

**EPHESIANS**  
**CHAPTER FOUR**

1. How did the Lord's prisoner urge his readers to conduct themselves?

*"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" (Ephesians 4:1). There is behavior that suits the upward calling of God and Christians must resolve ourselves accordingly. This implies contrary behavior is inappropriate and ought to be avoided.*

2. What are the characteristics of this conduct?

*"With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3). A worthy walk is mostly characterized as pursuing unity with the mindset and behavior that allows unity to be reached.*

3. Name the core tenets of unity. Be prepared to discuss each.

*"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6). Despite efforts to suggest unity is achieved in diversity of thought, the unity expressed by inspiration here depends on mutual recognition of the exclusiveness of truth, specifically the oneness of the following:*

- 1) The body, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24). The Lord only promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18), none other. All other churches are fraudulent and must be repudiated. Salvation is in the body

(Ephesians 5:23) and entrance to the body is through baptism (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:13).

- 2) The Spirit is singular (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:4, 11).
- 3) Our hope must be about the same thing. Hope is never fixed on what one has or can see, but on an as-yet-unattained goal (Romans 8:24). Hope's object is eternal life (Titus 1:2; 3:7). Its destination is heaven (Colossians 1:5; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:3-4). Its source is the gospel (Colossians 1:5; Titus 1:2-3). Its realization is at the last advent of Christ (Titus 2:13; 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:2-3). The oneness of hope contradicts multiple falsehoods:
  - a) The doctrine of the Watchtower Society (so-called "Jehovah's Witnesses) who believe only 144,000 will enter heaven and all other righteous dead will occupy a rebuilt earth (Isaiah 51:6; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:10-13; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:50).
  - b) The doctrine of the Mormons (so-called "Latter Day Saints") who believe in baptism by proxy for the dead (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:10).
  - c) The doctrine of the Catholics who believe the unrighteous dead can work their way out of "purgatory" (Luke 16:23-26; Matthew 18:8; 25:46; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 1:9)
  - d) The doctrine of the Hindus, Buddhists, New-Agers, et al. who believe in reincarnation (Hebrews 9:27).
  - e) The doctrine of millennialists who believe the righteous will be raptured to heaven while the unrighteous will remain on earth to face a later judgment (John 6:40; 12:48; 5:28-29).
- 4) There is only one Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:13-16; Revelation 17:14; 19:16), even though there are many lords on earth (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 8:5-6). God has made Jesus Lord (Acts 2:36), but that does not mean He, the Father, cannot be called "Lord" (Acts 4:24-30) because the One who bestowed authority does not relinquish His own (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:27).

- 5) The faith is objective faith – what we ought to believe, not subjective faith – what we happen to believe. This faith is worth fighting for (Jude 3). This faith should be held in common (Ephesians 4:13; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:1).
- 6) There are a variety of baptisms (Hebrews 6:1-2), but only one is valid and effective in the present.
  - a) The baptism of Moses is in the past (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:1-2).
  - b) The baptism of suffering pertains to overwhelming persecution (Luke 12:50).
  - c) The baptism of John is in the past (Acts 18:24-26; 19:1-5).
  - d) The baptism of the Holy Spirit served specific purposes the only two times it ever occurred (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; 10:44-47; 11:15-18). It remains in the past.
  - e) The baptism of fire refers to punishment in hell (Luke 3:16-17). It is yet in the future, but we intend to avoid it.
  - f) The baptism of Christ gets a sinner into Jesus (Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4), removes sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16), and brings salvation (Mark 16:15-16; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:21).
- 7) There is but one God and Father (Mark 12:28-31; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:5). Other gods are false (Acts 19:26; Galatians 4:8).

4. Explain the grace given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

*"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift"* (Ephesians 4:7). Just as Paul counted his preaching ministry a "grace" given him (3:7-8), so the responsibilities of each role within the body Christ "gave" (4:11). Every Christian has something to do. Not every given responsibility is a spiritual gift, but it is the same Lord and same Spirit that endow these gifts (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:4-6). Thus, unity is achieved through the joint operation of these roles.

5. When were the gifts bestowed?

*“Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men’”* (Ephesians 4:8; Psalm 68:18). Jesus promised the gifts to the apostles (Acts 1:8) immediately before He ascended to the Father (Acts 1:9-11) and on the day they received those gifts (Acts 2:1-4), the church was established (Acts 2:47) which is where many of the gifts, which will be enumerated below, exist (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:28-31).

6. What did He take captive?

*“He led captivity captive”* (Ephesians 4:8)! Captivity itself was captivated by Him! The devil takes souls captive by his deceptions (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:24-26; Hebrews 2:14-15), but Jesus has won (John 12:31; Colossians 2:15)!

7. What did the ascension imply?

*“(Now this, ‘He ascended’ — what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)”* (Ephesians 4:9-10)

That He ascended from earth to heaven implies He first descended from heaven to earth (John 3:13). Not only did He descend to earth, but He also descended to its lower parts, referring to burial (Matthew 12:40). Humility preceded exaltation (Philippians 2:5-11). Thus, the grace of God’s gifts to men should be received with humility.

8. What did He give some to be within the body of Christ? Explain each role.

*“He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers”* (Ephesians 4:11).

- 1) Apostles, by definition, are those sent forth by Christ, so we ought to receive them (John 13:20). Their qualification and mission was to be witnesses of the resurrection (Acts 1:22), but not every single witness was chosen (Acts 1:23-26; 10:40-42). There had been twelve (Matthew 10:1-4), but Judas was replaced, and Paul was born out of season (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:8-9). Theirs is a foundational role in the church (Ephesians 2:19-20), so that work abides even though apostles are personally gone from the earth.
- 2) Prophets are those who spoke as the Holy Spirit moved them (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:19-21). They have second rank in the church, after apostles (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:28-29) because theirs was the most edifying spiritual gift (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:1-5). The gift has ended (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:8-13), but the work of the prophets abides whenever we read Scripture (Ephesians 3:1-5).
- 3) Evangelists are, by definition, preachers of the gospel (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:1-5). They preach the word and baptize believers (Acts 21:8; 8:4-13, 26-40).
- 4) Pastors, are, by definition, shepherds. Those assigned the work of shepherding in the church are elder/overseers (Acts 20:17, 28; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:1-4). These men must be qualified to serve (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). There should be multiple elders per church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).
- 5) Teachers include all of the above, but one may teach without being an apostle, prophet, evangelist, or pastor. Given time, every Christian ought to be a teacher (Hebrews 5:12), but the work should be approached with the utmost gravity (James 3:1).

9. What is the common goal for apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers?

*“For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:12-13).

10. What is their work intended to prevent?

*“That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting”* (Ephesians 4:14). Christians must grow out of spiritual infancy (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:20; Hebrews 5:12-14). Doctrine matters (Hebrews 13:9; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:16; 2<sup>nd</sup> John 9-11).

11. How should truth be spoken?

*“Speaking the truth in love”* (Ephesians 4:15). It does not matter at all what we do if love is not the motive (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:1-3). Truth can be presented in an unloving way whereby one proves himself right and another wrong, rather than desiring the fellowship of the other. This is not to say that a person who was wounded in the process of correction was necessarily wronged (Proverbs 27:6; Hebrews 12:11).

12. Who grows and edifies the body?

*“May grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ — from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love”* (Ephesians 4:15-16). Every member of the church is responsible for growth (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:12-27)!

13. What were the Ephesians to refrain from?

*“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk”* (Ephesians 4:17). Gentile Christians should not be like other Gentiles (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:3-4; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:3-5), but like Christians – like Christ!

14. How did *“the rest of the Gentiles walk?”*

*“In the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart”* (Ephesians 4:17-18). Their mind and heart, their understanding and very life was futile, dark, blind, and altogether alien to God. No matter how much the devil tries to sell it, life without Christ is empty. Godless people try to fill their lives with things that ultimately will not satisfy them and it leads to despair (Ecclesiastes 2:17).

15. When people are *“past feeling,”* How do they behave?

*“Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness”* (Ephesians 4:19). Those who are spiritually callous do all they can to feel bodily stimulation and to accumulate material prosperity.

16. If one has *“learned Christ,”* how will he conduct himself?

*“But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was*

*created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:20-24).*

Those who know Christ prove it by keeping His commandments (1<sup>st</sup> John 2:3-4) and letting the old man of sin die (Romans 6:6).

17. Why should lying be put away?

*“Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another” (Ephesians 4:25; Zechariah 8:16).* Fellowship demands honesty. Lying is wrong among non-believers, too, but the reason given here is specific to the body. Within the brotherhood, lying will not do because a body cannot function without communication between parts. Our relationship with Jesus depends on truth (John 8:31-32) and damnation depends on lies (John 8:44; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:9-12).

18. Is anger permissible?

*“‘Be angry, and do not sin’: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil” (Ephesians 4:26-27; Psalm 4:4).* If there is just cause, meaning sin – and nothing but sin (Psalm 7:11), then anger is not only permissible, but necessary. It should be arrived at through calm deliberation, though (Proverbs 16:32; 19:11). Otherwise, anger should not characterize a Christian (Ephesians 4:31).

19. What should reformed thieves be doing?

*“Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need” (Ephesians 4:28).* It is insufficient to merely abstain from stealing (Matthew 12:43-45). More than that, the thief must replace his evil deeds with good deeds, which starts with earning his own living (2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 3:10-12). Working for wages is only the beginning,

though; he must learn to share with the less fortunate (Romans 12:13; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:18).

20. How should Christians speak?

*“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers”* (Ephesians 4:29). There is corrupt communication (Colossians 3:8) and there is communication that imparts grace (Colossians 4:6). We will be judged by which we choose (Matthew 12:33-37).

21. What is the effect of corrupt speech?

*“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption”* (Ephesians 4:30). We cause the Holy Spirit hurt when we use the mouths God blessed us with for corruption rather than edification. If Jesus is, Himself, the Word (John 1:1), then we absolutely must not treat words as trivial.

22. How should the forgiveness we have received affect our treatment of one another?

*“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you”* (Ephesians 4:31-32). The Lord’s forgiveness moves us to forgive each other (Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-35), which, itself, requires tenderness and kindness, and also demands we quit any contrary behavior.