
Ephesians

Chapter 4

Ephesians 4:1

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation to which you are called.

The books of Ephesians is said to divide here between the "theological" or "doctrinal" portion, chapters 1 to 3, and the "practical" or "application" section of chapters 4 to 6. But you have probably noticed that, when the Bible is taught expositionally verse by verse, most theoretical theology proves to be immensely practical, and the application sections are seen to contain much profound doctrine.

But it is true that there is a literary break here and a definite intention to develop practical advice which is derived from the earlier teaching.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of Ephesians are among the most valuable portions of scripture for teaching us about the will of God for us as individuals. You will go a long way toward mastering the principles of the Christian life by mastering the ideas contained in these chapters, indeed in all of Ephesians.

Chapter 4 deals a great deal with mental attitude, and it begins with Paul's great mental attitude under maximum pressure. In this chapter we study:

1. The principle of mental attitude
2. The unity of the members of the Body of Christ - the team concept
3. Principles involved with spiritual warfare (v. 8)
4. The exercise of our spiritual gifts
5. The development of unity and coordinated function in the church.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord"

Paul accepts his imprisonment as part of the plan of God for his life. He is not blaming anyone for his problems, least of all God. He considers this merely an event in his life. He knows that "all things work together for good for those who love

God and are called..." During this imprisonment he wrote the mighty works of Ephesians, Philipians, Colossians, and Philemon, indicating strongly that he was anything but defeated in very tough circumstances.

The word "therefore" refers to the previous chapters' teaching. In those chapters, the reader's attention is drawn to the importance of taking in the Word and becoming "rooted and grounded" in truth.

The impossible is accomplished through Grace. Through knowing God and His mind, the believer begins to see God and realize that God is able to do "exceedingly abundantly" above all that he can ask or think.

We are not really aware of the tremendous assets we have in Christ until we begin to see some of the principles of the Word applied to our lives. Then we develop the strong positive mental attitude that gives control and production the life.

"beseech you", PARAKALEW, "to call to; to cheer on; to exhort; to excite"

This Greek word carries the idea of someone being alongside to cheer you on. Paul is not begging; he is not on his knees to us pleading. He is heartily encouraging us. He wants us to be successful in the Christian life, in the operation of the life of the spirit, in the intake and application of truth, in the function of the filling of the Holy Spirit and production of gold, silver, and precious stones.

Paul know that we must have the desire and volition to establish our manner of life on Bible principles, on grace principles. Therefore, he begins his discussion of the Christian life with some principles of mental attitude.

"that you walk worthy of the calling"

The word "walk" is PERIPATEW in Greek, referring to "conduct of life".

The word "worthy" is AKSIOS, meaning "worthy" or "deserving", in classical Greek conveying the meaning of "high price".

The word "calling" is KLEISIS, "a calling; a legal summons; an invitation"

A calling is not some sort of mystical sense of one's career or destiny. It is an actual summons from someone of importance. God calls the Christian!

But how do you know when you've been called? What's the difference between being "called" to the ministry and just following your own desires? And where is the objective evidence that one has been called to preach, teach, be a missionary, etc.?

The word "call" today is so abused as to be totally useless. Young people are led to expect anything from skywriting to visions at the foot of their beds. A lot of people just "fake it", describing their call, knowing that there is almost no way to contradict it.

Many people answer "calls" which are just the rumblings of their emotions, or their responses to desires for approbation, for power, for recognition. And because keen young people are encouraged to "step out for the Lord", they step much too soon and much too far.

In the Bible, a "calling" is objective published information from a specific person. God does not provide information to people outside of His written Word. In the Bible God gives complete information to every Christian about His plan, His will for the Christian life, His program of personal ministry. There is no need to mistake God's will or miss it. It is all written down, and there's nothing about it that is mystical.

"wherewith you are called", the aorist passive indicative of KALEW, "to call"

The passive voice of the verb indicates that the believer is called by the Lord directly.

The Lord does His talking through the Word. Therefore, a believer will receive his calling through the Word of God. Any other source of information is bogus!

The whole time that a believer is on earth, he will be "walking". He does his own walking. The word "worthy" indicates that God wants the believer's walking to be accompanied by a proper mental attitude.

The walking is done in a manner that is compatible with one's position in Christ, with God's over-all plan, and with divine principles of production.

A "vocation", a "calling", means that there is an alternative to unproductiveness, an alternative to

living a life of misery and unhappiness, an alternative to having a mental attitude that is in terrible condition.

The Christian life is designed for happiness (joy) and production. Philippians is about happiness; whatever you are doing, whatever is happening to you, you can have happiness all the time. Ephesians and Colossians answer the question, "What is the believer-priest doing on the earth, anyway?"

You don't enter into the production phase of your calling until your mental attitude is correct. How can you tell when your mental attitude is squared away? The answer is in these chapters.

Ephesians 4:2

With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.

"with" - META, "associated with". Associated with the worthy walk are "lowliness and meekness"

"lowliness" - TAPEINOPHROSUNEI, "sound objective thinking according to an absolute standard"

Because the word "lowliness" was used to translate this verb in the KJV, there have been many strange ideas floated by Christians over the generations. Often, acts of humility or submitting oneself to hardships or degradation, certain things which place the believer in a lowly position, are thought to be the means of spiritual attainment. Many believers are impressed by the things they, or others, have given up or suffered.

But TAPEINOPHROSUNEI is NOT self-effacement. It is one of the key words in the Bible for Grace thinking. It one of the key ingredients to the true Grace life in which SELF is out of the picture, and in which God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the WHOLE picture.

This in a compound noun in the Greek. The emphasis is on PHROSUNEI, from the verb PHRONEW, meaning "to do good, objective thinking; to understand; to be in one's sound senses".

TAPEINO refers to orientation to an absolute standard, All good objective thinking must have a standard. Subjective thinking has no standards, calls on emotions and outside opinions, has no absolutes.

But this noun demands that a believer has standards, namely, the Word of God locked in the soul. And there must be a massive, continuous intake of truth to get these absolute standards.

TAPEINOPHROSUNEI is the first in this list because the rest of the list of characteristics would be worthless without it.

READ Acts 20:17-21. Paul, in his speech to the elders of Ephesus uses this word. He shows that he has had this mental attitude and that it has enabled him to have the ministry among the Gentiles that he has had.

READ Phil. 2:1-8. Compare also Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 5:5 (being "clothed with humility")

"meekness" - PRAUTEIS, "gentleness in the sense of true sensitivity".

This word refers to a mental attitude based on the principle of correct orientation to life, a correct mental focus directed toward God and toward other people. The idea of "thoughtfulness" is certainly present. This is NOT meekness in the sense of being wimpy. It IS one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, Gal. 5:22.

You must know Bible truth before you can apply it. A proper mental attitude is the result of learning the Word of God, applying it by faith, and producing the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The results will be perfect peace, instinctive love for all people, kindness, true friendship. As a result there will be the ABSENCE of insubordination, malice, hatred, envy, bitterness, jealousy, etc.

You are, right now, whatever is in your mind. "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." You are not what you appear to be; you are what you think.

For the growing Christian, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee."

"long-suffering" - MAKROTHUMIA, "patience toward others".

The mental attitude of long-suffering recognizes the spiritual progress, or lack of progress, of other people. Every person in a congregation is either growing in Christ or is in a state of backsliding, reversion.

Long-suffering is patience towards other people. Every community has people who are hateful, implacable, antagonistic, bitter, vengeful. These people malign, gossip, judge, criticize, complain, ostracize. But "long-suffering" means that the believer's attitude toward such people is patience.

A long-suffering Christian does not hate, does not seek revenge, does not malign or gossip, is not jealous or envious, does not counterattack.

Long-suffering does not mean that you pat your foot and wait for your chance.

Topic: MENTAL ATTITUDE

"forbearing one another in love"

"Forbearing" is ANECHOMAI, "to put up with; to endure; to take up the slack; to restrain oneself"

A believer can stand his ground because of a good defensive position. You do not have to give way to the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune". You can be stable and take a stand because of Bible truth in your soul. You can refrain from an improper response because you know the correct response.

"in love" refers to a lack of mental attitude sins. It is the result of a totally relaxed mental attitude toward others. This is the characteristic which allows a gracious interest in others without pride or prejudice getting in the way.

The evidence that one has true "love for the brethren" is in the observation of these mental attitude.

The opposites of "gracious interest" are:

- Bigotry as seen in ethnic humor, snide remarks, hateful actions.
- Self-promotion, one-upmanship in conversation, continually talking about oneself, one's experiences, showing off.
- Indignation accompanied by sarcasm or bitter talk.
- Insisting on one's own way, ideas, plans, programs.

All this shows lack of interest in others, hence, lack of love, hence, need for growth in these areas of mental attitude.

Ephesians 4:3

Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

"Endeavoring" - present active participle of SPUDADZW, "to hasten; to be zealous; to be diligent".

Here is a case of the Greek participle being used as the imperative, a usage that is peculiar to the koine Greek and to the papyri. So the translation is "Be diligent!", "Be zealous!" The infinitive "to keep" shows the area of diligence.

"to keep" - TEREW, "to keep; to guard"

The "**unity of the Spirit**" is a condition which exists continually as long as a grace status is maintained.

The concept of unity is brought up again in 4:13 and the following verses. Unity among people comes about when there is unity of thinking. It is edification and Christian growth that causes believers to be unified in their thinking, because the content of every person's thinking is the same, the Word of God. Without the unity of thinking that comes about through learning Bible truth, everyone is free to think independently. This results in a lack of unity.

The word "unity" here refers to a common essence, to the characteristics we share as members of the family of God, the Body of Christ, the things listed in verses 4 to 6.

An illustration of unity of thinking and purpose is found in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, where the Jews under Zerubbabel rebuilt the temple and the wall with tools and weapons in hand.

1 Peter 3:8, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." In this verse there are four chief characteristics of Christian unity.

"having compassion" - SUMPATHEIS, "suffering with". The English word "sympathy" is a transliteration of this Greek word. This is the ability to share with another person because of understanding in the spiritual frame of reference. Bible truth can be communicated because of knowledge of what the other is going through and how to help. One believer can think when another is not able to think; this is a great help when someone is going through a time of great stress.

"love as brethren" - PHILADELPHOS. This is rapport love, and it grows as the Christian grows, through edification. It is rapport and compatibility between two or more believers based on applied truth in the soul.

"pitiful" - EUSPLAGTHNOS. Literally, "happy innards", therefore "good emotions". The word "pitiful" in the KJV times (early 17th century) carried this meaning of sympathy and "having pity", but the English word carries an unhappy, unpleasant connotation today. The ability to have good feelings is the result of "mind over emotions", Bible doctrine leading the thinking so as to produce good feelings, in this case, towards others.

"courteous" - a mental attitude of graciousness. Grace thinking leads to grace action.

In all four of these cases from 1 Peter 3:8, the believer who has "one mind" thinks doctrine, and this is the stabilizing factor.

"in the bond of peace" - in the bond of security.

Ephesians 4:4

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling.

Chapters 4 to 6 are the chapters of the mature Christian life, of the *normal* Christian life. These verses are the description of the "conformed" life which is mentioned in Romans 8:29. These verses describe how to be conformed to the image of Christ, and everything for this life and for the life to come is described as a gift of God's grace.

Salvation Grace: non-meritorious, by means of Grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christian Life Grace: God provides living grace. Ephesians 1:3 points out that there is an escrow account of blessings in heaven, in Christ. Some people take advantage of Grace; others do not.

Maturity Grace: James 4:6 "...he gives more grace...God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." The grace life of the growing Christian includes (1) occupation with Christ, (2) stability, "this grace wherein we stand", (3) capacity for life, (4) unlimited blessings, (5) victory with Christ in the spiritual warfare, victory over circumstances, victory over evil.

You know you are growing and have reached some level of maturity when you are walking in the plan of God, know your position and responsibilities, and exercise your privileges as a child of God.

"There is one body"

THE BODY OF CHRIST

Each member of the Trinity is related to the Body of Christ.

God the Father place Christ as the Head of the Body.

Eph. 1:22,23, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all."

Col. 1:18,19; Eph. 5:23,24

The Holy Spirit forms the Body of Christ and sustains the Body.

1 Cor. 12:12-14, "For as the body in one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."

1 Cor. 6:15; 6:19,20.

Christ is the Savior of the Body.

Eph. 5:23, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body."

Eph. 5:25,30.

Christ is the Sanctifier of the Body.

Heb. 2:11, "For both he that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

Heb. 13:12, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered outside the gate."

The Body of Christ participates with the Lord Jesus Christ in tactical and strategic victory over Satan and his forces of evil.

Eph. 1:22,23, "And has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all."

Every Christian is a member of the Body of Christ. The Body includes Gentile believers and Jewish believers.

Ephesians 3:16, "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

The Body of Christ is the recipient of many spiritual gifts.

Rom. 12:4,5, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

1 Cor. 12:7,8, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit. For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom, to another, the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit..."

The communication of Bible truth is the responsibility of the Body of Christ and of those who are given communication gifts.

Eph. 4:11 and the following verses describe the process of church building through communication of doctrine. This is discussed in the Ephesians course for chapter 4.

The objective of the Body in this life is to live the Grace life.

Eph. 4:15,16, "But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

"and one Spirit"

The Holy Spirit does many things for the believer at the time of salvation, and forever afterwards during this life and on throughout eternity. It is very important at this point that you review the wide range of scriptures that describe the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. Please refer to the topical study which was included with Lesson 5. If you need a copy of the file, send a request to me at <wdoud@bga.com>.

Topic: HOLY SPIRIT

"**even as you are called**" - the verb KALEW is an aorist passive indicative.

Greek scholars regard the usage in this verse as the nomic aorist, indicating that this is a doctrine that is to be regarded as axiomatic. Therefore, every believer is part of the plan of God; you are in the plan of God, whether you know it or not, whether you like it or not.

The passive voice of the verb indicates that every believer receives this calling from God the Holy Spirit; and the indicative means that this is a dogmatic assertion. Every believer is in one body, elected.

"**in one hope**" - ELPIS, "expectation; confidence; prospect"

"**your calling**" - the descriptive genitive of the noun "calling". Being a member of God's family, the Body of Christ, in your station in life!

Ephesians 4:5

One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
"One Lord"

The Royal Family has only one Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Lord of all believers.

Some Christians say, "If Christ is not Lord of all, he is not Lord at all." This is an untrue statement! A person who says this simply does not understand anything about the relationship between Christ and His Body. And it is horribly misleading to say this because it directs the focus of a person's thinking on himself instead of on the Lord.

Christ is always Lord. If you are a Christian and you do not acknowledge Christ as Lord - if you live apart from the plan of God and shun His will for your life - as a child of God you will receive chastisement! "Whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and scourges..." Oh yes, Christ is Lord, and you'll learn that one way or the other!

"one faith" - PISTIS.

Everyone is saved the same way. This is true ecumenicism; those who have placed their faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ are members of the Church, members of His Body, members of God's family.

"one baptism"

This is a good place to study the doctrines relating to baptism. There are actually seven types of baptism mentioned in the Bible, including the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's important to be able to distinguish among the types of baptism and to know which type is being discussed in a particular context.

Four of the types of baptism are real baptisms and three are ritual baptisms.

Real Baptisms

The Baptism of Moses

The Baptism of the Cross (or Cup)

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The Baptism of Fire

Ritual Baptisms

The Baptism of John

The Baptism of Jesus

The Baptism of the Christian Believer

Topic: BAPTISM

Ephesians 4:6

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

"One God and Father of all"

This is God the Father. Both the Son and the Holy Spirit have been mentioned in this listing. And these seven items which unify all believers can be thought of as the family seal, or the escutcheon on the shield of the believer.

The phrase "of all" refers to all members of the royal family, the Body of Christ.

"who is above all" - literally, "the one over all"

This stresses positional location and authority. God the Father is sovereign in authority. He is the author of the divine plan.

"and through all"

This describes the omnipresence of God the Father. All the plan and production of God are manifestations of His character, His essence, His qualities. God is everywhere, personally present. The whole of God is in every place.

This is not pantheism, because pantheism denies the person of God.

God, in the totality of His essence, without diffusion, expansion, multiplication, or division, penetrates and fills the universe.

Psalm 139:7,8,18; Jer. 23:23,24; Acts 17:27.

God is also free to be local, such as on the mountain with Moses, in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle; on the Mount of Transfiguration with three of the apostles.

"and in you all"

God actually indwells every member of His royal family.

All members of the royal family have the same Father, just as all members of the royal family have the same Savior, and just as all enter the palace (are placed in the Body) the same way, through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

While all members of the royal family are unified by these attributes of nobility, all do not have the same functions, nor do all achieve the same stage of growth at the same time.

Topic: ESSENCE OF GOD

Ephesians 4:7

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

While we live out our lives on earth, God's plan for us includes giving us a measure of His grace. We are left on this earth so that we can grow towards maximum spiritual maturity, so that we can

enjoy prosperity, and so that we can see the grace of God in our adversities.

When we reach heaven, there will be no more tears, no more sorrows, and best of all, there will be no more sin and no more desire to sin!

But in this life God is able to demonstrate to us His wonderful grace in times of maximum stress, in times of great need, when we are physically worn out and broken down, and even when we have sinned and need to be forgiven, restored to fellowship, and set on the road to maturity again..

Ephesians 4:4-6 have shown us what is provided for all of us at salvation, the great assets which we have as members of God's family and as part of the Body of Christ. In the verses from 4:7-16, we are shown what God provides to us after salvation, His post-salvation provision.

"but unto every one"

But word "but" is used to show that there is a difference between that which is common to all members of the royal family (one Lord, one faith) and that which differentiates among believers. Each individual Christian is given a unique capacity, by grace, to function and grow as a Christian and to produce as a member of the Body of Christ.

The words "unto every one", or "unto each one" takes into consideration the differences among a wide variety of believers.

"is given grace" - aorist passive indicative of DIDOMI, thus "has been given".

There is a unique grace package designed for each Christian. The aorist tense of the verb "given" shows that there was a time in the past when this grace package was given. The passive voice shows that we were given this by God.

The plan of God for every believer includes:

- Salvation and the assurance of a glorious eternal future
- The opportunity to walk in the Spirit and be occupied with Christ.
- The opportunity to live in the Word of God, acquire divine wisdom and prudence, and be able to make decisions and solve problems according to God's divine viewpoint.
- Peace that passes understanding.
- A great happiness (joy) that does not depend on circumstances, people, or things.

- A well laid out "career" of serving God, exercising spiritual gifts, evangelizing and teaching, producing "gold, silver, and precious stones."

There is something that prevents Christians from having the happiness and prosperity in this life that comes from being a member of God's family. What's missing in many lives is Bible doctrine in the soul!

Indifference to the Word of God, rejection, apathy, or antagonism toward Bible truth keeps many believers dirt poor and malnourished spiritually, in spite of their being members of God's royal family. People try to reach happiness by substituting something else for the Word of God, such as some religious experience, emotionalism, ecstasies; but any attempt to live for the Lord apart from God's plan of grace will cause a person to miss the boat.

But ...

"according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

This is a gift without any strings attached. The Lord Jesus Christ was the greatest gift that could be given, and He was given without measure to any person who believes on Him, who calls on Him.

In the same degree, without measure, grace is provided in the plan of God to supply the needs and provide all the assets required for a successful life on earth for every Christian.

The letter to the Ephesians is one of the principal "how to" books of the Bible. In these chapters we learn what the plan of God is, how we can become a part of it, how we can have access to "all blessings in heavenly places in Christ", how we can become powerful Christian operatives in the grace of God.

Ephesians 4:8

Wherefore, he says, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

"wherefore" - "for this reason".

The word "wherefore" follows a conclusion in order to allow inferences about the conclusion.

"he says" - LEGW, "he says" or "the scripture says".

What follows is a documentation of the conclusion and is a quotation from Psalm 68:18.

"when he ascended up on high" - ANABAINW.

These verses refer to the ascension of Christ as part of His victory over the forces of Satan in the ongoing spiritual conflict.

According to Greek scholars, this verb is in a tense called a "culminative aorist". It views the ascension of Christ in its entirety but regards it from the viewpoint of its results, namely, the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father as the unique person of the universe.

Topic: ASCENSION OF CHRIST

It is a blessing to remember Eph. 2:5,6, which tells us that "even when we were dead in sins, (God) has made us alive together with Christ (by grace are you saved), and has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

We are saved by grace! We are given living grace! Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father! We are seated with Him! Therefore, we are already placed in a position of victory with the One who will have ultimate victory!

We are there to observe when His enemies shall be made His footstool!

"he led captivity captive" - aorist active indicative of AICHMALWTEUW.

This verb means either "to take captives in battle" or "to lead a triumphal procession of one's own soldiers along with their captives."

The consensus of the commentators which I studied is that this phrase is a reference to Christ leading the Christians who had previously died, that is, they died prior to his ascension. This would include all Old Testament believers and those saved during Christ's lifetime. They have been residing in Paradise (also called "Abraham's bosom") until the Ascension of Christ. They are called captives because they do not have a resurrection body yet. They will not have a resurrection body until the second coming of Christ, 1 Cor. 15:51-54.

There are references to Paradise in Luke 23:43; Luke 16:23; Gen. 37:5; 1 Cor. 15:55; and Hab. 2:5.

I think this view is the most likely from several that have been presented in many commentaries; but the documentation for this opinion is sketchy. I base my opinion on the fact that, to me, the tenor of scripture seems to be least disturbed by this version of the account.

"and gave gifts unto men" - "distributed gifts unto men".

Here is a reference to the distribution of spiritual gifts among believers of this age. There have been many books and written about spiritual gifts over many generations of Bible teachers. I have read many of these publications over the years along with my Bible studies; but I still don't feel that I can be dogmatic about much that has been claimed.

Without question, the Lord Jesus Christ has made available some sort of divine enabling power to every Christian, i.e., "a gift or gifts." These are spiritual gifts, and a number of scriptures show that the Holy Spirit is intimately involved both in the supplying of spiritual gifts and in the exercise of these gifts. See chapters 12 to 14 of 1 Corinthians.

Where I have trouble is in the area of discerning one's spiritual gift or being sure that one has some particular gift or other.

I have heard many men claim, for example, to have the spiritual gift of pastor or "pastor-teacher," and I have heard a few claim even to be apostles or prophets. But I have never heard a good explanation of how those men discovered that they had this gift, other than to cite certain circumstantial evidence that led them to think they had the gift. (Claims of miracles I discount entirely.)

Several times I have asked men "How do you tell the difference between discerning that you have a communication gift and simply deciding that being a pastor is what you want to do?" I have not heard a good answer.

Nevertheless, we see that in Eph. 4:11-16, some have been given communication gifts, those of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher - divine enablings to be used to "feed the flock of God", to bring us to unity, to be conformed to the image of Christ, to be productive Christians.

Until I have better information, then, I think I'll regard any Christian who is doing the work of "feeding the flock" by thoroughly teaching the Word of God to Christians as having a communication gift and a divine enabling for the work.

I'll leave the titles and other accoutrements of religion for someone else to work out. Those who occupy pulpits, or who rule as elders, and do not teach the Word of God, are not "pastors" ("shepherds" or "feeders"), anyway. They are either impostors, or they have communication gifts

and are not using them. In either case they are best avoided.

Ephesians 4:9,10

(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Verses 9 and 10 are a parenthetical expression for the purpose of amplifying the statement in verses 7 and 8.

The following comments have been transcribed from taped messages of R. B. Thieme, Jr., Pastoral Messages on Ephesians, 1963.

"Christ's body was in the grave, His spirit was in the presence of the Father, and His soul descended to a region called Hades (Greek) or Sheol (Hebrew).

"All believers from Adam and Eve up to the Resurrection of Christ, who had died, stayed in one compartment of SHEOL, known as Paradise, or Abraham's Bosom. Those who died without Christ prior to the Resurrection were sent to Torments.

"Prior to the Resurrection of Christ, no human beings were in heaven; all believers checked in to Paradise in the heart of the earth. Reference: Luke 16:19 and following.

"There is also a place called Tartarus which is a residence for certain of the fallen angels (demons) who were involved in the events chronicled in Genesis 6. They are locked up there until the Judgment of the Great White Throne.

"Jesus Christ was not in Hell, He was in Hades. Hades has two divisions, Paradise for the believer, and Torments for the unbeliever. Hell, and the lake of fire and brimstone, is reserved for the future."

Ephesians 4:11

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

This part of Ephesians chapter 4, verses 11 to 16, is one of the most important passages for understanding what God's plan is for individuals and churches. Here the Lord provides communicators with spiritual gifts which enable them to teach us God's word with insight and accuracy. Here is the outline of a believer's growth from spiritual childhood to maturity, from being a victim of today's

crisis to being a victory with Jesus Christ on the battlefield of spiritual warfare. Here the church, a body of learning, growing, functioning saints, enables its own edification by the coordinated functioning of mature individuals.

Chester McCalley, the pastor of Beth Haven Church in North Kansas City, Missouri, says that personal growth in Christ, and the growth of a local church, is very much dependent on two activities, FEEDING and BEING FED. His lessons entitled "The Fed and the Feeder" describe how a pastor prepares substantial and nourishing "meals" of spiritual food, providing his congregation with the quantity and quality of teaching that are needed for growing in Christ. But, he says, to be fed one has to show up for meals and partake; and a Christian who will not receive teaching or who fails by faith to adapt doctrine to his life, will show ever-increasing signs of spiritual malnutrition.

"The Christian who does not understand what God has done in the past, and does not have faith in what God will do in the future, will be overwhelmed by today's crisis." Chester McCalley

1 Peter 5:12, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: FEED THE FLOCK of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind."

Deuteronomy 8:3, "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

We live by God's Word, that which proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus". And it is our pastors - our shepherds - who have the duty to provide us with this nourishment, lest we waste away in spiritual malnutrition!

The spiritual gifts, which were given by the Lord Jesus Christ, include those mentioned here, that of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. Here is an outline study of spiritual gifts provided by my pastor, Bob Bolender, of Austin Bible Church, in Austin, Texas.

Spiritual Gifts

I. Introduction and Definition.

A. God has a purpose in life for each and every believer.

1. Life-long purpose (Jer. 1:5; Ps. 139:16; Matt. 6:27).
2. Short-term purposes (Acts 16:6 Paul is forbidden to go to Asia, cp.

Acts 18:19-21; 19:1-41 where Paul bears some of his greatest fruit in

Asia).

B. To facilitate the believer's fulfillment of that purpose, God has provided spiritual gifts.

1. During this present dispensation, the distribution of spiritual gifts is universal. Every Church Age believer has (at least) one (Rom. 12:3,6; Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10).

2. During previous dispensations, each and every believer had a purpose in life, or a work-assignment, but the giving of spiritual gifts was not universal. The Spirit of God would come upon a person for a specific time or reason, and then depart just as suddenly (Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6,19; 15:14; Num. 11:17-30). Moses expresses his earnest desire (Num. 11:29) was for the universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit such as we enjoy in this present age!

3. Spiritual gifts (charisma) are given entirely by grace (charis), and the assignment of one gift versus another gift are not reflections of individual human merit or demerit.

4. Passages which speak of spiritual gifts, and "list" examples of such include Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; 13:8-12; 1 Cor. 14 is the application of 1 Cor. 12-13 to the particular circumstances in Corinth, but we gain great principles there as well; Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).

a. Peter (1 Pet. 4:10-11) gives the simplest breakdown of gifts when he divides them between communication gifts and service gifts.

b. Paul gives more detailed distinctions of gifts. Eph. 4:11-13 should be taken in context with what Paul has already written in Romans and 1st Corinthians. In Eph. 4, Paul is describing what are often referred to as the leadership gifts: Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, and Pastor- Teacher. I prefer to think of them as the equipping gifts, because they

are designed for the equipping of the saints for the work of service (Eph. 4:12).

5. The purpose for spiritual gifts.

a. For the common good (of the entire body of Christ) (1 Cor. 1:7).

b. For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, and for the building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12).

c. For serving one another (1 Pet. 4:10).

6. Who gives these spiritual gifts? The Holy Spirit is referred to as the giver of these gifts (1 Cor. 12:11). The Lord Jesus Christ is referred to as the giver of the "leadership gifts" (Eph. 4:11). These are delegated responsibilities, of course, because ultimately everything is given by the Father (James 1:17). This is the Trinitarian perspective that is important to maintain.

II. Development: The Calling to the Ministry.

A. The example of Paul.

1. Paul was saved on the Damascus road (Acts 9:4-6). This is salvation calling.

2. Paul was called to the ministry on the street called Straight, in the house of Judas (Acts 9:11,15,16). This is lifelong-purpose calling.

3. Paul was called to the specific task of the first missionary journey while ministering in Antioch (Acts 13:3). This is short-term purpose calling.

B. The example of Timothy.

1. Timothy was saved in his youth (2 Tim. 3:15). This is salvation calling.

2. Timothy was called to the ministry under the Apostle Paul's ministry (Acts 16:1-3). This is lifelong-purpose calling. Paul was the Apostle under whose ministry Timothy was trained for his gift of Pastor-Teacher.

3. Timothy was called to the specific ministry of Ephesus upon Paul's departure from that place (1 Tim. 1:3). This is short-term purpose calling.

4. Timothy had a problem with "neglect" of his spiritual gift (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). Others needed similar reminders, such as Archippus (Col. 4:17). Paul, the older man, was sensitive to Timothy's (and Archippus') gift and its use.

C. The example of Samuel.

1. Samuel was saved as a small boy (1 Sam. 1:28).

2. Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli the priest (1 Sam. 2:11,18,21,26). This is short-term

purpose calling. Samuel trained under Eli. Samuel served to be an encouragement to Eli, when his own sons were certainly a disappointment to him.

3. Samuel was called as a Prophet to the Lord (1 Sam. 3:1-21). This is lifelong-purpose calling. Eli, the older man, was the one who first recognized the calling of the Lord.

III. Development: Training for spiritual gift operation.

A. The spiritual gift is an entrusted treasure, which God intends to be used for its design and purpose (1 Cor. 9:17; 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:14).

B. The spiritual gift is not to be neglected, nor allowed to grow cold (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). The best training is use! Paul was constantly sending Timothy here and there for the use of his gift. Christ sent His disciples out on training ministries (Matt. 10:5-42).

C. Believers need to be trained and equipped in the use of their spiritual gift.

1. The ministry of the Evangelist and the Pastor-Teacher, in the local church setting, is designed to train and equip all believers for the work of service (Eph. 4:12).

2. The curriculum for training in every spiritual gift is the Word of God in its full counsel (2 Tim. 3:16,17).

3. The training for every spiritual gift is in the realm of God the Father, and is therefore Paternal in scope (Heb. 13:20,21).

4. The Biblical model for a training institution is not the Pharisaical schools of learning (Acts 22:3), or any form of secular educational process (1 Cor. 1:20,21). It is illustrated both by Christ and His walking ministry with the twelve disciples (Acts 10:38-43), and by Paul and His working ministry with his associates/trainees (2 Tim. 3:10,11).

Ephesians 4:12

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;

What is your greatest desire or goal for yourself and for your Christian community? I answer the question for myself by referring to two Bible passages: Acts 2:41-47 and Acts 16:4,5.

Acts 2:41, "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

"And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

"And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

"And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common;

"and they {began} selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

"And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

"praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."

Acts 16:4,5, "Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees, which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.

"So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily."

These scriptures show that:

1. Apostles and teachers were teaching the Bible continually and people were soaking it up (positive to Bible teaching).
2. Christians were growing in grace and being strengthened.
3. The edification was producing great unity among believers so that they enjoyed wonderful fellowship together.
4. The Christians enjoyed a wonderful reputation and testimony for Christ in the community.
5. The local churches were enjoying a time of great productivity, both in the production of divine good and in reproduction of spiritual progeny.
6. This occurred in many locations, not just in Jerusalem, and not just as a spinoff of the miraculous events on the Day of Pentecost.

Now - how were these wonderful conditions brought about? Answer: by the process described in Ephesians 4:11-16 !!

What keeps a church from growing and prospering, from edifying itself as a local body?

Answer: when individual Christians fail to be edified and equipped, either through their own neglect or the neglect of the "feeders", a group will fail to achieve unity and will not operate through the filling of the Holy Spirit in the sphere of love. This will result in a lack of "body" growth and effective functioning.

When a church is not growing and functioning it may be because there is no effective teaching.

Where there is good teaching, individuals may fail to grow, and many things can cause this, such as:

- Failure to stay in fellowship and to be consistently filled with the Holy Spirit
- Failure to believe and obey the doctrine being taught
- Failure to exercise Faith-Rest and other victory principles
- Failure to be occupied with Christ, to be Grace oriented, to live in the Word of God.

Eph. 4:11-16 provide the keys to satisfying the commands of verses 1 to 3 and 17 to 32, SHOULD YOU SO DESIRE!

How does a Christian "walk worthy of the vocation to which he is called?" Verses 11 to 16 make this concept very clear and give concrete steps to follow. YOU ARE CALLED! There is no point in approaching the Christian Life half-heartedly or on a part-time basis. YOU must identify with the "YOU" of this chapter!

Read the following scriptures carefully, giving thought to these ideas.

Matt. 4:21; 1 Cor. 1:14; 2 Cor. 13:11; Gal. 6:1

This is the doctrine of Hebrews 6:1, the idea of perfection or "completeness of knowledge", "fulfillment", "realization".

For the "work of the ministry", read:

Topic: CHRISTIAN WORKER QUALIFICATIONS

Ephesians 4:13

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

"Till we all come", the 1st person plural aorist subjunctive of KATANTAW, "to come; to attain to"

This Greek word was used very similarly to the way that the English word "come" is used. That is,

there are both literal and figurative uses for the word.

Literally, KATANTAW means "to arrive somewhere". It is used this way in the Bible in several places.

Acts 16:1, "Then came he [Paul] to Derbe and Lystra..." which speaks of Paul's arrival in a geographic location.

Acts 20:15, "And we sailed from there, and came the next day over against Chios..." referring to the apostle's arrival at Chios.

But the use of KATANTAW in Ephesians 4:13 is figurative, referring to someone's attaining to something.

Acts 26:6,7, "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers. Unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God day and night, hope to come [KATANTAW]. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews."

In Acts 26 Paul is speaking of the confidence that the Jews have they they will reach, or attain to, the promises made by God to the Jewish people.

Phil. 3:10,11, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto [KATANTAW] the resurrection of the dead."

In Phil. 3 Paul shows his earnestness in desiring to "arrive at" or "attain to" a deeper knowledge and experience of his relationship with Christ by means of a greater understanding of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

In our verse, Eph. 4:13, the idea is that there is the possibility that Christians can "attain to" a state of unity of the faith, by means of the Word of God which is taught by the communicators of doctrine.

Note that unity and knowledge are tied up in the same package. It is oneness of thinking that is the basis for Christian unity. And it is the Word of God which can bring any believer to thinking according to divine viewpoint. Therefore, all people who think in Bible terms will be unified.

Here is a place where the grammatical mood of a verb is important. The Greek verb KATANTAW is in the subjunctive mood. This is the mood of potential, not certainty. The subjunctive mood says "maybe we will come (to unity) and maybe we won't." The difference, of course, lies with a Chris-

tian's personal volition, the choices made when doctrine is presented.

There will be no unity if the Word of God is not taught in a local church.

If the Bible is taught carefully and well, there may still be no unity if believers in the church do not accept and apply the truth they receive. Believers who do not learn Bible truth, or who reject what they learn, will not be unified with other believers who accept truth by faith and who have application of the Word in their lives.

"in the unity of the faith"

"Unity" is the Greek noun HENOTEIS. The Greek and English words are cognates, which means that the English word "unity" comes directly from HENOTEIS.

This chapter has the only two places in the New Testament where HENOTEIS appears. Indeed, in the King James Version, the word "unity" only appears in the New Testament in English in this chapter.

In Eph. 4:3, one of the characteristics of "walking worthy of the vocation" to which we are called is that we "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Yet a person may well wonder how Christians can be expected to maintain any sort of unity when there is so much diversity of culture, language, and opinion.

The context of verse 13 has the answer! Unity CAN be attained to, and there is a straightforward process by which believers arrive at unity. Unity must be based on unity of thinking according to divine viewpoint. And unity of thinking leads to unity of purpose and service which results in the growth of the church outlined in verse 16.

Topic: UNITY (DAVAQ)

"and of the knowledge of the Son of God"

"knowledge" is EPIGNOSIS, which may be defined as "full and applied knowledge", or knowledge which is characterized by both wisdom and prudence.

In Ephesians 1:7-10, we see that in Christ we have redemption and that in Christ God makes available wisdom and prudence, "having made known unto us the mystery of His will..."

A believer can have all of the riches of God's grace that he wants. Ignorance of God's Word and carnality prevent a Christian from having these riches.

Compare Eph. 5:15, asophos (unwise) with 2 Cor. 11:1, 17, 21 (aphrosunei), "foolish"

The wisdom of God is not merely intellectual or academic. It is not a higher philosophy which the Gnostics in the early church claimed to possess. It is the source of understanding of the details of daily living.

Phil. 1:9-11, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That you may approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

Note that "knowledge and judgment" are the foundations of the outworking of Christian love and fruitfulness.

Jesus Christ give men the ability to see the great ultimate truths of eternity and to solve the problems of daily living.

Col. 1:9, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."

"unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

There is a goal - spiritual maturity. There is a pattern - the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The Bible is the only source of knowledge of how to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no such thing as "love at first sight" in spiritual things. The believer must get to know Christ very well, and this requires the daily intake of knowledge about Christ through the Word of God, which is "the mind of Christ."

I Cor. 2:16 "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Phil. 3:10 "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death."

John 14:23 "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loves me not keeps not my sayings; and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me."

To be like Christ, we must know Christ!

Knowledge of the Bible leads to occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ, a daily walk with the Saviour. The "looking unto Jesus" requires being in the Word.

Heb. 12:2,3 "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds."

The Bible is the only source of God's viewpoint, the only basis for Christian unity.

Isaiah 55:7-9 "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Bible truth is the basis for orientation to God's plan during the believer's lifetime.

Isaiah 26:3,4 "The one who is steadfast of mind thou wilt keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in thee. Trust in the Lord forever, for in God the Lord, we have an everlasting rock."

Bible knowledge produces sanity and stability of mind. It is very important to get the Word of God into the mind before the times of pressure come. It is not too likely that an unstable person will respond to the Word of God. God's deals with the pressures of life using "preventive maintenance".

James 1:8 "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

Bible truth is the basis for divine guidance. With all believers in a local church being guided by the same truth, there will be unity.

Romans 12:1,2 "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

But without the Word of God, the believer's mind will be corrupted by Satan and will become a repository of world-viewpoint and false teaching.

2 Cor. 11:3 "But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ."

This is avoided by the process outlined in verse 14.

Ephesians 4:14

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, and cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive:

Satan is the crafty one, lying in wait to deceive. He has a whole program of false doctrine that he uses to fool the immature person, the novice, the gullible one.

Chester McCalley has said: "If a Christian does not know what God has done in the past and does not have faith in what God will do in the future, he will be overwhelmed by today's crisis."

Satan doesn't give up when a person accepts Christ as Saviour. In fact, he intensifies his activity. He has a strategy regarding believers which is very subtle and far-reaching.

Satan accuses believers before God. The sins of the Christian are observed by the fallen angels and reported. In effect, a dossier is being kept on each believer. Satan does this to try to hinder the work of God on earth. However, 1 John 2:1ff points out that Jesus Christ is our Advocate with the Father; and the Lord reminds the Father of what happened at the Cross and makes note of the believer's faith and position in Christ.

Rev. 12:9,10; Zech. 3:1,2; Job 1:6-11; 2 Cor. 2:11

Satan tries to keep the believer from the Word of God. He discourages unity among believers and he encourages Christians to ignore the Word and accept false teaching so that they will revert to their former manner of life.

1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Cor. 10:19-21; 2 Cor. 11:3, 13-15; 2 Chron. 21:1

Satan distracts by trying to keep believers from public assembly worship, Heb. 10:25. He tempts the believer with an improper emphasis on details of life such as money, success, social life, pleasure, loved ones, health, sex, materialistic things, or status symbols. The mature believer knows that his happiness is not derived from these things, so

he is not a slave to them. The novice Christian, however, may try to gain happiness from such things, and this will distract him from the Word of God.

False teaching is also a part of Satan's strategy. The following are some of the characteristics of false teachers:

- They have a false facade. Matt. 7:15; Rom. 16:18.
- They court believers. Gal. 4:17,18; 2 Tim. 3:5,7.
- They appeal to human pride. 2 Cor. 10:12
- They promote idolatry because it is a quick way to demon influence. Hab. 2:18,1
- They promote legalism. 1 Tim. 1:7,8
- The false teachers will continue to operate throughout Satan's rule on earth. 1 John 4:1

Satan seeks to frustrate the will of God for the believer. There are three categories of the will of God which Satan tries to interdict.

- The operational will of God (what God wants us to do); James 4:7,8; Gal. 5:7.
- The mental, or intellectual, will of God (what God wants us to think): 1 Tim. 4:1.
- The geographical will of God (where God wants us to be); 1 Thess. 2:18.

Satan encourages believers to worry. Worry neutralizes the soul of the believer. He tries to frighten Christians with regard to physical death

1 Peter 5:7-9; Heb. 2:14,15

Satan attempts to change the focus of the believer. Instead of Occupation with Christ, Satan wants the Christian to be occupied with

Self, (Col. 3:1; 1 Cor. 1:10,11; Gen. 3:4,5; Mt. 26:31-35)

Things, (Heb. 13:5,6; 1 Cor. 1:10,11),

People, (Jer. 17:5; 1 Kings 19:10; Jer. 17:4).

One of the functions of the Faith-Rest principle is to protect the Christian in the area of having a proper focus on life.

Satan also promotes heavily in the area of mental attitude sins such as fear, worry, bitterness, desires for revenge, pride, guilt feelings, lack of love, failure to forgive, hatred, mental adultery, and so forth. A believer is neutralized by sin; and mental attitude sins are behind all sin. And they are the worst category because they are so devastating. As

long as mental attitude sin is taking place, the Word of God is being ignored.

There are several religious counterfeits mentioned in the Bible.

- A counterfeit gospel. 2 Cor. 11:3,4
- Counterfeit ministers (unsaved, humanists, misled, etc.) 2 Cor. 11:13-15
- Counterfeit doctrine 2 Tim. 4:1
- Counterfeit communion table 1 Cor. 10:19-21
- Counterfeit righteousness Matt. 19:16-18
- Counterfeit manner of life ("living the beautiful life") Matt. 23
- Counterfeit power 2 Thess. 2:8-10
- Counterfeit gods 2 Thess. 2:3,4

The Bible talks about the Armor of God as enabling the believer to "stand against the wiles of the devil". This armor is protection for us while we live in kosmos diabolikos, and the weapons of our warfare are stronger than Satan as we take our stand in the Lord Jesus Christ. See Ephesians 6:10-18.

Ephesians 4:15

But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ;

"Speaking the truth"

Another reference to Bible truth; however, now we see the mature Christian functioning as a knowledgeable witness to the grace of God. A believer who knows the truth can speak the truth.

Note the process to this point:

1. The truth was revealed by God the Father and the Holy Spirit to the inspired writers of the Bible.
2. The truth was recorded in writing and made available to mankind.
3. The truth has been taught by people who have been given spiritual gifts of communication.
4. Christian people have learned and applied the truth through the teaching and edification ministry of the Holy Spirit.
5. Growing believers are now able to "speak the truth".

"may grow up into him in all things"

"Growing up" in Christ is edification! This result in a Christian's life is the core of the Apostle Paul's desire and prayer for the Ephesian believers.

Eph. 1:16-18, "...making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of his calling..."

Eph. 3:14-19, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saiths, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God."

When I read the above prayers for the first time, I thought these would be wonderful results in my own life, but I had no idea how to proceed to reach these lofty goals. How would God reveal things to me? How would I be strengthened in the inner man? How would I ever be able to have spiritual comprehension of the love of Christ which passes knowledge?

Thank the Lord for the answer to all these questions in Ephesians 4. We are now studying the HOW-TO of the Christian life, God's grace plan for the edification, strengthening, and unifying of believers to stabilize us and make us ready for a life of ministry.

"who is the head, even Christ."

Topic: DEITY OF CHRIST

Ephesians 4:16

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effective working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Here is the result we've been looking for! Here is the picture of a community of Christian believers, growing in Christ, functioning in unity, stabilized by the Word of God, and witnessing to the world. The results is that a church builds itself in the sphere of love.

"from whom" - from the Lord Jesus Christ

"the whole body" - the body is the church.

Eph. 1:22,23, "And has put all things under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that fills all in all.

The Body is also mentioned in the following:

Eph. 2:16 - Jews and non-Jews are included.

Eph. 4:4 - these things are common to all believers; the family coat of arms.

Eph. 4:11,12 - how the body grows

Eph. 4:16 - how the body works together

Eph. 5:23 - the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior of the body.

"fitly joined together" - present passive participle of SUNARMOLOGEW.

This is a compound Greek word made up of SUN + HARMOS + LOGOS (or LOGEW, the verb form).

SUN = "with; together with"

HARMOS = "a joining; a union". Hence the English word "harmony", a "union between persons; an agreement; concord", and includes the concept of musical harmony.

LOGOS = "word; vocabulary". Refers to mentality, the things that we think about, the vocabulary we use to discern and decide things. Our vocabulary provides the basic building blocks for our standards.

Therefore, "fitly joined together" [SUNARMOLOGEW] means "a harmony of thinking; a unity of words or ideas; concord in thinking", with emphasis on accuracy because the thinking is based on God's word.

Unity is more important that any other feature of local church life. All legitimate church activity is based on accuracy (God's Word) and a unified belief in that accurate Word.

"and compacted" - another present PASSIVE participle, "to cause to come together; to unite; to knit together; to bring to terms; to reconcile"

"by that which is supplied" - EPIXOREINIA, "supply; aid; additional help"

"every joint" - HAPHEIS, "a fastening; a ligature; a joint"

You and I are "joints". For some reason I like this word, and I notice that the New American Standard version uses it, too. What we have to this point, then, is ...

"From whom the whole body brought into harmonious thinking by the additional help of every joint..."

...so that we Christians are part of the fundamental process of church growth!

"according to the effectual working of every part" - KATA, "by means of", plus the accusative singular of ENERGIA, "active energy; operation; efficiency".

All "parts" of the body work together effectively to produce the Lord's desired result.

"makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

This is the body-to-body relationship in which the church increases (grows) as edification takes place. Individual believers grow in Christ as the Word is taught and absorbed. The resulting unity brings about church growth.

SUMMARY of Eph. 4:11-16

1. When the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven, He gave spiritual gifts to Christians. The Holy Spirit became the Comforter and Teacher of all believers. "And when the Spirit is come, He shall teach you all things."
2. Some of the gifts are teaching gifts: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.
3. One objective of the teaching ministry is to bring Christian saints to maturity so that they can do useful work in the ministry of edifying the Body of Christ.
4. Another objective of teaching is to bring believers together in unity, so that every Christian has a working knowledge of the Word of God, can become mature, and become more like the Lord Jesus Christ every day.
5. The purpose is to produce Christians who are no longer as gullible and naive as children who can be pushed around by anyone with a smooth line of talk.
6. But the Christian is to learn the truth accompanied by the inner working of the Holy Spirit so that he can grow up into Jesus Christ in all things.
7. When this happens, the whole Body, the Church, is accurately framed together by the additional help supplied by every believer (joint) in the Body.

8. And every part of the body contributes active energy and operating efficiency to the work of causing growth in the Body. That is, the body edifies itself under the care and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 4:17

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.

This passage of Ephesians, verses 17 to 24, is probably the strongest and most graphic warning to Christians in the New Testament!

Paul issues this warning now because he knows that the great results of the previous verses depend on the personal choices that people make in the Christian life.

In this passage we are shown that it is possible for a Christian to have a darkened spirit (soul), an understanding that is like that of an unbeliever (other Gentiles), and the empty soul that has no spiritual understanding in it.

And we are also shown that it is completely unnecessary for any of us to have these problems. But as long as we live we are dependent on doctrine from the Word of God and on our day-to-day resolve to learn Bible truth at the feet of those the Lord has provided as communicators.

The developed Christian life in Grace is supposed to lead to maturity, edification, and effective function, as described in 4:11-16. But when a Christian's understanding is darkened, he becomes sensitive to the opinions of other people, his self-consciousness leads him to flail around in a hundred directions. Self-consciousness leads to self-pity, then bitterness and implacability.

But God has ordained a system for getting Bible truth into the believer, via the public proclamation of the Word of God and the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is incumbent upon every believer to keep himself on track by staying in God's plan for spiritual growth.

"This I say, therefore"

"This" is a reference to the statements which follow, comments on the subject of insensitivity, obtuseness, and indifference in the soul. Indifference to the Word of God is a Christian's greatest occupational hazard. The apostle warns about the hardness of soul which is the direct result of fail-

ure to obtain Bible teaching and spiritual understanding.

The first hints about the problems of immaturity are brought out in Eph. 4:14. Immature Christians are "children", gullible, pushed about by every phony idea that comes along ("winds of doctrine"), and easily fooled by crafty imitators.

Everyone begins the Christian life as a novice; we all started our Christian walk as "babes in Christ." A new believer is expected to be naive, to behave as a "child", and not to know how to function as an "adult." Young children have to grow up.

But the spiritual "babe" needs to take in spiritual food every day in order to grow. Otherwise, the effects of spiritual malnutrition will be obvious for everyone to see. Verses 11 to 16 tell us how to grow up spiritually and function like adults. Verses 17 to 19 verses show what happens to Christians who do not follow the Lord's plan for growth.

"and testify in the Lord" - a use of the verb MARTUREW, "to make a solemn appeal".

Paul is very concerned for his Ephesian friends and colleagues. In his wide travels he has seen every kind of dysfunctional Christian. He knows what Christians need for Christian growth and spiritual health, and he knows how easy it is for indifference to develop. He begs his friends not to "walk as other Gentiles walk".

"that you walk not as other Gentiles walk"

"walk" refers to the pattern of life a person follows. Chapter 4 began with his exhortation to "walk worthy of the vocation to which you are called." And he continues in chapter 5 with "Therefore, be followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love..."

"Gentiles" is ETHNEI, the plural of ETHNOS, "a nation; a people". Here the reference is to the rest of the "general population" who have not accepted Christ as Savior. Paul is pointing out that if a Christian has deadness of soul, his manner of life will exactly resemble that of the unbeliever.

1 Cor. 3:3, "For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men?"

Christians are supposed to be distinguished by their walk. But there are believers, just as there are unbelievers, who are moral or immoral, religious or irreligious, self-righteous and legalistic, living

in overt sin or not, in short having nothing to distinguish them from other people.

Now begins the statement of the main problem in Christianity and in individual Christians' lives.

"in the vanity of their mind"

"Vanity" is the Greek word MATAIOTEIS, "emptiness; vain; fruitless; without profit".

A believer who is occupied with Christ and living in the Word is constantly "renewing his mind" by a process in which he continually takes in (inhales) the Word of God and exercises the Word (exhales). Let's read ahead...

Eph. 4:22-24, That you put off concerning the former manner of life the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and BE RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND, and that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The apostle Paul makes a very similar plea to the Christians in Rome in Romans 12.

Romans 12:1,2, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The opposite of a RENEWED mind is an EMPTY mind.

A negative Christian "exhales", that is, he thinks, speaks, and acts based on the contents of his mind. "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." However, because he does not "inhale" the Word of God, he can only "exhale" his own ideas, his own doctrines, or the ideas and doctrines that he has picked up from whatever sources in the world.

When a soul is empty, there is a resulting "vacuum" that pulls in false doctrines, doctrines of demons, darkness. Satan has a complete system of false theology to be used to ensnare the novice, the unprotected, the gullible. Today these doctrines may be any system of religion, existentialism, communism, or any other non-biblical proposition. Into the "vacuum" will go misery, mental attitude sins, religion, legalism, emphasis on details of life, human viewpoint, and so forth.

Topic: SATAN

1 Tim. 4:1-3, Now the Spirit speaks expressly that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by them who believe and KNOW THE TRUTH.

"of their mind" - NOUS. This word is a reference to the mind as a container of the thoughts of the soul. The phrase is not "...vanity of thoughts" but "...emptiness of the mind, the container of thoughts."

The verb equivalent to NOUS is NOEW, "to think". The noun, therefore, means "place of thinking". Both these words are used extensively in the Greek New Testament; and both words are used with various prefixes to indicate different kinds of thinking.

For example, DIANOIA is DIA + NOUS. DIA is the preposition "through", so DIANOIA are thoughts moving "through the mind", or simply "active thoughts." This is used in Eph. 4:18.

In another example, the Greeks had an expression for changing one's thoughts, METANOIA, the "changing of the mind." This word was translated "repentance" in the King James Version, and the word "repent" 17th Century England meant "to rethink" or to change one's mind about something. The change in idiom in modern times has resulted in a lot of confusion about repentance; but repentance is simply changing one's mind, reversing previous thinking.

Verse 17 reads, then, "This is say, therefore, and make a solemn warning in the Lord that your manner of life is not to be as the Gentiles manner of life, in the emptiness of the mentality of the soul."

Ephesians 4:18

"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;"

"Understanding" is DIANOIA, the activity of thinking in the soul.

READ Isa. 55:7-9, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, says the Lord ..."

There are two types of active thinking [DIANOIA] that are available to a Christian.

The first type is called DARKNESS and refers both to satanic thoughts and human viewpoint.

Col. 1:21, And you that were once alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled."

2 Cor. 10:5, Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

And from 1 Tim. 4:1, "...doctrines of demons"

The opposite type of active thinking is DOCTRINE, which is the Word of God active in the mind of the believer.

Again - the way a believer sets himself up for trouble and darkness in the soul is to NEGLECT BIBLE TEACHING. It happens when one is too busy, apathetic, antagonistic toward doctrine, or antagonistic toward the teacher of doctrine.

"darkness" is SKOTIDZW, "to shroud in darkness; to be benighted; to bring about moral obscurity."

The process of darkness: the Christian who is negative toward Bible truth opens up his soul and empties it; satanic doctrines occupy the soul by moving into the vacuum. There are scores of repercussions; here are eight of them.

1. Darkness causes a Christian to fail to orient to the plan of God. He does not know God's plan or how it works, and he does not know how he fits into God's plan.
2. Darkness brings about a failure to orient to the grace of God. The result is arrogance and legalism, lack of forgiveness, lack of graciousness.
3. Darkness causes inner misery, unhappiness, lack of peace. These things cannot be compensated for by anything in life, but the negative Christian spends his life in a frantic but futile pursuit of happiness through the details of life.
4. Darkness can bring about neuroses and psychoses.

Phil. 4:6,7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard [STABILIZE] your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

5. Darkness results in a frantic search for happiness through details of life, or through some form of sublimation.
6. Darkness leads to slavery to the details of life. Sins may grow out of legitimate things in life (money, success, pleasure, sex, social life, family, loved ones, career, hobbies, health, status symbols).
7. Darkness leads to apostasy, erroneous thinking, false doctrine in the soul.
8. Darkness is accompanied by a lack of capacity to love, leading to pseudo-love towards God, family, the community.

"being alienated from the life of God" - the perfect passive participle of APALLOTRIOW, "to alienate".

Disorientation to the plan of God is a result of darkness. A Christian can live his whole life on this earth and always be out of phase with God's plan for his life. This can go on indefinitely as long as the believer refuses to hear and believe the Word of God.

All of this is caused by...

"through the ignorance that is in them" - DIA plus AGNOIA. "By means of" or "because of" the "ignorance" that is in them.

This word is, literally, "no thinking". The Greek word describes someone who is ignorant of the content of something that he is supposed to know. To "ignore" means "not to think about".

Therefore, the Christian in darkness either has not learned Bible doctrine, or he does not think of the Bible doctrine to which he has been exposed. So he lives in darkness. Without knowledge of the Word of God it is impossible to orient to God's plan of Grace. When a believer lacks knowledge and edification he is out of step with the plan of God.

"in them" refers to believers who have darkness in their souls.

"because of the blindness of their hearts"

"Blindness" is POROSIS, which is a direct cognate of the English word "porosis". POROSIS means "callous" or "something which has hardened or petrified". It is used for the buildup of scars from multiple wounds in the same place, hence "scar tissue."

So verse 18 reads, "Having become darkened in thinking, having been alienated from the life of

God, because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the callous on their heart."

So, in verses 17 and 18, all the ingredients for soul blackness have been presented:

1. Negative volition towards Bible truth
2. The resulting callous (scar tissue) on the soul
3. The opening up of the vacuum (emptiness) of the soul
4. Darkness in the soul
5. Subjectivity
6. Alienation from the life of God.

Ephesians 4:19

"Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."

Remember - Paul is warning Christians not to fall into this lifestyle. It is easy to associate a sinful manner of living with non-Christians. But Christians who live apart from the plan of God can easily be involved in "Gentile" lasciviousness or uncleanness.

"Who" is a relative pronoun referring to people who have callous on their souls, who are negative toward Bible teaching.

"being past feeling" is APALGEO, "to cease to feel anything; to become calloused". Callous develops from failure to learn and appropriate the Word of God. For the negative Christian, callous remains on the soul and accumulates, resulting in a lack of feeling. In other words, his situation continually gets worse.

Darkness of the soul is characterized by mental attitude sins, such as arrogance, bitterness, jealousy, worry, vindictiveness, implacability.

The antidote is first, Confession of Sin; then, Occupation with Christ and Living in the Word.

"have given themselves over unto lasciviousness". Literally, "have betrayed themselves into immoral sexual activity (ASELGEIA)"

Topic: SEXUAL HEALTH IN THE BIBLE

"to work all uncleanness" - or, "to make a profession of impurity".

"with greediness" - this is the frantic search for happiness through the details of life. Because details of life cannot satisfy, the search becomes more and more intense, resulting in greediness.

Greediness is the willingness to do something immoral, illegal, or harmful to other people in order to obtain something one desires. The Christian life removes greediness because a believer trusts God to supply all needs and has the patience to wait for God's timing in everything.

Topic: CONFESSION OF SIN

Topic: OCCUPATION WITH CHRIST

Ephesians 4:20,21

But you have not so learned Christ; If so be that you have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

Francis Foulkes in "Ephesians", "'But you' the apostle says to his readers, emphasizing the personal pronoun, 'can no longer walk in that way. You have not so learned Christ. The truth of God and of His purpose has come to dominate your minds, and this truth has ethical implications. Your lives are no longer dark, your minds no longer vain. You are no longer alienated but walking step by step in the full light of the Lord, and in fellowship with Him. So you must finish with all immorality, and the passion for what is impure, and for what outrages the souls and bodies of others.'"

The ability to stand alone for that which is right is one of the truest signs of maturity in the Christian life. It is the sign that one has openly identified himself with a superior way of life - with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE VERY CAREFULLY THE SEQUENCE FOLLOWED IN THIS PROCESS OF CHRISTIAN MATURITY!!

1. You learn Bible truth; you grow in Christ; you become more like Him; you are edified.
2. Result: whereas you were once in darkness, you are now "light in the Lord" and you "walk as a child of light".

The Christian life is NOT a process by which you turn over multiple new leaves and form yourself into a product that is somehow acceptable to God.

The Christian life IS a process by which you submit to His plan of grace, learn and apply the doctrines of the Word of God, and enjoy His work of reconciliation, restoration, and edification in your life, whereby you grow into a place of spiritual productivity.

Topic: SEPARATION

To put it another way: while separation is definitely a part of God's plan, you do not become more spiritual or more advanced in the Christian life by separating yourself from various evils. Rather, your advancement in the Christian life depends on the Word of God in your soul and your being filled with the Holy Spirit. As the Lord builds our lives, line upon line, precept upon precept, the fruit of the Spirit grows in our lives and our behavior changes, as shown in the verses that follow in chapter 4.

Ephesians 4:22

That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Notice in verses 22 to 24 that the Christian life is one of moving from a former state to a future state, from the "old man" to the "new man". And the mechanism is described in verse 23 as being renewal that takes place in the mind. It is like a breathing process in which bad air goes out and good air comes in.

"that you put off" is APOTHESTHAL, "to lay aside" as in laying aside a garment.

The word "former" refers to us when we were unbelievers. An unbeliever may be religious or irreligious, moral or immoral, self-righteous or sincere - there are all types of unbelievers. And the qualities of an unbeliever are generated by the sin nature in his soul. It is very important to study the doctrine of the Sin Nature at this point, because the Bible describes us to a "T" and helps us to see just what it is that we are laying aside.

Topic: SIN NATURE

"which is corrupt" is from the Greek PHTHERO, "to be constantly depraved". This is the strongest Greek word for depravity and means "to be marked by corruption or evil."

"according to deceitful lusts" Lusts are the activators of the Sin Nature and the motivators of a person who not controlled by the Holy Spirit. There are all sorts of lust patterns, and any person will have one or more of them: power lust; the desire for approbation; sexual lust; lust for worldly possessions; etc. The result of lust, among other things, is slavery to the details of life - seeking happiness and satisfaction in what the world offers, rather than through God's plan.

Ephesians 4:23

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

This is one of the greatest concepts in the Christian life! This verse describes how the Christian life works - the very process!

If someone asks you, "How do I live the Christian life? How do I grow in Christ? How can I become a productive believer?", here is your answer.

The word "renewed" is ANANEOUTHAI, which means "to be continually undergoing a restoration process". This is comparable or analogous to involuntary respiration, the automatic breathing process by which our lungs continually bring in oxygen and expel carbon dioxide and other gases which could be harmful to the body.

The Bible process is called edification. Bible doctrine comes in, first academically through the communication of the Word. Then, the Holy Spirit undertakes His teaching activity and gives us spiritual perception of the things we have learned. As the Word of God comes in to our souls and gives us life, false doctrines are expelled; our human viewpoint is replaced by divine viewpoint. That which is harmful is replaced by that which is life-giving.

The only way to "put Christ first" in the life is to have maximum intake of God's Word accompanied by the continual filling of the Holy Spirit.

Here is the same process discussed in RomanS.

Romans 12:1,2, I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, {which is} your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Ephesians 4:24

And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The "new man" refers to edification, the structure (OIKODOME) which the Father builds in a believer's life. Edification is the process of spiritual growth in a Christian who is living according to the plan of God and who is fulfilling the command to "grow in grace and in the knowledge" of Jesus Christ.

To grow in Christ, a Christian must be consistent on a daily basis in staying in fellowship with the Lord through confession of sin, and learning and applying Bible teaching.

Edification is the means of advancement and productivity in the Christian way of life.

Doctrine that is learned must feed both the human spirit and the human soul for capacity for both human and eternal life. Edification of the soul is the result.

Synonyms for Edification

- Light. Eph. 5, "...walk as children of light.
- "Christ formed in you" Gal 4:19, connotes edification.
- "The new man," Eph 4; Col 3, refers to edification
- "The perfect man," James 1:4.
- "Imitators of God," Eph 5

1 Cor 14:26, "When you assemble, let all things be done for edification."

Acts 9:31, "All the church were having prosperity, having been edified, and advancing in occupation with Christ.

Ephesians 4:25

Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

This section of Ephesians, from 4:25 to 5:2, directs us to the very practical results of our putting on the "new man" of verse 24. The word "wherefore" indicates that the following characteristics of the Christian life are a direct result of the development of a new Christian character.

This is where the rubber meets the road. The Christian life demands a new character, a new outlook, and a willingness both to "abide in Christ" and to "grow in Christ." Here are the positive qualities or actions that must be found in the Christian life.

We are to "put away lying" and "speak truth".

Zech. 8:16 'These are the things which you should do: speak the truth to one another; judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates.

Falsehood is put away with the old man. Truth, and truthfulness, comes in with edification.

"we are members one of another"

When Christians try to deceive one another, they break the bonds of royal family, love, and fellowship. We belong together as members of one body, so we must be completely honest and open with one another.

Chrysostom: "If the eye sees a serpent, does it deceive the foot? If the tongue tastes what is bitter, does it deceive the stomach?"

Foulkes: "Lying is a great hindrance to the proper functioning of the body. When members are open and truthful, the body will work in harmony and therefore efficiently. Without openness and truth, there can only be disunity, disorder, and trouble."

In general, growth in Christ is the antidote for verbal sins.

Topic: SINS OF THE TONGUE

Ephesians 4:26

Be angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.

OR, "Although you may have become angry, stop sinning."

This verse is a quotation of Psalm 4:4.

There is righteous anger, such as we see in the Lord Himself (Mark 3:5; John 2:13-17); but His anger never led to sin because His emotions were always perfectly controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Foulkes: "A Christian must be sure that any anger is that of righteous indignation and not just an expression of personal provocation or wounded pride. It must have no sinful motives nor be allowed to lead to sin in any way."

Christians can have victory over the sin of anger! The Bible talks about anger and answers questions like the following:

- What's the difference between sinful anger and righteous indignation?
- Does God get angry?
- What causes me to get angry, and what can I do about it?
- How can I have victory over the sin of anger?

If you haven't recently studied what the Bible says about ANGER, it's important that you do so now. The topic accompanies this lesson.

Topic: ANGER

"let not the sun go down upon your wrath"

"Wrath" is PARORGISMOS, "provocation", which refers to the personal resentment that anger, even righteous anger, can become when it is harbored and brooded over in men's hearts, especially when the heart is overwhelmed with temptations to malice and bitterness. Passionate feelings against people are not to be kept long lest they break down the love between brethren.

The teaching of verses 31 and 32 is also very important here. Those verses show that the means for putting away bitterness and malice is "forgiveness". The grace believer is a forgiving person. Realizing that the Lord has forgiven us, even when we were His enemies, we are motivated to put away our self-righteousness, or even our genuine rights, in order to forgive others and "put away wrath".

Even unbelievers are not strangers to this concept of achieving immediate reconciliation with others in times of strife. Plutarch says of the Pythagoreans: ".. if betrayed into angry reviling (they) made it their rule to shake hands before sunset."

Psalm 4:4, "Tremble, and do not sin; Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah."

Ephesians 4:27

Neither give place to the devil.

"Place" = "opportunity". Bishop Moule says that anger "gives Satan a half open door", an opportunity for fostering the spirit of pride or hatred.

Foulkes: "Sudden instinctive indignation against injustice or wrong, good in itself, if retained and nursed as a grievance, will let the devil lead his victim on to unkind thoughts, words and actions, and so work havoc with personal relationships."

Satan is to be resisted. James 4:7. He is to be given no place in the believer's life.

Ephesians 4:28

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that has need.

There must be no more common pilfering, but honest work instead.

Dishonesty was a way of life for many in ancient times, just as it is for many people today. Whenever discipline or personal integrity is even slightly relaxed, honesty and productivity slip a

lot. Most employees are in a position to steal something: pencils, computer time, petty cash, working time.

The honest Christian laborer stands out in a society like this. Honesty and good character are two of the most important aspects of the Christian's testimony. In any witnessing situation, these traits are necessary before any verbal testimony can be successful. Lev 19:35,36; Deut 25:13-16

Prov 11:1 "A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight."

See also Prov. 16:11; 20:10; Micah 6:9-14.

Rom 12:17 "Recompense no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men."

READ 2 Cor 8:20-24

1 Thess 4:11,12 "That ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing."

Note carefully Titus 2:9,10

Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, NOT PILFERING, but showing all good faith that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.

The objective of this Christian life is to ADORN, to DECORATE the doctrine of the Savior! What a precious privilege and responsibility!

To ADORN means "to arrange; to set in order; to decorate; to embellish; to prepare; to trim; to put in readiness; to honor; to dignify"

Matt. 23:29 "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish (kosmew) the sepulchres of the righteous..."

Luke 21:5 "And as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned (kosmew) with goodly stones and gifts,"

1 Tim 2:9 "...women adorn (kosmew) themselves in modest apparel..." The adorning of the heart is to be given priority.

Rev. 21:2,19 "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished (kosmew) with all manner of precious stones."

One of the main goals of God's plan is that every Christian "adorn" or "decorate" the doctrine of the

Lord. Honesty in everyday life is a very important part of this.

Ephesians 4:29

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.

Note just ahead in Ephesians 5:3,4, "But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and {there must be no} filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks."

The word "corrupt" is SOPROS, "rotten", therefore "worthless". Like bad fruit, such speech spreads rottenness and leads others to think on the worthless. This is to be replaced with "that which is good".

Proverbs 15:23, A man has joy in an apt answer, And how delightful is a timely word!

Foulkes: "The test of a man's use of money is: 'What am I giving to those in need?' The test of his conversation is not just 'Am I keeping my words true and pure?' but 'Are my words being used to minister grace unto the hearers?'"

The speech of the Christian is to be characterized by grace.

Col. 3:16,17, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

Col. 4:5,6, "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person."

Ephesians 4:30

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.

All sin is a cause of personal sorrow to God. We are called to "walk worthy of the vocation with which you are called", to walk in fellowship with the Lord. And the Holy Spirit occupies the Christian and is the source, the bond, of the spiritual fellowship with have with God. He is our teacher and our comforter. Sin grieves the Holy Spirit and

is the cause for the loss of fellowship, the loss of filling, the loss of the controlling ministry of the Spirit.

The Spirit's presence is also a seal of assurance of the life and inheritance that we possess now and will possess fully in the end. The very thought of this should encourage us to keep ourselves pure.

1 John 3:2-6, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.

"And everyone who has this hope {fixed} on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

"Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

"And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

"No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him."

But we do sin! And we do grieve the Spirit! So remember that Jesus Christ is our Advocate with the Father. And remember that there is open to us a method of being cleansed from the corruption and defilement of the sin we commit - by means of the cleansing which follows confession.

1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Prov. 1:23, "Turn at my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you."

So there is a restoration to fellowship with the Spirit, a means of continuing to be occupied with Christ, through acknowledging God's sovereignty and our sin.

Ephesians 4:31

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

Here is even more reference to sins of the tongue and of mental attitude, so that they can be set over against the way that we have learned in Christ. Six things are named here that are decisively to be put away.

"**Bitterness**" is PIKRIA (cf. the English "picric acid"). Aristotle spoke of this as "the resentful spirit which refuses reconciliation." The Apostle Paul says that all of this must go, every trace of such sharpness of spirit, of such temper.

The "wrath" and "anger" here are those which spring up from passion and temper because of personal resentment or provocation. The only Christian rule about these is total abstinence!

Then follows "clamor", KRAUGEI, which is "the loud self-assertion of the angry man, who will make everyone else hear his grievance."

"**Evil speaking**" is BLASPHEMIA, "slander; blasphemy". This word is commonly used for speaking against God, but it is also often used for slanderous or abusive speaking against one's fellow men.

Finally, Paul adds "all malice", or "bad feeling of every kind", thus demanding the complete exclusion from the Christian's life of every thought that leads a person to speak or do evil against some else (Foulkes).

Ephesians 4:32

And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

The parallel passage in Col. 3:12 says, "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering."

If, after all, God has forgiven us of the most heinous sins, having reconciled us even while we were His enemies (Romans 5), how much more ought we to have gracious regards for other people, and act as conduits of God's grace to them.

A forgiving spirit is one of the most obvious and telling character traits in a growing Christian. The lack of a forgiving spirit is the mark of the novice Christian.

The word "forgive" is a Grace word, in the English as well as in the Greek. An early meaning in English was "to give or to grant". Then, "forgive" came to mean "to remit a debt; to give up resentment or claim for requital; to pardon an offense."

All of us are debtors to others, to society as a whole. And we often feel that people owe us many things in our human relationships. We feel we are owed courtesy and consideration. Sometimes we think that we are owed reward or status or promotion in some enterprise, or on the job. We are certainly owed fair treatment, justice, restitution and many other things.

But, many people in America are spiritually, ethically, and morally bankrupt. They simply cannot pay society what they owe! They are thoughtless,

selfish, ungracious. What should a Christian do about all of the debts owed to him. Answer: forgive them, as Christ forgave you.

A Christian who practices Grace thinking (divine viewpoint) will become a forgiving person. To forgive means "to give up a claim; to cease bearing resentment".

The rich man in Luke 7 was able to forgive the two debtors because he was prosperous. He gave to them out of his prosperity. A person can only give to others out of what God has already provided in the way of prosperity. In terms of money, the principle is "Let him that stole, steal no more; rather, let him labor, doing with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

As a growing Christian, you have many other kinds of prosperity, by the Grace of God. You have intellectual prosperity (divine viewpoint). You have spiritual prosperity (peace with God). You have emotional prosperity (relaxed mental attitude). You have financial prosperity (mastery of details of life). You have social prosperity (stable marriage, stable family life, etc.).

Wherever in your life you find that someone else owes you something, you have the wherewithal to forgive him! God has forgiven all of us who are absolutely without resources of our own. And He is not expecting or demanding some kind of payment in return for His Grace gifts. And we are to be channels of Grace to the world. "Out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of living water."
