

WALK WORTHY OF CHRIST

Lesson Aim: To show the believers what God requires of them to walk worthy of Christ.

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson and insert the questions below where they fit your lesson for class discussion.

Introduction: God calls Christians from a life of sin and shame to one of godliness and glory. This new life is our position in Christ when we receive Him as our Savior. Now it is our responsibility to walk worthy of this position that we have in Christ by the power of the Spirit that lives in us. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the calling with which you are called" (Eph 4:1).

How has God commanded believers to live their lives? 4:1-3

Believers are commanded to walk worthy of the calling that God has given to them by maintaining a walk of good works (cf. 2:10). They are to do this with an attitude of humility ("lowliness"), of gentleness ("meekness"), and of "longsuffering" that puts up with the faults of others. They do this because they sincerely love them. They also are to maintain this walk by striving to keep the unity of the brethren through the peace that the Spirit uses to bind believers together. Can we say that we are maintaining a walk of good works with a humble, gentle attitude that is patient with the faults of people? Can we say that we are peacefully doing our part to keep unity in our church?

How do the seven unities work to draw all believers together? 4:4-6

All believers are members in **one body** of Jesus Christ to nourish and protect each other. There is **one Spirit**, Who is the same person that dwells in every believer seeking to make each one like Jesus. There is **one hope** of being with Christ forever after the resurrection. There is **one Lord** that we serve, Who is Jesus Christ. There is **one faith** for salvation and spiritual growth that comes from hearing and learning the Word of God. There is only **one baptism** that is done by the Spirit when He places a believer in the body of Christ. Water baptism is a symbol of the Spirit's baptism and follows the Spirit's baptism. There is **one God and Father** of all believers, both Jews and Greeks, which brings the unities to a climax. To believers He is "above all" (is sovereign and transcendent); He works "through all" (is and present everywhere omnipotent); He is "in you all" (is personal and intimate.) These seven unities should help us appreciate the unity that we have with all believers so we treat them as brothers and sisters and never as enemies.

What has Christ done to build churches since He went to Heaven? 4:7-11

Christ gave gifts to all believers to speak or to serve in the church (4:7-8; 1 Pet 4:10-11). Those who received leadership and speaking gifts were in turn given as gifts to the churches to build them (4:11). The **apostles** were to establish churches and give Christians the New Testament. The **prophets** were given to build the churches by their preaching and by the new revelations they received directly from God before the New Testament was completed. The **evangelists** preached the gospel among the lost like missionaries and evangelists do today. The **pastor-teachers** took care of the spiritual needs of local congregations through public preaching and teaching along with private counseling as they still do. The first two leadership positions completed their work in the first century and are not functioning today. Since everyone has received one or more gifts to be used for Christ's church work, believers need to use their gift(s) to do their part in developing a healthy and effective body of believers.

What responsibility has Christ given to the leaders of the church? 4:12-16

Christ has given His gifted leaders the responsibility to equip the other "saints" so they can do the work of the ministry and by this means the body of Christ is edified (built up). All the believers are to work in the churches, not only the leaders. The climax of this building process will be the doctrinal unity of the believers and the full knowledge of the Son of God. When that is reached the body will be fully mature, like a "perfect man" that experiences the "fullness of Christ." This will enable the church to withstand the turbulence caused by every false doctrine. The more mature a church becomes, the less likely it will become a casualty (4:14). Also, the closer it gets to spiritual maturity, the closer it gets to Christ as Head (4:15) and to fellow believers in perfect love (4:16).

How does Paul describe the walk of unbelievers? 4:17-19.

Paul described the unsaved Gentiles as "having the understanding darkened"; they had **MENTAL DARKNESS**. As a result they lived wicked, licentious lives. He went on to say they were "alienated

from the life of God"; they had **SPIRITUAL DEATH**. The Gentiles were separated from God so they were destitute of spiritual life. Then Paul said unsaved Gentiles were "past feeling"; they had **MORAL DEPRAVITY**. Gentiles had become calloused by their sins and were no longer bothered by them. Finally, Gentiles without Christ were known for their "lasciviousness...uncleanness...greediness"; they had **PHYSICAL DEGENERATION**. The Gentiles through their hard heart abandoned themselves to wanton, shameless, outrageous sensuality. They practiced every kind of moral uncleanness that they learned and invented new ones to gratify their desires without respect for the rights of others. [Bold outline is from Dr. R.V. Clearwaters]. None of these things should characterize a Christian's walk.

How can we walk worthy for Christ? 4:20-21

Our walk does not begin to please Christ until we learn of Him and we receive Him as our Savior. That is when our walk with Christ begins. Then we must strive to walk like Jesus walked (4:20; I Jn. 2:6). He is "the way, the truth and the life" (4:21; Jn 14:6). When we walk in the truth like Jesus walked, we will experience a great change in our life and we will walk worthy of Him.

What must believers do to begin a walk worthy of Christ? 4:22-24

Three infinitives are used as commands to tell believers how to walk worthy of Christ. (1) He is "to put off" the deeds of the old man as one would put off a coat. It should be done once and for all. (2) He is "to be renewed" in the attitude of his mind. This is a continual process as he grows in spiritual maturity. (3) He is "to put on" the new man. This also should be a one-time experience. The new man from Christ is a remarkable improvement over the old man from Adam. The new man consists of righteousness and godliness in contrast to the wickedness and worldliness of the old man. We can begin and continue this dynamic walk with Christ through His power to strengthen us (Phil 4:13).

What does a walk look like that is worthy of Christ? 4:25-32

Specific areas of change in the believers' walk are delineated. They are to "put off" lying, and "put on" truth. They are to "put off" wrath and very carefully "put on" anger. They are to "put off" stealing and "put on" diligent work. They are to "put off" filthy talk and "put on" gracious talk that builds up the hearers. They are not to grieve the Spirit, Who sealed us unto the day of redemption. He is seeking to bring all believers together, so we are to "put off" the sins that separate believers (4:31) and "put on" the good works that unite believers. The positive change in our conduct is the strongest proof that we are true Christians. Let us walk worthy of God's calling by doing good works!