlightenment, that the saints would **know** (beyond a shadow of a doubt...) that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...

**Hope** as the world typically defines it is a desire for some future occurrence of which one is not assured of attaining. The ancient world did not generally regard **hope** as a virtue, but merely as a temporary illusion. Historians tell us that a great cloud of **hopelessness** covered the ancient world. Philosophies were empty... Religions derived [from] man's warped imagination were powerless to help men face either life or death. People longed to pierce the veil and get some message of hope from the other side, a message ultimately found only in the Cross of Christ."

- preceptaustin.org

Ephesians 4:1-16

15. What do the phrases in 4:6 indicate about the reasons for unity?

		<i>Unity this gives</i>
"One Lord"	Philippians 2:10; Romans 10:9	
"One Faith"	Galatians 2:20; Eph. 2:8,9	
"One Baptism"	I Corinthians 12:13	
"One God and Father"	I Corinthians 8:6	

**FYI:** "The acknowledgment of this one Lord was a matter of the most vital consequence to many Christians in the early centuries of our era. Because they had but one Lord, they refused to give the title 'Lord' to others who claimed it, notably to the Roman Emperor, when it was claimed in a sense that implied divinity." - F. F. Bruce

"Ultimately it was the early Christians' allegiance to Christ as supreme Lord that really became the impetus of persecution. The emperors wanted to be acknowledged and worshiped as 'Lord' in an effort to hold together the disintegrating immoral, chaotic Roman society through a central figure of authority designated as 'god.' But Christianity's view of the exclusivity of Jesus Christ would not allow such an acknowledgement. Thus, Christians were seen as a threat to the state..."

Persecution by the world against Christians comes in many forms. But its central core is the rejection of God and the resulting attack on those who follow Christ and claim He is the supreme Lord and the only way to salvation."

- Don Landis <https://answersingenesis.org/christianity/christian-life/response-to-persecution/>

16. For what did Jesus pray? John 17:11

- What effect should our unity have on the world? John 17:23

**Applying the Word:** How would you explain the "unity" that Paul was writing about? (Does this unity allow for different opinions? What are essentials for unity? What would some examples of non-essentials be?)

### Day 3

Ephesians 4:7-13 NAS

7 *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

8 *Therefore it says,*

*"WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH,  
HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES,  
AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."*

9 *(Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?*

10 *He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)*

11 *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,*

12 *for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;*

13 *until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.*

### Gifts to the body

17. To whom is grace given? 4:7

- How is this grace measured?

#### ***Digging Deeper***

What did Paul say about the sufficiency of God's grace in his life? 1 Corinthians 15:10

18. How did Paul say grace was being manifested in believers' lives?

- 1 Corinthians 1:4-5 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, NAS
- Titus 2:11-12 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, NIV
- Romans 12:6a Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly... NAS

19. What picture does 4:8-10 (based on Psalm 68) give you of Christ's victory?

**FYI:** "John MacArthur comments on Paul's use of **Psalm 68** noting that this psalm...is a victory hymn composed by David to celebrate God's conquest of the Jebusite city and the triumphant ascent of God (represented by the Ark of the Covenant) up Mount Zion (cf. 2 Sa. 6-7; 1Chr 13). After a king won such a victory he would bring home the spoils and enemy prisoners to parade before his people. An Israelite king would take his retinue through the holy city of Jerusalem and up Mount Zion.

Another feature of the victory parade, however, would be the display of the king's own soldiers who had been freed after being held prisoner by the enemy. These were often referred to as **recaptured captives**—prisoners who had been taken prisoner again, so to speak, by their own king and given freedom. (MacArthur, J: Ephesians. Chicago: Moody Press)"

- preceptaustin.org

Ephesians 4:1-16

20. How far was Christ willing to descend? 4:9 (Compare Philippians 2:6-8)

- How high is He exalted? 4:10 (Compare Philippians 2:9-11)

21. What purpose is given for Christ ascending in 4:10b? (Cf. 1:23; See Colossians 2:9-10)

**FYI: So that He might fill all things** "That is why His people can now enjoy His immediate presence simultaneously, wherever they may be, whereas in the days of His flesh He could only be in one place at one time."  
- F. F. Bruce

22. What gifts for the ministry did Christ give? 4:11 (*What do you know about "apostles and prophets" (4:11) from Eph. 2:20; 3:5?*)

- What are the purposes of these gifts of ministry? 4:12 (Mark the words "build(ing) up/edification" in 4:12,16,29.)

**IT'S GREEK TO ME: Equipping/prepare** NT:2677 *katartismos*, "a fitting or preparing fully"  
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"**Equipping** also has the idea of 'to put right.' This ancient Greek word was used to describe setting broken bones or mending nets. These ministries work together to produce strong, mended, fit Christians." - David Guzik

"The gifts enumerated in verse 11 do not monopolize the Church's ministry; their function rather is to help and direct the Church that all the members may perform their several ministries for the good of the whole. 'In the theocracy of grace there is in fact no laity.' (E.K. Simpson)" - F. F. Bruce

### **Maturity in Christ**

23. From 4:13, list the goals given for the growth of believers? How does this relate to Paul's prayer requests in 3:18,19?

**IT'S GREEK TO ME Mature** (4:13) Strong's NT:5046 *teleios*, complete (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.)

"The gifted offices and equipped saints bring the saints to maturity, according to the **measure** of Jesus Himself. As years pass by, we should not only grow *old* in Jesus, but *more mature* in Him as well.

Again, by clearly stating that this is a **unity of the faith**, Paul did not command a structural or organizational unity, but a spiritual unity around a common faith."  
- David Guzik



**Applying the Word:** *When you consider the source and the power behind the gifts that you have been given, how do you think you should feel about the person God made you to be and what He calls you to do?*

## Day 4

Ephesians 4:14-16 NAS

14 *As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;*

15 *but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*

### **Protection from deception**

24. From 4:14, list the ways that a mature faith protects us. (See also Romans 16:17-18)

### **Digging Deeper**

From Colossians 2:16-23, what were some of the teachings Paul had to confront?

**IT'S GREEK TO ME:** **tossed here and there** "*kludonizomai* NT:2831 signifies 'to be tossed by billows' (kludon, 'a billow'); metaphorically, in Eph 4:14, of an unsettled condition of mind influenced and agitated by one false teaching and another, and characterized by that immaturity which lacks the firm conviction begotten by the truth."  
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"The ancient Greek word for **tossed to and fro** is from the same words used to describe the stormy Sea of Galilee in [Luke 8:24](#) (*raging of the water*). We can wrongly value *movement over growth*; mere movement is being tossed to and fro, but God wants us to **grow up in all things**."  
- David Guzik

**trickery/cunning/sleight** – Strong's "NT:2940 *kubeia*; from *kubos* (a 'cube', i.e. die for playing); gambling, i.e. (figuratively) artifice or fraud: KJV - sleight."

**"By the trickery of men:** 'The words . . . refer to the arts used by gamblers, who employ false *dice* that will always throw up one kind of number, which is that by which those who play with them cannot win.' (Clarke)  
Running after spiritual fads always leaves one a loser."  
- David Guzik

**Craftiness** Strong's NT:3834 *panourgia*; adroitness, i.e. (in a bad sense) trickery or sophistry

**deceitful scheming** – Strong's #4106 "A wandering out of the right way. In the NT, used only figuratively meaning error...In an active sense, deceit, fraud, seduction to error and sin (Matt. 27:64; Eph. 4:14; 2 Peter 3:17; 1 John 4:6...)"  
- The Complete Word Study Dictionary (1165)

25. Why can false teachings be so deceptive? 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

Ephesians 4:1-16

26. What power do we have against false teachings, arguments and thoughts? 2 Corinthians 10:4-6

### **Growth of the body**

27. Fill in the steps to growth. (Note the repetition of the word “love.”)

“speaking the truth in love” 4:15a

4:16c \_\_\_\_\_



4:15b \_\_\_\_\_

4:16 a,b \_\_\_\_\_

**IT'S GREEK TO ME: *speaking the truth*** Strong's #226 NT:226 *aletheuo*; to be true (in doctrine and profession)

“The verb... in this context probably means not only speaking truth but living and acting it as well - ‘dealing truly,’ as RV puts it. Such true dealing is the very antithesis of the roguery described by the apostle in the preceding verse.”  
- F. F. Bruce

“This verb means more than talking about the truth. It is rather living and acting the truth that the Apostle has in mind. This is the antidote to the spiritual duplicity of the previous verse. There should be works as well as words, but both must be ‘in love’. It is possible to put the truth over in a hard way, to be very correct in doctrine, but to show a complete lack of love in presenting it. This nullifies its power and spoils its witness.” - Stuart Allen (91)

28. What important connection do believers need to maintain? 4:15b

- What did Paul warn believers about in Colossians 2:8? What connection had they lost? Colossians 2:19

29. What picture does Paul give of the body of Christ in 4:16? (What *knits* us together in Colossians 2:2?)

**IT'S GREEK TO ME: *Held together*** “*sumbibazo* NT:4822 signifies ‘to cause to coalesce, to join or knit together’”  
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

***Applying the Word:*** What do you think happens when truth is spoken without love? When love is spoken without truth or actions? When have you seen the truth spoken in love and in action help “build up” someone?