

Eph 4vs 1-2 Walk Worthy in Humility and Gentleness

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which I, the prisoner of the Lord therefore, exhort you.--It was the cause of Christ that made him a prisoner, since the accusations leveled against him were on account of the gospel, and particularly preaching the gospel to gentiles

to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called. Our walk is tied to how Jesus walked, how He lived, and how He loves us, and especially how he gave Himself for us on the cross, saying, **2 and 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.** And how his sacrifice is what enables us to be able to walk in newness of life, saying in Rom 6:4 **4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life.** And this walking by the Spirit changes us, so that we don't just listen to the desires of our flesh, as animals do, but instead listen to the Holy Spirit, Gal 5:16-17 **16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the desire of the flesh is against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, in order to keep you from doing whatever you want.** It's clear that our flesh wants to do whatever it wants, but the Holy Spirit wants to bring out the fruit of a relationship with God in Spirit and in Truth in us. Paul is urging us to allow the Holy Spirit to change us from within, and for this to work itself outward, so that we are transformed to look more and more like Jesus. We see this idea in Phil 1:27 **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 about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;** Notice over and over again how strife, jealousy, evil desire, and lack of self-control, is excluded for those walking by the Spirit. But what is encouraged in the Body is rather unity, standing firm in one spirit, with one mind of Christ together, striving together for the faith of the gospel is encouraged. And, as we get to know Jesus more and more, we want to obey, and conform our lives to His, living out God's will for our lives. This growth in Christ is God's will for our lives. 1 Thess 4:3-7 **3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification;** We are called in our life to be worthy of the gospel of Christ.

The word klesis "call," or calling makes it clear, that God is not just giving us a call to be saved, but also a call to live our lives according to the model provided for us by Christ. Eph 1:18 **18 I pray 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,** The inward change by the Holy Spirit is the proof, and the outward change in behavior is the evidence. Holiness, and walking like Christ is His plan for us, and we are able to walk according to the Spirit by God's power. And how do we walk together?
with all humility and gentleness.

Humility

The primary example of humility in the New Testament is of course Jesus. When Paul wants to encourage us toward living out our Christian life in humility, he says "imitate Christ". Specifically, in Phil 2:3-8 **3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility consider one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross.** This attitude of sacrificing our own good on behalf of each other, according to God's Will, just as Jesus did by dying on the cross is the kind of humility that Paul is talking about in our verses today. Col 3:12-14 **12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and**

forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so must you do also. 14 In addition to all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Gentleness

The second characteristic that this New life should be bringing out in us, so that we can walk in unity is gentleness. It has the idea of “mildness” or “gentleness,” the opposite of “roughness” or brutishness, or a swaggering, haughty insistence on our own way. In describing this word Aristotle states that it is the proper balance point between “excessive anger against everyone and on all occasions” and “never being angry with anything.” This man is gentle and gentleness will be a balanced state between these two affections”. The word in Greek doesn’t have anything to do with weakness, but rather being temperate in our control of our emotions, while allowing ourselves to feel the appropriate emotion, given the circumstances. As Christians, we understand that anger is an emotion, but that it’s the actions that we allow ourselves to take when we are angry that get us into trouble. Gentleness, is listed as part of the fruit of the spirit, in Gal 5:22-23 which God is trying to cultivate in us. In fact, it is this even-handed, appropriate gentleness that corrects in love, without a spirit of retribution toward the sinner, but rather a heart for restoration and rebuilding that is encouraged when someone sins toward us, or anyone else. Gal 6:1 **Brothers and sisters, even if a person is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual are to restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you are not tempted as well.** Since gentleness is included in the fruit of the Spirit (5:23), it makes sense that spiritual people will take this or any other kind of action in a spirit of gentleness. That’s because, it is easy for legalistic religious people to sit in judgment on one who has suddenly yielded temptation, to convey their disapproval, heap anger, and shame, and wrath on them ostracizing them, and punishing them. But, a test of our true spirituality and Christian maturity is a readiness to guide those who stumble by the wayside back on the right road again in a sympathetic spirit, not looking toward punishment, but toward restoration. Along with spiritual maturity comes an appreciation for the fact that we are all vulnerable to temptation, and that apart from Christ, we would all fall, so this should prevent self-righteousness and bad treatment of those who have succumbed, which is why in 1 Cor 10:12, we are cautioned to restore gently, so that we don’t fall as well—mainly due to self-righteousness and spiritual pride. James also considers gentleness and good behavior as signs of spiritual maturity, wisdom and understanding of God, saying in James 3:13 **13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.** We see this gentleness in restoration again in 2 Tim 2:24-6 **24 The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, skillful in teaching, patient when wronged, 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.** We are to restore with gentleness, so that they can escape from the enemy’s trap. And we are not to spend our time contending with one another, but instead be gentle, showing every bit of consideration for other people that we can (Titus 3:2).