

# Usness

September 7, 2025

Ephesians 4:1-6

## DAY 1

*Eph. 4:1 As a prisoner of the Lord, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*

1. Where does your mind go with living a life worthy of the calling to be God's people?

\_\_\_ Guilt?

\_\_\_ Shame?

\_\_\_ Pressure?

\_\_\_ Other?

2. If you had one of the first three answers checked, I have good news for you. Paul didn't mean for your mind to go in any of those directions! The key phrase is, "calling you have received." That "calling" came through the gospel of Christ! Where does your mind go with "gospel of Christ?"

3. Larry Crabb wrote: "I might mention in passing that my **acceptability** in Christ is no warrant for careless living. Scripture also teaches that I am **accountable** to God for how I live.

a. If I understand **accountability**, but not **acceptability**, I will live under pressure to behave well in order to be accepted.

b. If I understand **acceptability**, but not **accountability**, I may become casually indifferent to sinful living.

c. When I understand **first** my **acceptability** and **then** my **accountability**, I will be constrained to please the One who died for me, fearful that I might grieve Him, not wanting to, because I love Him."

4. What first strikes you about the comparison of acceptability and accountability?

5. Which "comes first?" \_\_\_\_\_

6. Which of the two, acceptability or accountability, do you tend to emphasize in your life? What result can you expect from your choice? (Look back at Crabb's quote for a hint).

7. Living a life worthy of the gospel of Christ should *not* engender guilt, shame or pressure. It should evoke **gratitude** (for acceptability) **and drive** (not pressure) for greater holiness! What strikes you about that statement?

## DAY 2

Yesterday, we looked at the high calling we Christians share: to **live a life worthy** of the gospel.

*Colossians 1:9 And so, from the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup> to **lead a life worthy of the Lord**, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. <sup>11</sup> May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.*

1. Paul picks up on the same theme, "to lead a life worthy of the Lord...."

"Worthy." This Greek word means "of equal weight." We are to live in a way "equal" to God's standards of holiness.

2. Paul adds three ways this may be exhibited, in verse 10. What are they?

- a.
- b.
- c.

3. "Fully pleasing to Him..."

You likely grew up with a strong desire to please someone: father, mother, teacher, coach, etc. That may have been an impossible task! What does it mean to you that YOU could *actually* please the Lord?!

4. "Bearing fruit in every good work..."

Have you considered that "every" good work bears fruit, whether or not you see it, in "real time?" How would that help you "live a life worthy of the Lord?"

5. "Increasing in the knowledge of God."

Living a life worthy of God is not just about your "daily life" and obedience. It's also about relationship with God. How high a priority is developing your relationship with God, to you?

6. Of the items from today's devotional, what stands out to you most?

7. Is there an action step for you?

8. Pray God would encourage your heart and life toward pleasing Him.

### DAY 3

We looked at Ephesians 4:1, "...to lead a life worthy of the calling you have received." The next two verses give further indication of what it means to live a life worthy of our calling...

*Ephesians 4:2 Be completely **humble** and **gentle**; be **patient**, **bearing with one another in love**.<sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

1. The first quality is "completely humble." What is the difference between someone who is "humble" and someone who is "*completely* humble?"

2. The second quality is "gentleness." The root Greek word ("prautes") means "meek." "Meekness" is NOT "weakness." Meekness is the POWER to not be rude, harsh, pushy, controlling or pushing oneself forward. Which of these items tends to seep out of you?

3. The third quality is "patient." ("Makrothymias"). It is the quality that never gives up. It just keeps enduring. It is the power of "self-restraint" when you want to "give someone a piece of your mind."

4. The fourth quality is "**bearing with one another in love.**"

a. Forbearing" means "sustaining one another" in life's tribulations, even when the tribulation is your brother! This quality is needed when we run up against someone's weaknesses. We tend to get critical and petty. How would the idea of "sustaining" someone help your attitude?

b. What is the difference between "bearing with one another," and bearing with one another **in love?**

c. What does "with" imply? Which of the other qualities we studied today would help you to "bear *with*...?"

5. Which of these qualities is strongest in you? Which is weakest?

6. Pray that God would use your strengths and build your weaknesses.

## DAY 4

*Ephesians 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.* <sup>3</sup>  
**Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.**

The four qualities we looked at yesterday are to be used to "lead a life worthy of the Lord" (verse 1) AND to make unity possible in the church (verse 3).

How does unity "happen?"

1. How does unity "start?" Who initiated unity?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Who is to "keep" unity?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What human element is needed "to keep the unity of the Spirit?"
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Is "church" an individual "sport" or a team "sport?"
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How would Eph. 4:3 affect your approach to "church?"
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Are you a peacemaker? Is unity in your church a priority with you, something for which you would "make every effort?"
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. All of us are prone to be "dividers," rather than unifiers.
  - a. Ways I divide:
    - \_\_\_ Gossip
    - \_\_\_ Grumble
    - \_\_\_ Give a bad report about someone
    - \_\_\_ Murmur
    - \_\_\_ Lie / deceive
    - \_\_\_ Question someone; raise suspicions
  - b. How can you be a "unifier" this week?

## DAY 5

*Eph. 4:4-6 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.*

1. Overhear conversations on the plane, at a restaurant, just before a race, I'm absolutely amazed at how conversations drift to the things of which people disagree.
2. SEVEN times in these verses Paul hammers home things of which we DO agree. Every one of them is punctuated by the word, "one."
3. People will always disagree about issues, people, and events. What keeps unity is to major on the major and minor on the minors. That's good advice for a church, for a marriage, and at work.
4. What strikes you about the seven majors Paul mentions in vv. 4-6?

*Eph. 4:6 ...one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

5. The unity Paul is aiming for with us begins with God. As we saw in Ephesians 2, only God can bring people together who were formerly enemies of one another.

Deep unity is a demonstration of God's power.

We put Jesus on display when we are unified with our brothers and sisters.

6. God is sovereign. He is in charge. That doesn't mean He approves of everything that goes on in the world. What does it mean that He is "God and Father of all"?

a. "Over all":

Even in a fallen world, His purposes will not be thwarted. His purpose isn't to make *this life* comfortable. His purpose is to draw people to Himself. That continues to happen in spite of war, killings, and every ugly thing one human does to another.

b. "Through all":

Every circumstance in your life is redemptive. From the tragedies to the multiple red lights you hit when running late.

c. "In all":

You can discover the wonder of who He is. You can find God! Sovereignty means you can live life with a heart that is *relaxed*.

7. "Imagine what it might be like to develop a confidence in God that frees us to come to others demanding nothing from them, and feeling far more passionate about the opportunity to give others a taste of God than to receive something we want." Larry Crabb

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?