

Ephesians

A Worthy Walk

Ephesians 4:1-3

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11

Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a "transforming church". We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." Since "Talking Points, Walking Points" is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to "dive deep" too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled "Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time", are perfect for private reflection.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- The key word "walk" occurs six times in Ephesians. Circle each occurrence (4:1, 17 [2x], 5:2, 8 & 15). What images does the word "walk" conjure up in your mind?

Read Ephesians 4:1-16. What does it mean to "walk" in unity?

Read Ephesians 4:17-5:17. What does it mean to "walk" in purity?

Read Ephesians 5:18-6:9. What does it mean to "walk" in harmony?

Read Ephesians 6:10-24. What does it mean to "walk" in spiritual victory?

- Easter celebrates the cross of Christ. **How** does his death and resurrection enable us to...

(1) "walk" in **unity**?

(2) "walk" in **purity**?

(3) "walk" in **harmony**?

(4) "walk" in **spiritual victory**?

- Which of these are you currently experiencing?
- Which of them are lacking in your Christian experience?
- What one or two things can you do to improve that?

Sermon Summary

Ephesians 4:1-3 shows us the very practical differences that Jesus' death, burial and resurrection make to our everyday lives. The resurrection is not dry doctrinal truth—it is practical, eternity altering, life transforming. The first three chapters of Ephesians explain what God has done for us in Christ. To sum it up: “God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.” Over the last several weeks we have spent a great deal of time examining the nature and implications of these spiritual blessings. Chapters 1-3 are largely doctrinal, talking about what God has done for us. They address our “wealth” in Christ. We have learned that what God has done for his Son, the Lord Jesus, he has also done for us, because we have been united with him by faith. Chapter four is a pivot in the book: “Now that you know who you are in Christ, I want you to live out of that new identity. You are children of God, and with that privilege comes responsibilities and duties.” So whereas chapters 1-3 spoke of our “wealth” in Christ, chapters 4-6 talk about our “walk” in Christ. In fact, the key word “walk” is repeated six times (4:1, 17 [2x]; 5:2, 8 & 15). We are to walk in unity (4:1–16), purity (4:17–5:17), harmony (5:18–6:9), and in spiritual victory (6:10–24). That is the broader context for the verses under study today.

Paul begins with the word “therefore” (4:1), and remember: anytime you see the word “therefore” in Scripture, you need to ask yourself, “What is it there for?” It is Paul's way of saying that the exhortations he is about to give are based upon the doctrinal truths he has just taught us. Paul is not offering a light suggestion, he implores us in the strongest possible way, to live differently because we are no longer who we used to be. Because of our union with the risen Christ, we have a brand new identity with incredible spiritual resources at our disposal. We must harmonize how we live with our God-given calling to live in unity with one another. We are spiritual brothers and sisters. What unites us is way more important than what divides us. Therefore, we are to conduct ourselves in a way that reflects that unity. The strongest argument for Christianity is Christians—when we love as Jesus loved. But the strongest argument against Christianity is also Christians—when we fail to love as Jesus' loved. So, if we are to walk in a “worthy manner” **what virtues must we cultivate and display**, by the power of the risen Christ?

I. Humility As I studied this passage, I was surprised to discover that the word “humility” does not occur before NT times. The concept of humility was so foreign, so abhorrent to the Greek way of thinking, they didn't even have a dictionary listing for it! Apparently this Greek word was invented by Christians, probably by Paul himself, to describe a quality for which no other word was then available. It wasn't until Jesus arrived on the scene that humility was recognized as a virtue! He first humbled himself to become a man, and then to willingly die in our place. Jesus is our “humility role model.” He didn't come to be served, but to serve. Humility is perhaps the most foundational Christian virtue. We cannot begin to please God without humility, and yet it is terribly elusive! The only way we experience and convey genuine humility is when we “put on Jesus” and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. Then He can express his humility through us. Anywhere there is discord and division, you will find pride. On the other hand, where there is unity, you will find the virtue of humility. God calls us to walk in humility, giving others the respect they deserve by recognizing and honoring their intrinsic God-given worth.

II. Gentleness When you think of a gentle or meek person, what image comes to mind? Is it a positive or negative image? Often our perceptions of meekness are just wrong. While many dictionaries define the English word “meek” with terms such as “timid”, or “a deficiency in courage”; that is far from the biblical meaning. Rather than weakness, timidity, indifference, or cowardice, gentleness pictures strength under control—like a racehorse. Meekness or gentleness conveys strength under control. It has nothing to do with impotence or weakness. It implies proper restraint. Gentleness expresses the absence of the disposition to assert personal rights, either in the presence of God or of men.

III. Patience Have you ever noticed that impatient people are usually demanding people? The opposite of a patient person is someone with a hair-trigger temper, someone who explodes in fury at the slightest provocation. You know anyone like that? These people are touchy. They have a hair trigger temper. They are super-sensitive. They are always getting upset. They are easily angered. It only takes one

touchy person in a group to destroy morale. But God calls us to be peacemakers. He calls us to be forgiving. He calls us to not be easily provoked. The unity of the church and the unity of our marriages depends upon it! Now within the church, we must be careful not to confuse the quality of patience or long-suffering with an attitude of indifference. They are not the same! Theologically liberal churches have a tendency to tolerate behaviors and theological positions that the Bible condemns. Against such errors, we are not to be long-suffering. We should lovingly and courageously take a stand! As Christians, we are not to sacrifice truth in order to get along. Sometimes we have to risk conflict in order to deal with the problem. On the other hand, theologically conservative churches are tempted to embrace the opposite error. In our desire to uphold the truth and the authority of the Scriptures, we can be guilty of fighting over every minor point of theology. Sometimes we quarrel over preferences! That's not good. The Corinthian church made both errors! In Corinth, there was a church member who was involved in an incestuous relationship. The church knew about it but failed to exercise church discipline as it should have (1 Corinthians 5:1–5). Somehow the Apostle Paul heard about all of this, and in a letter he exhorted the church to take appropriate action, which they did. The good news is, this man did eventually turn from his sin—which is the aim of church discipline. So the man responded as he should have but unfortunately, the church did not. Rather than forgive and restore the man, the church continued to hold him at arm's length. First they were too lax, and then they were too harsh! It is difficult to maintain the proper Biblical balance, but that is what God has called us to do. We must make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (v. 3). We are not called to **create** unity; the Holy Spirit has already done that. We are called to **preserve** unity—and that is something that we have to constantly work on, because Satan loves to sow discord and disunity.

Today, on Easter Sunday, as you look in the mirror of God's Word, which of these traits is in shortest supply in you? Humility? Gentleness? Patience? Why don't you ask someone who knows you well, someone whom you trust—a close friend, your spouse—which of these character traits you most need to develop? And when they tell you, don't be all defensive! Instead, ask forgiveness of the people you've offended—and then be sure to ask God to develop within you this trait that you are lacking.



A writing area consisting of a rounded rectangle with a pencil icon in the top-left corner and ten horizontal lines for writing.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any topic.
Ephesians says that our "wealth" in Christ impacts our "walk" in him...*

Monday—Review Ephesians 1. We are united—so now we walk in unity (Ephesians 4:1-16).

Tuesday—Review Ephesians 2:1-10. Dead men were raised to life—so walk in purity (4:17-5:17).

Wednesday—Review Ephesians 2:11-22. We have been reconciled—so walk in harmony (5:18-6:9).

Thursday—Review Ephesians 3:4-10. We walk in victory in spite of the devil's schemes (6:10-24).

Friday—For further comparison and insight, read Colossians chapters 1 & 2.

Saturday—For further comparison and insight, read Colossians chapters 3 & 4.

Five Question Bible Study

Bible Text: _____ Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]