

Ephesians 4-6:9 • The Christian Walk

Introduction

In the first half of Ephesians Paul concentrates on telling us what our blessings and position are in Christ; in this last half he instructs us how to put those things into practice in our life so as actually change our behavior in Christ. Some might say the first half is about the “talk” and this second half the “walk”. The Christian life is often compared to a walk because it begins with one step of faith, necessitates progress, and demands balance and strength. Our goal should not be limited to just learning the information provided in the first half of Ephesians, but to prove it out by putting into practice the second half of Ephesians.

¹Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. ⁸Therefore 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? ¹⁰He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) ¹¹And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³until 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.

¹⁴As 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; ¹⁵but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, being fitted and held

[Read 4:1-16]

Q: What is the repeated theme of this first passage? How would you summarize the first step of the Christian walk?

A: To walk in unity.

Q: What might we infer about how unity works from how Paul begins in v.1-3? Is unity something that comes about supernaturally?

A: All the items listed in the opening verses have to do with our own, individual walk and behavior. The message is that it begins with us, with the degree to which we’re becoming like Christ as an individual. There is no unity without us **FIRST** submitting to the process.

Q: Is Paul asking that we manufacture unity? That we bring about unity where none exists?

A: No, Paul is talking about maintaining the unity already existing in the body.

Point: A sign of spiritual maturity is the individual’s walk and behavior conforming to God’s Word and ways to such a degree that they become assimilated into the unity of the body of Christ. One of the signs of a perfected faith is unity.

*“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given 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 perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.***

John 17:20-23

Q: The grounds for unity are listed in v.4-6. Which would you pick as the central item from them all?

A: That there is “one Lord” – everything else is derived from the Godhead.

“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!

Deuteronomy 6:4

Q: So why were a variety of gifts and offices provided?

A: “...to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith...” (v.12-13) Many gifts to many local assemblies, but for one purpose for one body.

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.

Point: Whereas v. 1-6 deal with the one body and its unity, v. 7-11 deal with many local bodies and the diversity of gifts which contribute to the overall goal of one body and its unity.

Q: What are the goals of the church listed in v. 12-16?

1. "...the equipping of the saints for the work of service..." (v.12)
2. "...building up the body of Christ..." (v.12)
3. "...attain to the unity of the faith..." (v.13)
4. "...attain to the...knowledge of the Son of God..." (v.13)
5. "...attain...to a mature man...the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ..." (v.13)
6. "...no longer...tossed here and there...by every wind of doctrine..." (v.14)
7. "...speaking the truth in love..." (v.15)
8. "...to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head..." (v.15)
9. "...fitted and held together...according to the proper working of each part..." (v.16)
10. "...growth...building up...in love." (v.16)

Application: This is **THE** biblical program for how to operate a church. Go back through this list and identify **EXACTLY HOW** your local body is accomplishing each of these things. Go through each of your church's programs such as Sunday morning service, Sunday School, small groups, etc. and identify how each is being achieved. If you can't identify specifics, then they're not being accomplished. What needs to be done? How does this contrast to man-made programs, entertainment, recreation, or "drives" which come up short of these standards?

Q: Based on these goals, what would you say is the number one priority of the pastor-teacher?

A: To nourish the saints with the Word of God thereby equipping them for service.

Q: Who then actually carries out the work of the ministry?

A: The saints. As each saint grows and wins others for Christ, the entire body grows in Christ.

Q: What is the greatest danger to unity, to the body of Christ?

A: The immature saints who are unstable and easily led astray. This is why discipleship in the Word of God is of the utmost importance both for them individually and the church as a whole.

¹⁷So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; ¹⁹and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. ²⁰But you did not learn Christ in this way, ²¹if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, ²²that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being

[Read 4:17-32]

Q: Whereas in the previous section Paul describes the believer's relationship to the church, to what has that focus changed in this section?

A: Paul is now dealing with the believer's relationship to the world.

Q: How would you summarize Paul's advice on how to live in the world and still maintain a Christian walk?

A: Paul is calling us to walk in purity and not allow the world to spiritually defile us.

Q: How does Paul describe the way the unsaved walk?

1. Their minds are darkened because they believe lies and have not received the truth. (v.17-18)
2. They are spiritually dead. (v.18)

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corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,²⁴ and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

²⁵Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.

²⁶BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger,²⁷ and do not give the devil an opportunity.

²⁸He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.

²⁹Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

³⁰Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.³² Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

¹Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; ²and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

³But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; ⁴and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. ⁵For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

3. They have surrendered themselves to do all kinds of sin. (v.19)

Point: *This is not only a good description of the walk of the unsaved, but reveals what may be wrong with our own walk when we allow such things to take root in our own walk. By inference we should be exactly opposite where these things are concerned.*

Q: What are the three admonitions Paul goes on to provide where he expects the Christian walk to be radically different from the unsaved?

1. "...lay aside the old self..." (v.22-23)
2. "...put on the new self..." (v.24)
3. Lay aside behaviors specific to the old self in favor of those of the new self. (v.25-32)

Application: *These are the specific behavioral changes which prove the degree to which one is immersed in the "new self" versus mired in the "old self". How do others see you in regards to these things? How would you judge the purity of your own walk?*

[Read 5:1-5]

Q: What is the aspect of our walk that Paul is now referring to?

A: That we should walk in love.

Q: What KIND of love is inferred by the example that is provided?

A: Sacrificial love, love that thinks of others first as exemplified by Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

Q: What is implied about Christian love in the bad things contrasted in the list in v.3-5?

A: Biblical love hates certain things. In fact, there are some sins which should never be named among believers.

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

Romans 12:9

Point: *When so-called believers and/or their false teachers allow for habitual, deliberate sin to reside side-by-side with their Christianity, in reality these are false believers who God sees as "immoral", "impure", "covetous" to the point of being an "idolater".*

Application: *How does your own love measure up to this standard? How do these things betray the fact that love is lacking in others?*

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⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷Therefore do not be partakers with them; ⁸for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹(for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; ¹²for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. ¹³But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. ¹⁴For this reason it says,

“Awake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine on you.”

[Read 5:6-14]

Q: What does it mean to be a “partaker”?

A: It implies having something in common or shared and is often translated as “fellowship” or “partnership”. It’s not a casual or accidental relationship that’s being described, but a lifestyle choice.

Q: What aspect of the Christian walk is Paul addressing here?

A: To walk in the Light.

Point: *The light cannot compromise with the darkness, it can only expose it. Paul is talking about living **IN** the world but not becoming partners with those who are still unsaved, of maintaining the correct distance from sin.*

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

2 Corinthians 6:14

Observation: *Note the following verses which state specifically what Christians **SHOULD** be partakers of:*

*For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.*

2 Peter 1:4

*to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow **partakers of the promise** in Christ Jesus through the gospel,*

Ephesians 3:6

*but to the degree that you **share the sufferings** of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.*

1 Peter 4:13

*For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may **share His holiness**.*

Hebrews 12:10

*Therefore, holy brethren, **partakers of a heavenly calling**, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;*

Hebrews 3:1

*Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a **partaker also of the glory** that is to be revealed,*

1 Peter 5:1

Application: *Where are your personal partnership ties the strongest? How about your local church? What might they indicate?*

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¹⁵Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of your time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

[Read 5:15-17]

Q: What aspect of the Christian walk is Paul addressing here?

A: To walk carefully.

Q: How is this defined here?

1. To walk with wisdom.
2. To make the most of one's time.
3. To do all this in the full understanding of the "will of the Lord".

Application: *In other words, we do not waste time, energy, money, and/or talent on that which is apart from His will. How well does your own walk measure up to this standard?*

¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; ²⁰always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; ²¹and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

[Read 5:18-6:9]

Q: What are the three pairs of people this final section deals with?

1. Husbands and wives.
2. Parents and children.
3. Workers and masters.

Q: Yes, there are specifics for each category of person and each pairing of groups, but to what aspect of the Christian walk is Paul addressing through them all?

A: To walk in harmony.

²²Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. ²⁴But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

Point: *Paul began in chapter 4 with the believer's relationship to the church and then moved on to the believer's relationship with the world. He narrows it down to the quality of our individual walk in the first half of chapter 5, and then concludes with the application of all that has been taught to our personal relationships. Paul is showing how we should walk individually, corporately, as a witness to this world, and in relationships with others.*

Q: What is the "secret" to harmony in the home and on the job?

A: The fullness of the Spirit. (v.18)

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, ³⁰because we are members of His body. ³¹FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. ³²This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her

Q: What characteristic did Paul begin this section as being the "secret" to unity in the church?

A: The fullness of the Spirit. (v.4:3)

Point: *The unity of the church and the harmony of the home both depend on the Spirit. It is power from within, not pressure from without, which holds the Christian church and home together.*

Q: What are the evidences of a Spirit-filled life?

A: Joy (v.19), gratitude (v.20), and obedience (v.21)

Point: *The marks of a Spirit-filled life are not unusual emotional experiences, miracles, or supernatural events, but rather Christian character.*

Q: What is the basic principle that helps bring harmony to the home or workplace?

A: Headship. All relationships are to mirror our own submission to Christ as the head, whether as husband, wife, child, master, or servant.

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husband.

⁶Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

⁵Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; ⁶not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. ⁷With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

⁹And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Point: Family members who are walking right in the Lord will be right with each other.

Q: What is Christ's present ministry in the church?

A: He is sanctifying and cleansing the church through the Word of God, and He does this by the work of the Spirit in His chosen servants. (v.4:11-16)

Note: The water referred to in v.26 is not baptism as it refers to a continuous process. Water for washing is a symbol of the Word of God. (See John 15:3; 13:1-12)

Q: How does this final section complete the circle back to Paul's opening teaching on unity in the church?

A: Harmony in our personal relationships is the practical application and proof that the greater principles are actually at work. We can **SAY** we're one body under one Lord, but it can only be proved by both our individual walk and our relationships with others if both conform to the Word of God.

Application: How do your personal relationships measure up to these standards? How about your local church? Why is it that personal relationships may need to be reconciled before overall revival can be experienced?

"Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

Matthew 5:23-24

Overall Application

- To walk in unity. (4:1-16)
- To walk in purity. (4:17-32)
- To walk in love. (5:1-5)
- To walk in the Light. (v.5:6-14)
- To walk carefully. (v.5:15-17)
- To walk in harmony. (v.5:18-6:9)

Therefore...

- How well does your personal walk mirror each of these traits?
- How well does your approach to discipleship develop these qualities in others?
- How well does each of your local church's programs and activities achieve each of these goals?