



EPHESIANS 4:1-6

IN HIM
I AM

EPHESIANS

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Know: Read Ephesians 4: 1-6

Note: Read slowly, carefully marking keywords- continue to mark the words from previous lessons—Mark keywords with a different color or with a symbol to differentiate them.

- Walk
- Bond of peace
- Calling
- Baptism
- Gifts

Observation: Study notes below for context. Journal your thoughts or questions.

What: Take an inventory of your church and how you relate with the people God has placed you in. How have you sought for unity?

“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Ephesians 4:1-3

In this next section of Paul’s letter, he directs his attention toward our **walk**. Paul wanted his readers to understand that walking always comes after sitting. Before a baby can learn to walk, they must learn to sit. This is true of our Christian life. If we walk before we sit, we will walk contrary; it will always feel like a struggle destined for failure.

Sin is to get out of harmony with God’s design for us. The word “sin” is *hamartia*, meaning “without a share in.” When we walk contrary to our sonship, we are walking outside of our beloved identity. God has pre-designed who we will be.

How many times have we come to the throneroom of grace to tell God how badly we are doing? God, however never holds up a mirror of shame or failure, never calling us to behavior changes. He holds up the mirror of Jesus, showing us that we are beloved because of Jesus and that reality is where we live from. We are what we behold. Right behavior always follows right believing.

Israel had left Egypt.

They had been slaves for four hundred years, obeying only the voice of their slave masters, constantly driven by fear of punishment. The night God delivered them from Pharaoh, He had given the Israelites instructions for how to carry through their new freedom. Motivated by excitement and awe, they followed His lead until they reached a point of panic.

The Egyptians were upon them. Penned in by the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army, they had no choice but to obey His voice. God proved Himself strong by parting the Red Sea. They crossed on dry ground, the waters crashing over the enemy.

God would now be the voice they were to obey. Faithful to God's promise with Abraham and his sons, God led them into the wilderness to make a covenant with them. This covenant was based on His faithfulness to Abraham, a covenant that would make the Israelites kings and priests. Being familiar with slavery, they had no idea what this kind of covenant should be. Having forgotten the God of their forefathers, they knew of the Egyptian gods- fierce, pagan gods. When they came to the foot of Mt. Sinai, the mountain trembled and shook, causing the people to tremble in fear.

God was about to reveal to them that He was unlike the pagan Gods, requiring rituals and the sacrifice of their children. But the people were too terrified to listen. They sent Moses as their representative, asking that if God would give them a list of what they should do, they would obey. Their slave mentality prevented them from being dependent on His voice.

We were made into a new person when we were made alive in Christ. The Holy Spirit came to make His home inside of us. We are no longer to listen to the voice of our dead "man"- our flesh. We are to listen to God's voice. No matter what challenge, God's voice will always guide you. When we become familiar with His voice, we will no longer need to depend on the world's self-help tools to make decisions or create boundaries. Although those tools are good, many people need to learn how to be healthy. However, the Spirit can speak to us regarding even the smallest details of our lives when we learn to listen to His voice.

Recently, I went skiing in a new place, unfamiliar to me. I did not like not knowing the slopes or the unknown curves on the runs. Once I tried it, I began to get used to the area, and the desire for my preferred old place faded.

When faced with the unfamiliar, we often hesitate or not trust the step toward the new. We don't believe God is there when we approach what's obscure. Faith requires trust that if God said he would speak to or lead us, He would be faithful to his promise.

Bond of Peace

There is a lot of talk about “church hurt.” In no way do I desire to minimize the hurt many have encountered; I would like to address how we can move toward healing those who have been hurt and work toward guarding ourselves from hurt.

I have experienced plenty of church hurt. Leaders who abuse their position in ways that almost led me toward self-harm when I was younger; stepping into a room full of women who were slandering me, letters written to shame me and call out “sin,” ugly things have been done to me that *should* have caused me to run far from the church. However, I choose to forgive, and through forgiveness, God revealed a love for the church that drives me toward healing the areas that have been misused.

One way I guard against offense toward someone is to be rooted in the love of God. To the extent that I live from love is the extent that I will love. If I am saturated in love, my ability to love you will be greater than your ability to offend me. I seek to celebrate you for who you are instead of what you’re not.

We can move toward healing church hurt when we learn to champion what God is doing in others, turn our eyes on Jesus, and fix them on the finished work of the cross. The bond of peace happens when everyone turns their eyes in the same direction.

“4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4:4-6

How often have you felt like you have to pretend? Have you ever felt like an imposter when you have been around those you would deem more “spiritual” than you, afraid to be transparent? Some people think they need to fix themselves before Jesus will love them, but the reality is that Jesus already sees and knows us.

Paul didn’t call out hidden sin nor call the church imposters. He looked for Jesus in everyone, even if they didn’t display Christ-like character. We have all been made in the image of God. Rather than looking for sin, we are called to look for the Jesus in them.

The hope of our calling does not refer to a particular calling, such as a vocation. Paul is referring to our salvation. We have all been called members of one body, sharers of the same spirit; we must guard it and seek unity.

We all share the same Lord, the same faith and the same baptism.

One Baptism

The Bible mentions many different baptisms (John's baptism of repentance, water baptism, Holy Spirit baptism, Jesus' baptism of suffering, and baptism for the dead.) Since there are different baptisms, why does Paul say there is only one? He refers to the baptism that happens to every believer when they are put into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. The moment you came to Jesus, you were baptized or placed in him by the Spirit. To be baptized means to be dipped or immersed.

Your old self had issues that you could never resolve. The Holy Spirit's solution was to bury your old nature in the ground with Jesus. This is what it means to be baptized into his death. But the Holy Spirit didn't leave you in the ground. Just as he raised Jesus, he raised you. Because of that one baptism, you are now free from sin and free to live in Christ.