

Ephesians 4:1-6

The first three chapters of Ephesians are all about our wealth in Christ.

And they're about "**--- the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ**". Eph. 1:3

And can there be any place more secure, more blessed, more fulfilling, and more open to a wonderful future, than "**in Christ**"?

And all because God has "**--- predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6: To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.**" Eph.1:5-6

Yes, all that we have, and all that we are,
is a result of God's grace.

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But that's not the end of the story. Indeed,
it is only the beginning.

Our blessings in Christ have been provided
to equip us for our walk in Christ.

In other words, we have been saved to serve.
And that's what Ephesians chapter 4, right
down to Ephesians Chapter 6 and verse
9, is all about.

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I think it would be safe to say that
Mercedes-Benz has produced the
ultimate, when it comes to
automobiles.

Unlike most vehicles, these amazing machines
haven't been produced on an assembly
line, but are hand-built by skilled
craftsmen.

And I'm told that upon completion, their hoods are sealed and their engines are guaranteed to run trouble-free for 10 years.

And I suppose, with their lustrous finish and gleaming chrome, they could be placed on a pedestal and simply admired as a work of art.

However, such a usage would be a complete waste of their superb engineering.

No, these vehicles aren't built to be ornaments.

They're designed to move, and to move with elegance.

And God hasn't created Christians to be ornaments either. **"--- we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."**

Yes, walk.

And as Paul indicated in Eph. 4:1, a Christian's walk should be "**--- worthy of the vocation wherewith**" he is called.

But why is he calling this walk a vocation? I usually connect a vocation with a profession such as a doctor or a lawyer.

But Christians also have a vocation, or a calling, and they're uniquely prepared to follow it.

They have been redeemed by "**the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:**"

They are members of God's family, and are living stones in His temple.

In short, they have been blessed "**with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ**".

And not only are they "**in Christ**", but
Christ is in them.

So then, wouldn't it be appropriate for
Christians to manifest, at least to
some degree, Christ's attributes and
characteristics?

Well, yes, it would, and that's what Eph.4:2
is all about.

It's about *walking* --- "**With all lowliness
and meekness, with longsuffering,
forbearing one another in love**".

And I think the first thing you will notice
is that these Christlike
characteristics are completely foreign
to the society we live in.

That's why Paul warned the believers in Rome
against being absorbed by their
environment.

Rom.12:2 "**And be not conformed to this
world: but be ye transformed by the**

**renewing of your mind, that ye may
prove what is that good, and
acceptable, and perfect, will of God."**

No, our vocation has nothing to do with
conformity.

It's all about being "**transformed by the
renewing**" of our minds.

And how are our minds to be transformed?

Well, Paul, in his letter to the

Philippians, left no doubt about it.

Phil 2:5 "**Let this mind be in you, which was
also in Christ Jesus:**"

And doesn't Eph.4:2, which we are presently
studying, infer much the same thing?

If we have the mind of Christ, we will walk

**"With all lowliness and meekness, with
longsuffering, forbearing one another
in love".**

So then, let's begin by considering the
Christlike attitude of "**lowliness**".

Lowliness can also be described as humility. And if you take another look at Phil.2:5 and continue reading, you will discover that Christ is our ultimate example of humility.

Even though He is equal with God, during His earthly ministry He **"made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:**

8: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Now that's humility!

And not only is humility, or "**lowliness**", a Christlike attitude, but it is the direct opposite of false pride.

That's why Paul wrote in Rom.12:3, **"For I say, through the grace given unto me,**

to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

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The story is told of a young and rather brilliant seminary student who was invited to speak at a large church in Edinburgh Scotland.

I'm afraid the honour rather went to his head, and caused him to ascend the stairs to the pulpit with a confident air.

However, even though he was brilliant in his studies, he was not used to public speaking.

In short, he got stage fright, and forgot every word of his amazing sermon.

After a rather painful attempt to pull it together, he descended those same stairs with his head down, and was met by an old Scottish lady.

"Young man, if you'd walked up to those stairs the way you walked down, you'd be walking down them the way you walked up."

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And pride keeps bad company, doesn't it?
Wasn't pride the principal factor that led to Satan's downfall?

While on the other hand, Jesus said ---

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Yes, lowliness is Christlike, but false pride is satanic.

That's why "**lowliness**" builds up the body of Christ, while pride tears it down.

And that's why Paul cautioned the believers at Philippi --- "**Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.**" Phil. 2:3

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The next attitude Paul mentions is

"meekness".

Meekness doesn't take offense easily.

But meekness isn't weakness.

Consider Moses' reaction, who is described as "**very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth**", when he came down from the mountain and found his people wallowing in sin.

And consider Jesus' reaction, who described Himself as "**meek and lowly**", when He

entered His Father's house and found it being used as a "**house of merchandise.**"

No, meekness isn't weakness.

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So then, when is meekness appropriate?

Well, just as a child needs to meekly accept his just punishment rather than rebelling against it, so a Christian needs to bow meekly before his Heavenly Father's will.

On the other hand, even though he should manifest this Christlike attitude before men, he should be unflinching when it comes to worldly compromise.

And not only is meekness Christlike, but it is one of the fruits of the Spirit.

And by the way, so is longsuffering, the very next attribute mentioned in Eph.4:2.

And as you will notice, this verse makes a direct connection between **"longsuffering"** and love.

Do you see it? **"--- with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love"**.

And isn't love the real motivator behind all of these attributes?

Well, yes, it is, and it will take all of them to accomplish Eph. 4:3.

Yes, it will take lowliness and meekness and longsuffering **"--- to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."**

Certainly, **"the unity of the Spirit"** must refer to the spiritual body of Christ, for that is the only assembly that is bound together by the Holy Spirit's presence.

And not only does the Holy Spirit fuse the body together, but He links the body to its Blessed Head.

So then, Christians have no responsibility
or capacity to provide this blessed
"unity".

It is the exclusive work of the Holy Spirit.
However, we must do our level best to keep
this blessed unity **"in the bond of
peace."**

Not peace at the expense of truth, but peace
at the expense of tolerance.

And that's where **"lowliness and meekness"**,
and, yes, even **"longsuffering"** come
in.

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In Eph.5:30 we are told that believers **"---
are members of his body, of his flesh,
and of his bones."**

So I think we can safely conclude that the
"unity of the Spirit" is somewhat like
the ligaments that bind the body
together.

And although I can't make a direct connection, I think this "**bond of peace**" that believers must try to maintain could also be aptly pictured as the ligaments in a human body.

And the wonderful thing about ligaments is their ability to bind bone to bone without hampering independent movement.

So, what about this "**bond of peace**"?

Must it be rigid, or can it accommodate independent movement?

In short, can we continue to love our brothers and sisters in the Lord, even though we may not agree with them on every point?

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Eph.4:6 "**There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;**

5: One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
6: One God and Father of all, who is
above all, and through all, and in you
all."

Here we see the seven unities of the Church
of Jesus Christ, and the first one is
"one body".

I'm sure this term **"one body"** has been used
to teach the unity of all religions,
but, in fact, it teaches the very
opposite.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit
moulded individual believers into **"one
body"**, thus forming the spiritual body
of Christ.

No, there are not many bodies, there is **"one
body"**, and it is made up of born again
believers.

And the reason there can only be **"one body"**
is because there is only one Saviour.

And that's why Jesus said in John 14:6 ---

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me".

He wasn't being dogmatic or narrow; He was simply stating the truth.

No one else has satisfied God's just demands, and no one else has been made **"--- sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Cor.5:21**

Oh, I know there are many denominations, and that is regrettable.

This unfortunate situation muddies the waters both for believers and unbelievers alike.

However, in spite of the confusion, there is only **"one body"**, composed of born again believers, and **"The Lord knoweth them that are his."** 2 Tim.2:19

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And as we have already noted, the presence of **"one Spirit"** is another very unique unifying factor.

Shortly before Jesus' ascension, He made this promise to His disciples **"--- I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever"**.

That promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and believers have been reaping the benefits ever since.

1 Cor.12:13 **"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."**

And without exception, every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

So much so that Rom.8:9 emphatically states,
"--- if any man have not the Spirit of
Christ, he is none of his."

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And then Paul mentions "**one hope of your
calling**" Eph.4:4

This could only refer to the rapture of the
Church.

1 Thes.4:16-17 "**For the Lord himself shall
descend from heaven with a shout, with
the voice of the archangel, and with
the trump of God: and the dead in
Christ shall rise first:
17: Then we which are alive and remain
shall be caught up together with them
in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the
air: and so shall we ever be with the
Lord.**"

Are you, or your fellow Christians, going
through a period of great distress?

Well, there's light at the end of the
tunnel.

Some day our bridegroom will return and
deliver us from this present evil age

--- **"Wherefore comfort one another
with these words."** 1 Thes.4:18

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Returning to Eph.4:5, Paul speaks of **"One
Lord, one faith, one baptism"**.

Jesus laid down an important principle in
Matt.6:24 --- **"No man can serve two
masters: for either he will hate the
one, and love the other; or else he
will hold to the one, and despise the
other. Ye cannot serve God and
mammon."**

And a Christian only has one legitimate
Master.

Anyone, or anything else, is nothing more
than a sinful distraction.

That's why Jesus asked His uncommitted
followers "--- **why call ye me, Lord,
Lord, and do not the things which I
say?"**

Yes, He must be Lord of all, or He is not
Lord at all.

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And then Paul talks about "**one faith**".

And by that, he means "**the faith which was
once delivered unto the saints.**"

The unique body of truth, contained in the
scriptures, that forms the basis of
our Christian belief.

And not surprisingly, the lion's share of
that faith concerns the person and
work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To begin with, we must believe that Jesus is
**"the Lamb of God, which taketh away
the sin of the world."**

That's foundational to our salvation.

But we must also believe that Jesus is
Emmanuel.

And by that I mean --- He is God in the
flesh.

He is eternal, uncreated, self-existing, and
an equal member of the Godhead.

And like the His Heavily Father, He is the
Creator.

As John 1:3 puts it --- **"All things were
made by him; and without him was not
any thing made that was made."**

Yes, a belief in Christ's deity is
absolutely essential, and not
surprisingly, it is one of the
fundamental beliefs that is missing in
the false cults.

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"one baptism" --- and I believe Paul is
talking about water baptism here, not
spiritual baptism.

If spiritual baptism had been the subject,
it would have been included in V4 in
reference to **"one Spirit"**.

So, what are the particulars of water
baptism?

Well, first of all, it has no saving power
of its own.

It is simply a public testimony that the
participant has been saved, and
intends to live a separated life unto
the Lord.

Or, to put it in the words of Rom.6:4, it is
a public testimony that believers have
been **"buried with him by baptism into
death: that like as Christ was raised
up from the dead by the glory of the
Father, even so we also should walk in
newness of life."**

And isn't it interesting, that once again,
we are talking about our **"walk"**?

Eph.4:1 says, we should **"walk worthy of the vocation wherewith"** we are called.

Rom.6:4 says, we **"should walk in newness of life."**

And in some countries, public baptism can be very costly.

It can mean the loss of our job, separation from friends and family, or even death.

Personally, I have never faced the threat of death.

However, as a young man and a young Christian, I struggled for months concerning this issue of baptism by immersion.

For me, it meant leaving the church I had always attended, and being seriously misunderstood by the family I grew up in.

In the end, the joy of obedience far outweighed the cost.

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And now we come to the seventh and final unity which is found in Eph. 4:6 ---
"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Unlike the nations around them, who worshipped many deities, Israel was to worship the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

Yes, they were to worship **"One God"**.

And even though He revealed Himself to them by many wonderful names, an Israelite never looked upon God as his Father; except in the sense of Malachi chapter 2, where He is pictured as their Creator.

And I'll take a moment to read that verse.

Malachi 2:10 **"Have we not all one father?**

**hath not one God created us? why do we
deal treacherously every man against
his brother, by profaning the covenant
of our fathers?"**

So then, in Old Testament times, no

Israelite would think of calling God
his Heavenly Father, for in his mind,
he would be putting himself on an
equal level with God.

And that's why it's so interesting to note

that even as a child, Jesus called God
His Father.

Remember the time when His parents spent

three days looking for Him, and
finally found Him in the temple?

When His mother asked Him to explain His

actions, He said, **"How is it that ye
sought me? wist ye not that I must be
about my Father's business?"**

And during His public ministry, He often called God His Father.

John 5:18 **"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."**

And it's not hard to imagine why they were furious.

If He were merely a man, He would be committing blasphemy.

The problem was, He wasn't an ordinary man, and they should have recognized it.

Only the Son of God could have performed such miracles, and if He was the Son of God, then He was **"equal with God"**.

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Yes, Jesus has every right to call God His Father.

But there's another reason for calling God our Father, and it has nothing to do with being equal with God.

We can call God our Heavenly Father if we are His children.

And Jesus repeatedly put forth that concept in His teaching.

Matt.5:16 **"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."**

Matt.5:44-45 **"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;
45: That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:"**

And again in V48 --- **"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."**

And when His disciples asked --- **"Lord, teach us to pray"**, He began His prayer with these words --- **"Our Father which art in heaven"**.

It was an entirely new concept, but it was true.

God could be their Father, and they could be His children.

And today, every born again believer can call God his Father.

Rom. 5:15-16 **"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.**

16: The Spirit itself beareth witness

**with our spirit, that we are the
children of God:"**

Oh what a wonderful privilege!

May it never become commonplace in our
thinking.

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And not only is God our Father, but He is
"above all".

Yes, even in a world that seems so out of
control, we have a Heavenly Father who
knows the end from the beginning, and
is actively exercising His sovereign
will.

And He cares for us.

That doesn't mean we will be exempt from
storms, but it does mean His presence
will go with us.

And we can also be assured of Jesus'
presence.

Remember the night when His disciples were
caught in a storm?

Up in the mountain where Jesus had gone to
pray, He was keeping His eye on them.
And in the moment of their greatest
distress, He came to them walking on
the water.

Yes, He was looking after them.

And even at the end of His earthly ministry
He could say, "**those that thou gavest
me I have kept, and none of them is
lost ---**".

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And do you remember the night when Jesus and
His disciples walked to the Garden of
Gethsemane?

As they were walking, Jesus told them about
the deep waters they would soon be
going through.

He even told them about their desertion ---

**"Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now
come, that ye shall be scattered,
every man to his own ---".**

He wasn't trying to scare them; He was
fortifying them.

As He told them, **"These things I have spoken
unto you, that in me ye might have
peace."** `

But, how could such an earth shaking
revelation bring them peace?

Certainly, it had nothing to do with their
circumstances, for Jesus assured them
---"**In the world ye shall have
tribulation:"**

And then He ended this statement in a most
unusual way --- **but be of good cheer;
I have overcome the world.**

And that's the key to it all, isn't it?

Our peace isn't based upon our
circumstances, but the fact that Jesus
is in control.

And our peace is also based on the fact that
our Heavenly Father is **"above all"**.

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And not only is He **"above all"**, but He is
"through all".

The original Greek word that is translated
"through" in this verse has several
similar shades of meaning.

One of them describes an action, which in
traveling from its beginning to its
end, passes unhindered through
anything that might be in its path.

So then, when Eph.4:6 tells us God is
"through all", it is referring to the
fact that every event in world history
is shot through by God's inalterable
purposes.

And nowhere is this more evident than at
Calvary.

All through the trial and along the dark
pathway to Calvary, Satan was
rejoicing in the fact that he was
about to realize his most coveted
ambition.

Before the end of the day, he would have
destroyed the Son of God.

And the Pharisees were breathing a sigh of
relief also.

They had finally eliminated their thorn in
the flesh.

But the fact is, they were only playing
their small part in accomplishing
God's great plan of salvation.

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V6 ends with the words --- **"and in you all."**

Scripture makes it clear that the believer
is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and the
Son of God.

Now we are assured that our Heavenly Father
is in residence.

And what is true of the individual believer
is also true of the Church of Jesus
Christ.

2 Cor.6:16 **"--- for ye are the temple of the
living God; as God hath said, I will
dwell in them, and walk in them; and I
will be their God, and they shall be
my people."**

So, not only has God promised to **"dwell in
them"**, but He will **"walk in them"**.

That puts a whole new light on our feeble
attempt to walk worthy of our
vocation, doesn't it?

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Well, we have been meditating upon the seven unities of the Church of Jesus Christ. However, in closing this lesson, I would like to mention another unity, and it's one that Christ prayed for specifically.

John 17:21 **"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."**

Previously, the believers had been individual followers, but now Jesus was requesting a special unity.

And the purpose behind His request was ---
"that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

Of course, that prayer could only be answered by God, and it was answered on the day of Pentecost.

However, even though we have no part in answering that prayer, we can apply ourselves to Paul's urgent request.

We can endeavour **"to keep the unity of the Spirit** (that Jesus prayed for) **in the bond of peace."**