

EPHESIANS

Chapter 4

Unity in the Body of Christ

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it^a says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.”^b ⁹ (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions^c? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

4:1–16 So far Paul has taught that God brought Jew and Gentile into a new relationship to each other in the church and that he called the church to display his wisdom. Paul now shows how God made provision for those in the church to live and work together in unity and to grow together into maturity.

4:1 *prisoner*. See note on 3:1. – Even in prison the bond with Christ remains unbroken. (A) – Paul was in prison because he had dared to speak of Christ and lived his life as a witness to Christ. This shows that he was willing to pay the price of being called by Christ. – This was a formula for vital communion with Christ, indicating that his captivity was the captivity of a part or member of the Lord. An exhortation from such a prisoner ought to fall with double weight. (PC) – His entire imprisonment was due to his connection with the Lord. In 3:1 the thought is that of special office, here the thought is that of faithfulness to the Lord. As one who is himself faithful he admonishes others. (Lenski) – Paul reminds us that he is God’s ambassador, commissioned to preach the gospel. He has carried out this task to the extent of being arrested and imprisoned for his

efforts. But even being a prisoner doesn't stop him from helping his beloved Ephesians. (PBC)

TO LIVE A LIFE WORTHY – The Greek word is “walk.” The idea in Hebrew and signifies one's entire conduct. (A) – The word for live is - pereepateho which means to be totally dedicated with living in a certain manner. Today we might say “walk the talk.” The word for worthy is acheeoce which means that which is appropriate for a particular position or calling. They were not to be ashamed of their faith and thus try to hide it. – Because the Ephesians have this new life in Christ, Paul can expect a proper response from them. (PBC)

calling. See 3:10, 21 and notes. – Christians are called by God to have part in fulfilling God's vast design for the universe. In their unity is prefigured the unity of all things that God is bringing about in Christ. (A) – kaleho. To be bidden in this case by God. The word “received” says very plainly that this was something done by someone other than the Ephesians themselves. This was done through the Gospel and didn't include any of the Jewish rituals or other contingencies.

4:2 HUMBLE – The humble are those who know the privilege of their calling. They set their own sins against the perfection of Christ. They know that they are creatures of God the Creator. They know that they are beggars before God, humbled by his generous grace. The humble are able to be servants. With an attitude of servanthood comes unity. (LL) – This is the opposite of pride or haughtiness of spirit and is the quality of one who does not seek to gain prominence for himself but give others the credit. (A) – It may be brought about by our remembering what we were when God's grace took hold of us. (PC) tapinofrosoonay – It literally means “lowliness in mind.” It would be the opposite of being proud and arrogant. Remembering who or what we were in the past can help one to be humble.

Luke 14:10 “But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests”

Romans 12:3 “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”

Philippians 2:3-5, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.” Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus”

GENTLE – The original Greek (prautes) carries the idea of being angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time. It is used as well of kings who despite their strength, show great mercy to their subjects. Sometimes translated meekness, the word actually belongs to those of strength, who intentionally refuse to use their strength to

wrong others. (LL) – The word describes one who so depends on God that he refuses to be deflected from the goal by slights, injuries, or insults. It is found in men of great strength and character. (A) This is the natural expression of a lowly state of mind, opposed to boisterous self-assertion and rude striving with others, it genders a subdued manner and a peace-loving spirit that studies to give the soft answer that turns away wrath. (PC) – It is well illustrated by Luke 6:29 “If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.”

PATIENT – The original Greek (makrothumia) means literally to be long-tempered. Patient people are not short with others, especially with those who let us down, insult us, or even injure us. (LL) – This would be better translated “longsuffering.” The idea is the willingness to give up hope for improvement in a troubled relationship. (A) – A long holding out of the mind before it gives room to action or passion. (Lenski)

BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER - anekhomahee – To hold back from reacting to annoyances. To be tolerant of other people’s quirks. To put up with a good deal faults or weaknesses on the part of others.

1 Corinthians 13:7 “It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

Colossians 3:13 “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

4:3 MAKE EVERY EFFORT – This means a burning desire or blazing zeal for the cause of unity.

keep the unity. Which God produced through the reconciling death of Christ (see 2:14–22). It is the heavy responsibility of Christians to keep that unity from being disturbed. – henotace – To preserve a oneness or unanimity. This unity could only be achieved because of Christ’s death and resurrection. – It is the unity that exists in the holy Christian church, into which the Holy Spirit has brought all believers in Christ. (PBC)

Philippians 1:27 “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.”

4:4-6 In these three verses there are seven “ones” which define the unity of the church. Seven is the number of completion or perfection. We might translate: “The Church is absolutely and perfectly one. Furthermore, the first three elements of oneness look to the present, the second three look back to the historical origin of the Church, and the last one looks to the ultimate origin of the Church – God himself. The entire section is devoted to the foundations of unity. (A) – meeah – There is total agreement. In verses 4-6 there is a sevenfold (biblical number for completeness) basis for unity (one body – one Spirit – one hope – one Lord – one faith – one baptism – one God).

4:4 ONE BODY – Paul sees one church – the body of Christ. As he writes 1 Corinthians 12, every part of the body is essential for it to work effectively. Clearly Paul could not envision a church fragmented into denominations. Yet even with many denominations the church of believers in Christ is one body; that is, we all have the same Head, Jesus Christ, and we have all been called out to be the church, we function for the same reason, and we all really do need one another. (LL)

one hope. Has different aspects (e.g., 1:5, 10; 2:7), but it is still one hope, tied to the glorious future of Christ, in which all believers share.

ONE LORD – All in the church serve one Lord. Kurios, the Greek word translated “Lord,” was used of the master of slaves and of the Caesar of Rome. That makes all in the church servants. It makes Christ master and king. We are united under one great leader, Christ. (LL)

4:5 ONE FAITH – The substance of saving faith is the same for every Christian – faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. (LL)

one baptism. † Not the baptism of the Spirit (see Ac 1:4–5), which was inward and therefore invisible, but the sacrament of baptism (see note on Ro 6:3–4). Since Paul apparently has in mind that which identifies all believers as belonging together, he would naturally refer to that sacrament in which every new convert participated publicly.

4:6 ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL – The church has one ultimate authority, one provider, and one whose love for us unites us as a family. The use of the title Father presents the unity of the church as that of a family with a good, strong, and gracious Father. (LL)

4:7 grace. See 3:7–8. – The stress in the Greek is on “each one of us.” Again we are reminded that the gifts themselves are gifts of grace. (A) – These are gifts which each should exercise to the welfare of his brothers/sisters. (S)

4:8 Ps 68:18 (see note there) speaks of God’s triumphant ascension to his throne in the temple at Jerusalem (symbol of his heavenly throne). Paul applies this to Christ’s triumphal ascension into heaven. Where the psalm states further that God “received gifts from men,” Paul apparently takes his cue from certain rabbinic interpretations current in his day that read the Hebrew preposition for “from” in the sense of “to” (a meaning it often has) and the verb for “received” in the sense of “take and give” (a meaning it sometimes has—but with a different preposition; see Ge 15:9; 18:5; 27:13; Ex 25:2; 1Ki 17:10–11).

captives. Probably Paul applies this to the spiritual enemies Christ defeated at the cross. – Satan and hellish hosts, and he sees in Christ’s ascension a triumph over the forces and powers of darkness. (S)

GAVE GIFTS TO MEN – Marvel of marvels, he deigns to give us mortal a part in his grand plan to have the church spread out into all the world. (PBC)

4:9 ascended ... descended. † Although Paul quoted from the psalm to introduce the idea of the “gifts to men,” he takes the opportunity to remind his readers of Christ’s coming to earth (his incarnation) and his subsequent resurrection and ascension. Some interpret this

passage as referring to Christ's descent into hell, but this is probably incorrect. – Paul's emphasis in this section is on Christ's exalted return to heaven. Hence it seems somewhat more likely that the apostle's reference is to Christ's state of humiliation. (PBC)

4:10 TO FILL THE WHOLE UNIVERSE – As the exalted, other-worldly one, who sits at God's right hand. Christ now fills all things by his powerful, effective omnipresence. (S)

4:11 *It was he who gave.* The quotation from Ps 68 has its ultimate meaning when applied to Christ as the ascended Lord, who himself has given gifts. – The stress in the Greek is on "each one of us." Again we are reminded that the gifts themselves are gifts of grace. (A) – These are gifts which each should exercise to the welfare of his brothers/sisters. (S)

apostles. Mentioned here because of their role in establishing the church (see 2:20). For qualifications of the initial group of apostles see Ac 1:21–22; see also notes on Mk 6:30; Ro 1:1; 1Co 1:1; Heb 3:1. In a broader sense, Paul was also an apostle (see 1:1). – The original group who founded the Church. (A) – apostolos – Means to be a "sent one." Someone who is delegated to be an ambassador (special messenger) of the Gospel. Acts 1:21-22 defines an apostle as someone who: (1) was with Jesus the whole time and (2) witnessed his resurrection. In a broader sense Paul was also an apostle (Ephesians 1:1).

prophets. People to whom God made known a message for his people that was appropriate to their particular need or situation (see 1Co 14:3–4; see also note on 1Co 12:10). – Men of the NT who spoke the Word authoritatively to their contemporaries. (A) – profaytace – To be a foreteller or an inspired teacher. This is a fulfillment of Joel 2:28. 1 Corinthians 14:1-5 describes the prophet as someone who speaks to others for their "strengthening, encouragement and comfort" and therefore "edifies the church."

evangelists. See Ac 21:8; 1Co 1:17. While the other gifted people helped the church grow through edification, the evangelists helped the church grow by augmentation. Since the objective mentioned in v. 12 is "to prepare God's people for works of service," we may assume that evangelists, among their various ministries, helped other Christians in their testimony. – Probably missionaries who reached out to the non-Christian with the Gospel. (A) – yooanghelistace – A preacher of the Gospel. They took the Gospel message which they had received from the Apostles and carried it to those regions where the Apostles had not gone. Philip was an Evangelist.

pastors and teachers. † Because of the Greek grammatical construction (one article with two nouns; also, the word "some" introduces both words together), it is clear that these two nouns describe one office. Those who have pastoral care for God's people (the image is that of shepherding) will naturally provide "food" from the Scriptures (teaching). They will be especially gifted as teachers (cf. 1Ti 3:2). – Pastor comes from poymane which means to shepherd or care for people. Teacher comes from didaskalos which means a master teacher (instructor) like one possessing a doctor degree. The Greek text indicates that these words describe a single occupation of ministry of the Word.

4:12 *to prepare God's people for works of service.* Those mentioned in v. 11 were not to do all the work for the people, but were to train the people to do the work themselves. – katartismos – To complete thoroughly (perfectly). Also means to restore, adjust or repair like repairing a broken bone. In this case it means a through training program to equip people. – Works comes from ergon which means an act of labor. Service comes from deekonee which means giving attendance or aid which provides relief. The service could especially be in the area of teaching.

so that the body of Christ may be built up. See v. 16. Spiritual gifts are for the body, the church, and are not to be exercised individualistically. “Built up” reflects the imagery of 2:19–22. Both concepts—body and building—occurring together emphasize the key idea of growth. – Good body building requires that we eat right, exercise and get proper rest. – The official ministries of the church are not substitutes for the saints. They are there to make the saints functional. (A) – oykodomay – The building up of structure. In this case it is the Body of Christ (Church).

4:13 *until.* Expresses not merely duration but also purpose. – Spiritual achievement is not reached in individual isolation but in the corporate life by which the whole body grows. (A)

unity. Carries forward the ideal of vv. 1–6. – The oneness is the one that unites us all. It is the oneness belonging to the faith and to the knowledge of God. (Lenski) – This also involves those who don't know Christ as their savior yet. (Stoeckhardt p. 82)

in the faith. Here “faith” refers to the Christians' common conviction about Christ and the doctrines concerning him, as the following words make clear (cf. also “the apostles' teaching” in Ac 2:42).

knowledge of the Son of God. Unity is not just a matter of a loving attitude or religious feeling, but of truth and a common understanding about God's Son. – Not mere intellectual knowledge but true heart knowledge. (Lenski)

mature ... fullness of Christ. † Not only the maturity of doctrinal conviction just mentioned, nor a personal maturity that includes the ability to relate well to other people (cf. vv. 2–3), but also the maturity of the perfectly balanced character of Christ. – playromah – To be completely full and not lacking anything. – As faith and knowledge about Christ grow, believers “become mature.” That process, however, is never complete here on earth. It has rightly been said that the Christian life is a constant “becoming.” Paul himself hadn't yet attained full spiritual maturity – as he frankly admits to the Philippians (3:12-15). For a candid statement of his frustration with his frequent lapses and lack of maturity, read Romans 7, particularly verses 14 to 25. Spiritual maturity is not fully attainable here, but it is what every Christian strives for personally and seeks to help others reach. (PBC)

4:14 *infants.* Contrast the maturity of v. 13. – These are images of immaturity and instability. The child has a flighty, unsettled temperament. (A) – They are helpless against assaults; they must be protected, carried in the arms of others. (Lenski) – naypeeos To be simple minded and immature like a baby. They are helpless against assaults.

Hebrews 5:12 “In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!”

tossed. The nautical imagery pictures the instability of those who are not strong Christians. – *klodonidzomahee* – To surge first one way and then another or to constantly fluctuate. These are people who run after every new teaching and do not have a solid biblical base.

teaching. Then, as now, there were many distorted teachings and heresies that would easily throw the immature off course.

cunning ... craftiness ... deceitful scheming. Sometimes those who try to draw people away from the Christian faith are not innocently misguided but deliberately deceitful and evil (cf. 1Ti 4:1–2). – The word pictures playing at dice. The idea is of the fickleness of the dice. The Christian who is easily swayed by every new doctrine is falling back into the fickleness of mind which shows he has no firm principles to guide him. The translation for “craftiness and deceitful scheming” would be “ingenuity in inventing error.” (A) –The devil is the author of all errors and inspires false teachers. (S)

4:15 *speaking the truth in love.* † True doctrine and a loving manner of life are implied. – The meaning for truth here is broader than merely speaking. It includes living and apprehending as well. The idea is that our whole inward disposition is truthful. (A) – They are not to lord it over their weaker brothers. Nor are they viciously to turn on false teachers, but rather speak as lovingly and as winsomely as possible in the hope of winning over the proponent of an incorrect view. (PBC)

grow up ... Head. A slightly different restatement of v. 13, based now on the imagery of Christ as the Head of the body, which is the church. Paul thus speaks primarily of corporate maturity. It is the “body of Christ” that is to be “built up” (v. 12). In v. 13 “we all” are to become “mature” (lit. “a mature man”). – Our union with Christ means participation in a dynamic, growing life. Our whole being is gradually assimilated to him. From Christ comes the energy and vitality for growth. (A)

4:16 Further details of the imagery of the body growing under the direction of the Head. The parts of the body help each other in the growing process, picturing the mutual ministries of God’s people spoken of in vv. 11–13. – Every part of the body is a channel which receives and passes on life. (A)

JOINED AND HELD – *soonarmologeho* – To organize in a compact manner with all the joints close together. – Paul makes it clear that every Christian has a role in Christ’s church. We need to keep that in mind. We’re often inclined to think that we’re too small or too unimportant to make much of a difference. Paul helps us understand how wrong that kind of thinking is. “Every supporting ligament” is important to the body. The whole body grows and builds itself up “as each part does its work.” Every Christian is an important part of the church, because growth and improvement in the church come “from him,” that is, from Christ and not from us. Think of what misery and discomfort the whole body feels when one member is sick or fails to function properly. (PBC)

love. Maturity and unity are impossible without it (cf. vv. 2, 15).

Living as Children of Light

¹⁷ So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. ²⁰ You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. ²¹ Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. ²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”^a: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. ²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

4:17–5:20 Paul has just discussed unity and maturity as twin goals for the church, which God has brought into existence through the death of Christ. He now goes on to show that purity is also essential among those who belong to him.

4:17 I TELL YOU THIS AND INSIST ON IT IN THE LORD - martooromahee – To affirm (testify) something and even go on record to show our commitment to what we believe and say. What Paul is affirming and testifying to is the Gospel that has empowered them to become Christians. He uses a similar approach in Romans 12:1 “I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy.” – Paul means it to be practice as well.

futility of their thinking. Life without God is intellectually frustrating, useless and meaningless (see, e.g., Ecc 1:2; Ro 1:21). – Christians cannot spend their time on things that do not matter. They must not waste their minds on thoughts that go nowhere or that spin with every new idea or philosophy. (LL)

4:18 *darkened in their understanding.* Continues the idea of a futile thought life. – There is a progression here. Darkened suggests a blurring of moral distinctions. Repeated doing of what we know is wrong results in ceasing to think of those things as wrong at all. (A) – skotidzo – To make dark and obscure from sight. In their moral thinking and judgment the Gentiles are entirely darkened. They cannot distinguish between good and evil. Worst of all they are ignorant of salvation in Christ. – The problem with the

Gentiles was that they had no proper set of values. Their thinking was all messed up. With such a wrong set of values and with such wrong thinking, it was inevitable that they would become guilty of wrong actions. (PBC)

Matthew 6:23 “But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”

John 1:5 “The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.”

John 3:19 “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.”

SEPARATED FROM THE LIFE OF GOD - apallotreeoo – To be alienated or estranged away from someone or something. Not be allowed to participate. Natural man does not have a spark of fear of God, of love for or trust in God.

Psalms 58:3 “Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.”

Matthew 15:8 “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.”

Ephesians 2:12 “remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.”

BECAUSE OF THE IGNORANCE - agnoyah – Man is by nature totally blind, apathetic and insensible to all that is noble, and divine. – Man is by nature totally blind, apathetic and insensible to all that is noble, sublime and divine. (S)

Romans 10:3 “For they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

hardening of their hearts. Moral unresponsiveness. – The word translated “hardened” here carries the picture of a rock harder than marble. With such a hardened heart, God cannot get through to us. Hardened hearts make for untouchable consciences, immune to the appeals of God. It’s hard to give life to a stone. The result is a daily life that will not be touched by God’s convicting law or his appeals of love. It is reminiscent of Pharaoh in Exodus 7-11. (LL) – This is a deliberate steeling of oneself against God’s Word and will. (A) – porosis – Other words that apply are callousness, spiritual blindness or stupidity. They hate the very idea of religion.

4:19 HAVING LOST ALL SENSITIVITY – What is meant is that they are no longer sensitive to the prodding of conscience. (A) – aselgia – Licentiousness. Sexual excesses and filthy living. A regular Sodom and Gomorrah. – This is in the active sense. It is not that their sensitivity was taken from them; they abandoned it. (PBC)

have given themselves over. Just as Pharaoh’s heart was hardened reciprocally by himself and by God (see Ex 7–11), so here the Gentiles have given themselves over to a sinful kind of life, while Ro 1:24, 26, 28 says that God gave them over to that life. – Paul writes that in his culture people lost their sensitivity to what is proper and right. They are no longer shocked by their gross desires and behaviors. The sensuality of which Paul writes is an open expression of one’s worst desires with no sense of shame or disgrace. Greed and lust simply consume a person to where there are no boundaries and no accountability. Paul’s words have the ring of truth about them in a culture of drive-by shootings, open illicit sex, and increasing random violence. What limits there were on indecency and violence are disappearing. Our lust and greed seem insatiable. (LL) – “How Much Land Does a Man Need? – Leo Tolstoy – How much money do you need? Rockefeller. – There is ruthless trampling on the rights of others when one is concerned about nothing but satisfying one’s own impulses. (A)

4:20 *You.* Emphatic. – This is emphatic emphasizing the change the Gospel has made in their life.

KNOW CHRIST – Christ is the true revelation of the will of God in both his person and his life. (A)

4:21 *truth that is in Jesus.* The wording and the use of the name Jesus (rather than Christ) suggest that Paul is referring to the embodiment of truth in Jesus’ earthly life. – The Christian looks for the pattern of a godly life in God’s incarnation of himself in the person of Jesus. (A) – alaythia - This means absolute truth. This truth is closely connected to Jesus and is always the same because Jesus does not change. It is the truth about our salvation.

John 1:14 “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only,^d who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 14:6 “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really knew me, you would know ^a my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

4:22 *old self.* Probably means the kind of person the Christian used to be. The old life-style resulted from deceitful desires. – Paul here refers to the way his readers were before their conversion – their former lifestyles apart from Christ. Christians must deal every day with their old selves. For example, the sight and taste of alcohol continue to haunt a recovering alcoholic committed to sobriety. (LL) – Life without God decays. (A) – What we used to be, but still comes back. From the catechism “What does such baptizing with water indicate? It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and

repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever. The Old Adam is the corrupt and evil nature that we inherit because of Adam's fall into sin."

Genesis 8:21 "The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though^j every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."

Romans 7:18 "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. for I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out."

Romans 8:7 "the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so."

4:23 NEW IN THE ATTITUDE – Our minds are no longer ruled by futile thoughts or runaway desires but by the truth we have learned in Jesus. In Philippians 2:5 Paul writes, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." – anannehoo – To do some renovating or reforming.

Psalm 51:10 "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

Isaiah 40:31 "but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Romans 12:2 "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

minds. Cf. the evil thoughts of unbelievers (vv. 17–18).

4:24 *new self, created to be like God.* † Since the new self is created, it cannot refer to the indwelling Christ, but rather to the kind of person he produces in the new believer. Nor is it some kind of new essential nature the believer has, because that would have been brought into existence at his new birth. In contrast, this is a new way of life that one not only "puts on" at conversion (note the past tense in the parallel in Col 3:9–10) but is also urged to "put on" continually as a Christian (see note on Ro 6:12–13). – The new self looks more and more like God every day. (LL) – kaheenos – Something that has the sense of freshness.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."

TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS – Every day we Christians must strive to be who we are in Christ, to live in such a way that all of his imputed goodness shows itself. Paul makes it clear (as in Rom 6:11-13) that a life of righteousness (doing right by God and by others) and holiness (being distinctly set apart for the purposes of God) is a daily Spirit-driven choice continually made by Christians. (LL)

4:25 FALSEHOOD – There are outright untruths and subtle half-truths. There are the lies of silence and denial. Paul roots his concern for honesty in the church. Distrust can ruin a fellowship of Christians. (LL) – Shading the truth a bit and adjusting the facts are common weaknesses among people. They should not, however, be the Christian’s way of doing things. Dishonesty is especially damaging when it occurs among believers because we are members of the same body. To deceive a fellow Christian is really to harm ourselves, because just as in the human body all the members work together for the common good, so it is also in the church. Being dishonest with another Christian is like shooting ourselves in the foot. (PBC)

SPEAK TRUTHFULLY – In a world of subliminal advertising, half-truths, and political expediency, Paul’s challenge for truthfulness in all relationships stands as poignant as ever. (LL)

neighbor. Probably means fellow Christians in this context.

4:26 In your anger. Christians do not lose their emotions at conversion, but their emotions should be purified. Some anger is sinful, some is not. – Anger is not forbidden in the Scriptures. Christians are characterized often by a righteous anger at sin, sickness and injustice. What is forbidden, however, is to let anger carry us into sin or to allow anger to go unresolved, leading to bitterness and resentment. (LL) – Many things stir Christians to righteous anger. They cannot stand idly by while God’s name is taken in vain or his Holy Word is taught falsely. They rightly become angry when children are neglected or abused. They feel indignation when owners are defrauded of their property. The danger, however, is that righteous anger can turn into hatred and vengeful reprisal. (PBC)

Do not let the sun go down. No anger is to outlast the day. – Anger must be expelled from the heart before the day is out. This is a warning about nursing a grudge. All that does is provide the devil an opportunity to cause more division, hurt and trouble. (A)

4:27 the devil. Personal sin is usually due to our evil desires (see Jas 1:14) rather than to direct tempting by the devil. However, Satan can use our sins—especially those, like anger, that are against others—to bring about greater evil, such as divisions among Christians.

A Foothold – Sometimes we make it easy for the devil. We put ourselves into situations where sin is more likely. Give the devil an inch, and he will take a mile. (LL) – A good example can be found in Psalm 1:1, “...does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.” And commentary that follows:

walk in. Order his life according to. – Don’t begin to accept their values. (PBC) – “go with the wicked in their planning” (Beck) – “reject the advice of evil men.” (GN) – Not follow their advice, plans or pattern of life. (IB) – “who has not shaped his conduct after

the principles (plans) of the ungodly.” (L) - “if you don’t listen to those who tell you to do wrong things,” (150) – “do not follow evil men’s advice.” (LB)

WICKED – Getting loose from God and falling into evil. (L) Luke 15:13 “set off for a distant land.” Anywhere the Father wasn’t.

counsel. Deliberations and advice (see Pr 1:10–19).

stand. Station oneself. – Don’t hang around with them. (PBC) We do not slow down to “stand in the way of sinners,” listening to their supposed wisdom and joining them in their sinful actions. (LL) – “do not follow the example of sinners.” (GN) – “if you don’t follow those who lead you to dangerous places.” (150) – “who don’t hang around with sinners.” (LB)

sinners. See v. 5; those for whom evil is habitual, for whom wickedness is a way of life. – Means their manner of living. When a man “takes his stand” in such a way he is committed to the nefarious (evil – infamous) way of life that marks all who are walking in it. (L)

sit. Settle oneself. – Make yourself comfortable. (PBC) – “join” (GN) – “Nor taken seat in the assembly of scoffers.” Birds of a feather flock together. Mockery and ridicule of that which is holy have often drawn men together in this unholy cause. This last has plainly advanced farthest away from God. (L) – “if you don’t do along with those who do not love God.” (150) – Mention is made here of the “seat” of the scoffers. They come together for the purpose of holding unholy sessions, so that one may encourage the other in his enmity against God. They talk together with unrestraint, and so their exchange of ideas develops into a scoffing session, as one encourages the other by displaying a bold front in defiance of God’s Word and will. The sin of scoffing, mocking, and indulging in profanities flourishes best in the company of like-minded people. Everyone who attends such a meeting is apt to be swept away to engage also in such wicked talk. (S) – “Scoffing at the things of God.” (LB)

WALK, STAND, SIT – Luther and birds overhead but not nest in hair. – It does briefly indicate that, when a man once begins to live in the company of men who are separated from God, both will find themselves becoming involved ever more deeply. (L) – These point to the mind and practice of this person. (Learning – Attitude – Action) (S)

2 Timothy 2:22, “Flee the evil desires of youth.”

4:28 *steal no longer ... work ... have something to share.* It is not enough to cease from sin; one must do good. The former thief must now help those in need. – In the ancient world theft was a constant evil. For some it was their only source of income. Professional thieves made a living off the ports of the city, where ships brought in treasures, and in public baths and marketplaces. Christianity is never just a call to give up something but rather a call to replace evil with good. (LL) – The point here is to replace the bad conduct not only by honest labor but with a view to helping others as a result. (A) – Among the Ephesians, thieving was probably the result of idle habits and of dislike to hard work. (PC)

4:29 ANY UNWHOLESOME TALK – The Greek here means “rotten.” We would say “foul talk.” This implies much more than filthy language. The idea is any kind of talk which lowers the moral tone of the community. (A)

only what is helpful. An exhortation parallel to the previous one. The Christian not only stops saying unwholesome things; he also begins to say things that will help build others up. – Paul believed that the only thing worth saying about someone was that which built them up. Gossip, lies, and slander clearly did not qualify. In popular psychology books, especially those on conflict resolution and negotiation, Paul’s counsel comes through strongly. (LL)

4:30 *grieve.* By sin, such as “unwholesome talk” (v. 29) and the sins mentioned in v. 31. The verb also demonstrates that the Holy Spirit is a person, not just an influence, for only a person can be grieved. – The Holy Spirit is grieved not only when people choose to deny Jesus Christ but also when Christians choose to disregard or disobey the Spirit’s counsel in the Word. Most of us can recall a time from our childhood or teenage years when we did something very wrong. With the memory of the offense comes the recollection of our parents’ faces as we looked at them with out guilt. They were grieved, terribly disappointed in us. One does not forget that look. Paul describes the Holy Spirit as grieved by our sin. (LL) – The implication here is that the Holy Spirit is disappointed and saddened when these things occur in the life of the Christian. (A) – *loopeh* - Comes from the word meaning to distress. To grieve someone means to add a weight to their life making them sad and filled with grief. This is done when the work of the Holy Spirit (calling, keeping and strengthening us in our faith) is blocked or made difficult by our willful contrary behavior. – This happens when His work is obstructed, when sin is trifled with, when Deity is treated carelessly, when place is given to the devil, when the spirit of the world is cherished. (PC)

Psalm 78:40 “How often they rebelled against him in the desert and grieved him in the wasteland!”

Isaiah 63:10 “Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit.”

Acts 5:3 “Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?”

1 Thessalonians 5:19 “Do not put out the Spirit’s fire”

sealed. See note on 1:13. – *sfragidzo* – To put a stamp of approval on something to verify that in this case Jesus is the one who brings eternal life. This verb speaks of something that has taken place in the past and that was at Baptism. Kings wore rings that allowed them to make an imprint on something that they endorsed by the seal from that ring. The Holy Spirit is a seal that is affixed to us. He assures us that we belong to God. Ephesians 1:14 says that the Holy Spirit “is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance in the redemption of those who are God’s possession.”

day of redemption. See 1:14; 1Pe 1:5 and notes. – The Bible speaks of salvation as (1) past—when a person first believes (see, e.g., Tit 3:5), (2) present—as eternal life now,

that is, a living relationship with Christ by faith (see v. 9; 1Co 1:18), and (3) future—when Christ returns and salvation, or sanctification, is completed through glorification (here; see also Ro 8:23, 30; 13:11).

4:31 GET RID OF – *ahero* – To remove and take away. It can also mean to get rid of sin by repentance. Repentance means a change from what has been to something new and more positive. – They are rid themselves of all deep-seated bitterness and its by-products. It is not easy to “not do something.” It is easier to avoid bad behavior by being busy with positive acts. In verse 32 Paul names a few things the Ephesians could do instead of the negative actions mentioned in verse 31.

bitterness ... malice. Such things grieve the Holy Spirit. This continues the instruction concerning one’s speech (v. 29). – Bitterness is a harsh quarrelsome, malicious disposition. Rage is violent outbursts of anger. Anger is persistent resentment and refusal to Forget. Brawling is voices uplifted in quarreling. Slander is sneering and abusive words about others in their absence. Malice is the summary of all the previous words. (A)

4:32 *kind and compassionate.* The opposite of the negative qualities of v. 31. – The word for kindness in the original Greek denotes a softness that makes one approachable by others and able to minister to their needs. The same word is used in the Greek for a wine that has had all its harshness removed so that it goes down smoothly. Kind people have their rough edges smoothed out and are easy to be with. (LL)

forgiving. This basic Christian attitude, which is a result of being forgiven in Christ, along with being kind and compassionate, brings to others what we have received from God. – As God has forgiven us, Christians are to forgive others. Echoes of the Fifth Petition of the Lord’s Prayer sound through these words. When God forgives, as he forgave us in Christ, our sin is put away from us “as far as the east is from the west” (Ps 103:12). We are to approach the sins of others with this same total and no-more-to-be-done kind of forgiveness. In others words, we bury the hatchet, not leaving the handle up for future use. (LL)