

Ephesians Chapter 4

Day 1: Which Way are You Walking?

Read: Ephesians 4:1-6

Explore the Theme: We live in a culture that can often be heard shouting “us vs. them.” More often than not, someone is left on the outside looking in. But Paul urges followers of Jesus to live a different life - a life marked by honor, humility, patience and peace. How we each live out those characteristics in the world around us may vary, but God calls us to walk together, united by one faith, one hope and one truth: Jesus is over all.

Ask God: Be real with yourself as you ask God to search your heart. Where do you see evidence of honor and integrity in your life? How are you at practicing patience? Are you known as someone who is gentle and forgiving; someone who makes allowances for others? Thank God for the goodness you see in yourself, then ask Him to show you where growth is needed. Listen carefully and be teachable. Our Father speaks in love.

Live it Out: What we believe determines how we behave. If we believe that Jesus is living in us, then our character should be a reflection of His. As you move about your week, be mindful of what your life is saying about Jesus and who He is to you. What can you do differently so that you are walking worthy?

Day 2: Who is Walking With You?

Read: Ephesians 4:11-16

Explore the Theme: God calls us to walk together, united as one body, the Church. In His grace, God knows that we cannot walk alone. He gives us gifted leaders to instruct, encourage and challenge us to not only learn, but to live God’s word. God also gives us each other; a spiritual family and community. Whether life is at its best or threatens to knock us off course, our community can help us hold onto what’s real and true. Honest and authentic relationships with God’s people helps us to grow into the best version of ourselves.

Ask God: Take inventory of the people in your life who strengthen your faith and help you remember what is true, even if it means challenging you. How have they made a difference in your life? What change or growth have you experienced as a result of their presence? If you don’t have that kind of community, count the cost. What might you be missing out on? Ask God to show you what you need to do differently so that you can pursue community with God’s family.

Live it Out: Take some time this week to consider the gifts - the natural abilities and talents - that God has given you. How could you use those to help, serve and grow others? It might be an individual relationship you need to cultivate or a way you can give back, bless or better the family of God. Pray and ask God, the Giver, what you can do to use your gifts for His glory.

Day 3: Are You Walking in the Light?

Read: Ephesians 4:17-24

Explore the Theme: By God’s authority, Paul reminds us that none of us have arrived. If we have a personal relationship with Jesus, we never stop learning and growing. We are in an ongoing process of becoming who God has created us to be. That is not a journey without challenge. It takes accountability, commitment and

sacrifice. It requires that we lay down what might feel comfortable, popular or even pleasurable, so that we can pick up what is right, holy and more so, different from the world around us.

Ask God: We have a Savior who loves to make us new, but we also have an enemy that wants to keep us in darkness. Living separated from God is not just a problem for the unbeliever, it's a temptation for the children of God. The devil doesn't want us to pursue God, think pure thoughts or practice peace. Is there anywhere in your life where darkness is compromising God's light? Are there any lies you're believing about the way that you're living? This could be a lack of conviction over unhealthy habits OR it could be overwhelming shame where it is not due. Remember what is real about God's love for you and ask Him to show you the truth.

Live it Out: The thoughts that we think impact the life that we live. Paul reminds us that we have a Holy Spirit that is willing and able to renew and reset our thoughts. How do you need to practice thinking differently so that you remember what is right and true? This might include reading God's word, resting in God's presence, praising God through worship or praying for hope and help. Choose one way and renew your thoughts today.

Day 4: Instead, Walk This Way.

Read: Ephesians 4:25-32

Explore the Theme: If we profess Jesus as our King and if we want to walk in unity with His family, then there are some things that simply don't fit in our lives any longer. The good news? We belong to Jesus and He has given us everything we need to live the life He desires for us - a life rooted in truth, hope and the promise that He walks with us, today, tomorrow and always.

Ask God: Paul warns us of five sins we need to avoid if we want to become more like Jesus. Paul follows each warning with an instruction on how to build a different life - a life of integrity, honor and unity with God's people. The sins include lying, anger, stealing, corrupt speech and all kinds of bitterness. Ask God which of these sins are present in your life? Whether it's habitually or even occasionally, it's time for it to go. What instruction has Paul provided for you to instead live differently?

Live it Out: Practice the great exchange. Be real with God and confess the sin that needs to die in your life. Ask for His forgiveness and tell Him the way you want to live differently. Trust that God is not only faithful to cleanse you now, but He is able to provide the courage, strength and endurance you need to walk forward in freedom, today, tomorrow and always.

Day 5: Why We Walk Differently

Re-read: Ephesians 4:32b

Explore the Theme: Paul closes a chapter packed with truth, wisdom and challenge with a simple, but profound word that is worthy of a second look... "just as God through Christ has forgiven you." Why do our lives need to be marked by honor, patience, gentleness, humility, peace and unity? Because when our lives were not and for all the moments they will not be, Jesus has forgiven us.

Ask God: Simply be with God and express your gratitude for what He has forgiven in your life, and for the different person you have become and are becoming as a result.

Live it Out: Is there anyone in your life from whom you are withholding forgiveness? What would it look like to forgive them, just as God through Christ has forgiven you? Keep in mind, forgiveness does not mean reconciliation or even restoration of a broken relationship. While that is something we can pursue with God's direction, forgiveness is an opportunity to release that individual into the hands of a just and holy God.