

# WALKING WORTHY OF OUR VOCATION

## Ephesians 4.2-6: The essentials of a worth walk in our new vocation

**Theme:** Understand what a walk (lifestyle) worthy of the Lord and the Mission looks like.

**(Eph 4.1) Paul starts out the latter (practical) half of his letter by pointing out that we have a new vocation.**

- Our new life in Christ comes with a new “job”: (Eph 4.12) The work of the ministry, the work that results in the Body of Christ being edified (built up; Eph 4.16).
- That work (our vocation and mission) is supposed to be our “walk” (our lifestyle, how we live).
- We are all called to walk worthy of the work God has called us to do, the work of edifying the Body of Christ (the work of being and making disciples).

**(Eph 4.2-6) Now Paul explains himself a bit: What does a walk (lifestyle) worthy of our vocation look like?**

- (v1) Paul beseeches believers to walk worthy of their mission in life...
- (v2-6) And then he points out three essentials of a worthy walk...
  1. Essential Character Qualities
  2. Essential Disposition
  3. Essential Effort

### **I. (Eph 4.2a) Essential Character Qualities of a Worthy Walk**

#### **A. Lowliness: We need to walk/live “with all lowliness”**

1. This speaks of *humility*, and humility ought to characterize our lives as followers of Jesus Christ.
2. Paul refers to this character quality as “*lowliness*” because the opposite is “*highmindedness*.”
  - a) (Rom 12.3) Our tendency (and problem) is to think more “highly” of ourselves that we ought.
  - b) (Rev 3.14-22) We should always remember that this is part of the “spirit of our age” that we struggle against on a daily basis (in our walk in this world).
    - (1) The spirit of our age, that we must overcome if we are going to walk worthy of our Lord and the work He has given us to do, is the spirit of Laodicea (that last church).
    - (2) The word *Laodicea* is a transliteration that literally means “rights of the people.”
    - (3) (Rev 3.15-16) One aspect of this is the apathy and indifference of most church-goers.
    - (4) (Rev 3.17) But, don't miss the second aspect! “*Me-church*”. A second type of Laodicean is the self-centered Laodicean: “*I want it my way. I want what I want. And now!*”
3. (Php 2.5-8) If we ever hope to walk worthy of the vocation we have been given as Christians, we need to develop the mind (character) of Christ and think of others (the mission) before ourselves.

#### **B. Meekness: We need to walk/live “with all... meekness”**

1. Notice the word “all” associated with these two character qualities: lowliness and meekness.
  - a) Until you have all lowliness (and no highmindedness) and all meekness, you have not arrived.
  - b) We will be a “work in progress” in these two areas for the rest of our lives. So, don't think that you have “arrived” until you have all lowliness (humility) and all meekness.
  - c) And don't look down your nose at others you think aren't as far along as you!

2. Before talking about what meekness is, let's state clearly what meekness is not.
  - a) Meekness is not not being pusillanimous. A biblically meek person is not pusillanimous.
  - b) Pusillanimous: [def] Lacking courage or resolution; cowardly, faint-hearted; timid (a wimp!).
3. Meekness is seen clearly in Moses: (Num 12.3) He was the meekest man on earth.
  - a) (Exod 2.11-12) When Moses was about 40 years old, he killed a man with his bare hands.
  - b) (Exod 2.16-17) A few days later, Moses defends seven young ladies from some bully shepherds (and notices it says “shepherds,” plural). Moses stood up to several men in a fight to defend a group of ladies.
  - c) (Exod 32.19) Forty years later, when Moses is about 80 years old, in a fit of rage he smashes the two tablets of the Ten Commandments God just gave him. And then (v20) he grinds the idol of gold to powder, mixes it with water, and makes the Israelites drink it.
  - d) Moses was not like the soft, effeminate, wimpy girly-men we see in so many positions of “church leadership” today. Moses was not pusillanimous!
  - e) (Num 12.3) But yet God calls Moses the meekest man on earth! Why?
    - (1) (Num 12.7a) First: “My servant Moses...” – Submission
      - (a) Moses served the Lord; Moses chose to submit to God's as His servant.
      - (b) You are meek when, in spite of your faults, failures, and shortcomings, you submit to God as your Lord and Master (to lead your life as He pleases).
      - (c) Even a servant with a temper like Moses was meek. Why? Submission to the Lord.
    - (2) (Num 12.7b) Second: “...who is faithful in all mine house” – Obedience
      - (a) This is God's testimony of Moses: Faithful in all!
      - (b) So, again: In spite of his faults, failures, and shortcomings, Moses was meek because he obeyed God.

### C. Review: (Eph 4.2a) Essential Character Qualities of a Worthy Walk

1. If we want to walk worthy of the mission (our vocation in Christ), then we need to stop thinking in the terms of this world (and pop Christian culture) and we need start thinking biblically!
2. We need lowliness! That means we have to stop this “me-centered” Laodicean highmindedness of modern church culture today. The Church is not Home Depot and Jesus is not the Burger King!
3. We need meekness! That does not mean we become pusillanimous (effeminate, weak, soft, and pathetic!). It means we need to submit everything we are do to God, and obey Him.

## II. (Eph 4.2b) Essential Disposition of a Worthy Walk

- Disposition: [def] Predominant tendency (what characterizes your actions and reactions); attitude.

### A. First, notice the phrase “one another.”

1. Our disposition needs this focus: We walk together in the mission. We do the work together.
  - a) (Eph 2.22) We are “builded together”; we grow together.
  - b) (Eph 4.16) We will edify the Body of Christ when we do the job together, one with another.
2. We will not always agree... We will not always like each other... But, we are called to be lowly and meek so that we can labor together for the sake of the mission, our vocation in Christ.
3. That's why God's plan in our age is the local church: Here we work together in the mission.

## **B. Longsuffering: We need to walk “suffering long” with one another.**

1. That is just what “longsuffering” means: We tolerate one another; we put up with one another. And we have patience with one another.
2. (Rom 15.1) That means there will be times when we let someone else have their way (rather than pleasing ourselves, getting our way, and doing what we want; remember “me church”?).
3. And also remember: “Suffering” is never comfortable and rarely is it enjoyable. Longsuffering is even less comfortable and enjoyable!
  - a) But, I can guarantee you this: If we at Harvest Baptist Church do not choose to be longsuffering with one another, we will never accomplish the mission.
  - b) A walk worthy of the Lord and the work He has given us to do includes a disposition to suffer long with the people we are laboring with.
4. So get this well grounded in your mind: We are dysfunctional!
  - a) And we will be dysfunctional until Jesus comes back and finishes His work in us.
  - b) So, develop an attitude and disposition of longsuffering so that you can tolerate the brethren.

## **C. Forbearing: We need to “forbear” one another in love**

1. Forbearing is basically the action and reaction that comes from longsuffering (they go together).
2. Forbear: [def] To hold back and exercise self-control when subject to annoyance or provocation.
  - a) The dictionary gives as a synonym of *forbear*: **Sacrifice**.
  - b) You have to sacrifice yourself (and the things you want to do, or how you want to do them) for others and for the sake of the mission.
3. If you choose to follow Christ and obey His Word, you are guaranteed to be subject to annoyance and provocation (mostly from the brethren, but at times from lost people also).
  - a) That means you need the right disposition (the right attitude and tendency of reaction).
  - b) You need to love the person who is annoying you, and put up with him (forbearance).

## **III. (Eph 4.3-6) Essential Effort of a Worthy Walk**

### **A. Paul says that we have to “endeavor” to walk worthy of our new vocation (the mission/ministry)**

1. Don't make the mistake of thinking that all of this should just come naturally. It won't!
2. Endeavor: [def] To exert oneself to do something; to make an effort; to strive.
3. We need to endeavor (strive, work at) keeping the unity among us, in the bond of peace.

### **B. Understand what this implies: There already is unity in the Church.**

1. We are called to keep the unity that exists, not create unity among us.
2. The unity we are called to keep is the “unity of the Spirit” (that is what binds us together).
  - a) Christ is the Head of the Body and we (true, born-again believers) are the members.
  - b) Just like our physical head sends signals to the members of our bodies (to do what the head wants), so Christ sends “signals” by His Spirit so we, the members, will do what He wants.
  - c) The unity exists because we have all received the same Spirit who guides us according to the will and desires of the Head, Christ.
3. The problem arises when the members of the Body don't want to do what the Spirit says.
  - a) We grieve the Spirit by doing that which is contrary to the will of God (Eph 4.30).
  - b) We quench the Spirit by not doing that which God desires us to do (1Thes 5.19).

- c) And remember how God's Spirit guides us! He guides us by the Word of God—Scripture!
  - (1) (Rom 16.17-18) Those who choose to not follow Scripture are those who choose to not endeavor to keep the unity within the Church.
  - (2) We need to work hard at following Scripture because that is how we keep the unity!

**C. (Eph 4.4-6) Our unity one with another has seven aspects.**

- Each one of these seven aspects needs to exist for us to be in unity one with another
1. One Body: (1Cor 12.13) Only true, born-again believers can be in unity. Anyone outside the Body of Christ is separate (regardless of how “nice” they are, they do not have the Spirit that unites us).
  2. One Spirit: (Rom 8.9) Only those who have received the Spirit (true, born-again believers) can be in unity because it is the Spirit who unites us.
  3. One Hope: (Titus 2.13) Our hope (our sure guarantee) is that Christ will come for us. That hope builds unity among us when we all live for that day!
  4. One Lord: There will never be unity among believers while there are believers who say, “Lord! Lord!” and yet do not do what the Lord says. Unity is kept when we all serve the same Master.
  5. One Faith: (Jude 3, 17) This “one faith” refers to the one body of doctrine that was once delivered unto the saints (v3); it is that faith (body of doctrine) that was given to us through the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ (v17).
    - a) Therefore, Scripture is our “one faith” and Scripture provides our unity. Unity is kept when all the members endeavor to keep the unity by following Scripture.
    - b) Dreams, visions, and mystical promptings divide the Body of Christ. Scripture unites.
  6. One Baptism: (1Cor 12.13) The Baptism of the Holy Ghost, common among all true believers, unites us because it makes us all members of the same Body (joined by the same Spirit).
    - a) All other baptisms in the Bible (and there are seven in total) are pictures and types of this one.
    - b) This “one true baptism” of the Holy Spirit is not a “second blessing.” It is common to all.
  7. One God and Father of all:
    - a) God is the Father above all things because He is the Sovereign Creator and Lord.
    - b) But, He is the spiritual Father of all Christians (not of all men). We have been born into His family by His Spirit, and when we live as His sons, striving to please Him and not ourselves, then we will be keeping the unity in the family.

**(Eph 4.1) We are called to walk worthy of our new vocation in Christ.**

- Vocation: The work of the ministry that edifies the Body of Christ (discipleship).
- Walk: Our lives ought to revolve around our vocation, the mission of being and making disciples.

**(Eph 4.2-6) How do we do that? There are certain essential ingredients of a worthy walk...**

1. Essential Character Qualities: Lowliness and Meekness
2. Essential Disposition (attitude and tendency): Longsuffering and forbearing one another in love.
3. Essential Effort: God expects all of us in His family to put forth the effort to get along so that we can get the job done.
  - That means we need to set aside this “me-church” mentality of Laodicea (“rights of the people”).
  - And we need to strive to follow Scripture while striving to work with one another in the mission.