

## 06–12–2020 Ephesians 4.1–6 Bible Study

Read Ephesians 4:1–6 in your favorite translation. I will print the NET–2 translation.

4:1 I, therefore, the prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live worthily of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, putting up with one another in love, 3 making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you too were called to the 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.

### COMMENTS:

Romans and Ephesians are the New Testament letters with the most powerful presentations of theology. Chapters 1–3 have spoken of predestination and election, adoption and redemption, the work of the Holy Spirit, rebirth, the work of God in joining people from all nations and all walks of life together in the one holy body of Christ, the church.

Those chapters were so marvelous that Paul ends chapter 3 with a doxology. We want to say with Paul, “To him [God] be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (v. 21). And we should do so if we have understood the teaching in these chapters.

However, this is not the end of the letter. Paul continues saying, “I, therefore, the prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live worthily of the calling with which you have been called” (v. 1). He is telling us that this doctrinal teaching must be matched by living a life which shows itself in the relationships we have in the church.

In v. 1 the verb translated as LIVE is WALK. Frequently in the New Testament it is used to mean live. Today we do the same thing when we quote the saying, “You gotta walk the walk as well as talk the talk.” At Jesus time, most people walked so the message was easily understood.

Live you life in such a way as to honor God for his goodness to you. That is the point of living (walking) worthy of your calling. You do that when you respond in humility, gentleness and patience. The ending of v. 2 makes it very clear even to us today saying, “putting up with one another in love.”

We all have to learn how to “put up” with some people. God doesn’t ask this of us because he know how much fun it is. He invites us to look in the mirror and remember how many times God “has to put up with us. Every time we receive grace and mercy God is putting up with us.

We are doing it because we have seen how God brought together Jews and Samaritans (or Gentiles) by the blood of Jesus. This new creation into one out of many is the plan of God. In God’s plan we are different from each other like the many different flowers. The differences of color, language, size, etc. are intended for us to see the beauty in each one, even though different.

God doesn’t say this is a part–time job as a Christian. In v. 3 he tells us, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Why did we burn corncobs in the cookstove in summer and chop wood for winter? The corncobs burn quickly so you don’t have to keep a hot stove going so long. In the winter you need the stove not only for cooking but also for heating.

The church is the bride of Christ and brought into unity by the blood of Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Note the emphasis on ONE: one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father.

One is the smallest number as we learn to count, but as we see here, it is the biggest number in the eyes of God. One is followed by ALL: God and Father of all, over all, through all and in all. In God's plan there are no Lone Rangers.

All become one body. Go and read 1 Corinthians 12:12–26. Reading this is excellent preparation for tomorrow study. It will only take you a couple of minutes to do so. The body has many different parts, but they are all necessary.

REFLECTION QUESTION: Individualism is not wrong. One of my favorite stories is about the gentleman who was shipwrecked on an Island for 20 years before being found. Those who found him admired the three building he had built. One of the rescuers asked, "Didn't you say you have always been alone on this Island." He said, "Yes." "Then why three buildings?" the rescuer asked. He pointed to one and said, "That is where I live. The next one is my church." The rescuer responded, "But what about the third building?" He replied, "That is the church I used to attend." That is individualism gone crazy. Be yourself, remembering you are a part of something larger.