

Ephesians Chapter 4

In the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul has set forth the believer's position with all the blessings, honors, and privileges of being a child of God.

In the next three chapters, he gives the consequent obligations and requirements of being His child, in order to live out salvation in accordance with the Father's will and to His glory.

The first three chapters set forth truth about the believer's identity in Christ, and the last three call for the practical response.

Ephesians 4:1 "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,"

"I therefore ... beseech you":

In view of all that God's grace has done for the readers (as seen in Ephesians chapters 1-3), Paul urges them to "walk worthy of" their "vocation", they are to live in a manner befitting the divine call or invitation (vocation), which summoned them to salvation.

Paul by mentioning his imprisonment gently reminds his readers that he knows the worthy Christian walk can be costly and that he has paid considerable cost himself because of his obedience to the Lord.

"Therefore":

This marks the transition from doctrine to duty, principle to practice, and position to behavior.

This is typical of Paul.

The "I", in the verse above, of course, is Paul.

Paul never once forgot that he was the captive of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The high calling of these Ephesians was to become Christians and thereby become sons of God.

"The prisoner of the Lord":

By mentioning his imprisonment again (see 3:1), Paul gently reminded Ephesian believers that the faithful Christian walk can be costly and that he had paid a considerable personal price because of his obedience to the Lord.

Paul had the ability to see everything in the light of how it affected Christ.

He saw everything vertically before he saw it horizontally.

His motives were Christ's, his standards were Christ's, his objectives were Christ's, his vision was Christ's, his entire orientation was Christ's.

We know that salvation is a free gift of grace from God to all who will accept it.

Note with me, that is not the end of the subject.

When we accept the Lord Jesus as our Savior, that is just the first step.

There is a job to do.

The called of God are to walk in the salvation they have received.

“Walk ... worthy”:

“Walk” is frequently used in the New Testament to refer to daily conduct.

It sets the theme for the final 3 chapters.

“Worthy” has the idea of living to match one's position in Christ.

The apostle urged his readers to be everything the Lord desires and empowers them to be.

They should produce other believers by their walk.

"To walk worthy" means living the salvation that you received, not turning back to the sinful life.

True salvation brings a brand new life to the believer.

It is a life filled with good works, not because the works are required, but because good works follow the new life.

Walk is frequently used in the New Testament to refer to daily conduct, day by day living and it is the theme of the last three chapters of Ephesians.

"Vocation":

In the verse above, means calling or invitation.

This is not a job chosen to make a living by, but to make a life by.

Christianity is a way of life.

“Called”:

This refers to God's sovereign call to salvation, as always in the epistles.

The believer who walks in a manner worthy of the calling with which he has been called is one whose daily living does correspond to his high position as a child of God and fellow heir with Jesus Christ.

His practical living matches his spiritual position.

Verses 2-3

These verses begin to spell out what constitutes the worthy walk (of verse 1).

Such noble conduct includes humility, patience toward others, and bending over backward to maintain “unity,” or harmony, among God’s people.

Ephesians 4:2 "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;"

“Lowliness”:

This means humility which is not found in the Latin or Greek vocabularies of Paul’s day.

The Greek word apparently was coined by Christians, perhaps even by Paul himself, to describe a quality for which no other word was available.

This “humility” is a compound word that literally means to think or judge with lowliness, and hence to have lowliness of mind.

Humility, the most foundational Christian virtue (James 4:6), is the quality of character commanded in the first beatitude (Matt. 5:3), and describes the noble grace of Christ. (see Philippians 2:7-8).

We cannot even begin to please God without humility, just as our Lord Himself could not have pleased His Father had He not willingly “emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond servant and humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”.

This is a short description of the way a true Christian conducts his life.

This is still describing the worthy walk in verse one.

A Christian should pattern his life after his leader, Christ.

In fact, a Christian is a follower of and a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Meekness”:

Another word is gentleness, an inevitable product of humility, refers to that which is mild spirited and self-controlled (Matt. 5:5; 11:29; Gal. 5:23; Col. 3:12).

“Longsuffering”:

This is another word for patience.

The Greek word for patience literally means long tempered and refers to a resolved patience that is an outgrowth of humility and gentleness.

“Forbearing one another in love”:

Humility, gentleness and patience are reflected in a forbearing love for others that is continuous and unconditional (1 Peter 4:8).

All of the above mentioned character traits go with a humble servant of the Lord.

We know that the "love" spoken of here, and the charity in the following Scriptures in (1 Corinthians), both stem from the word agape, which is the unselfish type of love that God has.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 "Charity suffereth long, [and] is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up," "Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;"

1 Corinthians 13:7 "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

This is not only the unselfish love that Christ has, but His true followers have as well.

Ephesians 4:3 "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The ultimate outcome of lowliness, meekness, long-suffering and forbearing is the endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The unity of the Spirit here, is the Holy Spirit.

We are one with Christ in this Spirit, as He is one with the Father.

“Unity of the Spirit”:

The Spirit-bestowed oneness of all true believers has created the bond of peace, the spiritual cord that surrounds and binds God’s holy people together.

This bond is love (Col. 3:14).

This should be the diligent and constant concern of every believer.

The church's responsibility, through the lives of individual believers, is to preserve the unity by faithfully walking in a manner worthy of God's calling (verse 1), manifesting Christ to the world by oneness in Him.

"Endeavoring":

Means that we are going out of our way to make this unity work.

We know that on the day of Pentecost, they were in one accord.

There were no divisions and God visited them.

Jesus is the King of Peace.

The bond that preserves unity is peace, the spiritual belt that surrounds and binds God's holy people together.

It is the bond that Paul described in Philippians as "being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose" (2:2).

The only real peace in this life is the peace that He gives you from within.

That is the peace that the world does not understand.

It is peace that you can have in the midst of the storm.

Humility gives birth to gentleness, gentleness gives birth to patience, patience gives birth to forbearing love, and then all four of those characteristics preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

These virtues and the supernatural unity to which they testify are probably the most powerful testimony the church can have, because they are in such contrast to the attitudes and the disunity of the world.

Verses 4-6

This passage elaborates on the "unity of the Spirit" (verse 3).

Everything that relates to salvation, the church and the kingdom of God is based on the concept of unity as reflected in Paul's use of seven "one's" in these three verses.

This oneness among Christians refers to having:

(1) One body – The one body of Christ, the Christian church;

- (2) One “Spirit” – The same Holy Spirit who imparts the same spiritual life to all believers;
- (3) “One hope” – All Christians share the same future certainty and are headed toward the same heavenly destination;
- (4) “One Lord” – All submit to the same divine ruler, Jesus;
- (5) “One faith” – All believers have placed the same trust in Christ for salvation;
- (6) “One baptism” – Holy Spirit baptism at the time of salvation (1 Cor. 12:13); and
- (7) “One God and Father” – All believers in Christ have the same God and heavenly Father.

Verses 4-6

In these three verses, Paul lists the particular areas of oneness, or unity.

Paul focuses on the Trinity, the Spirit (in verse 4); the Son (in verse 5); and then the Father (in verse 6).

His point is not to distinguish between the persons of the Godhead but to emphasize that, although they have unique roles, they are completely unified in every aspect of the divine nature and plan.

Ephesians 4:4 "[There is] one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;"

“One body”:

Meaning the church, the body of Christ, is composed of every believer since Pentecost without distinction, by the work of the “one Spirit” (See 1 Cor. 12:11-13).

“One Spirit”:

The Holy Spirit of God, who is possessed by every believer and who is therefore the inner unifying force in the body.

Believers are individual temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16-17), that are collectively “being fitted together and are growing into a holy temple in the Lord.

Being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:21-22).

“One hope”:

This is the pledge and promise of eternal inheritance given each believer (1:11-14), and sealed to each believer by the one Spirit (verse 13).

“Hope ... calling”:

Our calling to salvation is ultimately a calling to Christlike eternal perfection and glory.

In Christ, we have different gifts, different ministries, different places of service, but there is only one calling.

The calling to “be holy and blameless before Him” (Eph. 1:4), and “to become conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom. 8:29).

Which will occur when we see the glorified Christ (1 John 3:2).

It is the Spirit who has placed us in the one Body and who guarantees our future glory.

Jesus Christ is the only hope that any of us have.

He said Himself, no man cometh to the Father, but by me.

Our hope is in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:5 "One Lord, one faith, one baptism,"

There is One Lord Jesus Christ, who is our all in all.

You cannot be the servant of more than one person.

Your Lord is your master.

His wishes are your desire to fulfill.

You cannot serve two masters.

Paul told the Galatians, “Even though we or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8).

“For the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him” (see Romans 10:12).

Luke 16:13 "No servant 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."

Faith is in One, as well.

Wherever your heart is, lies your faith.

Our faith lies in Jesus Christ.

This baptism here, is speaking of the one mentioned (in Matthew 28):

Matthew 28:19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"

In true Christianity, there is only one faith, "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" and for which we are to contend (Jude 3).

"One baptism":

Spiritual baptism by which all believers are placed into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:11-13 is here implied).

This is the baptism to new life in Jesus.

We are buried with Him in the watery grave, to rise to new life in Him.

Ephesians 4:6 "One God and Father of all, who [is] above all, and through all, and in you all."

We know that the Father is the supreme Father of Jesus and of all the believers in Christ.

We are sons of God, and Jesus is His only begotten Son.

Our sonship is by adoption.

"One God":

This is the basic doctrine of God taught in Scripture (see Deut. 4:35; 6:4; 32:39; Isa. 45:14; 46:9; 1 Cor. 12:11-13).

1 Corinthians 8:6 "But to us [there is but] one God, the Father, of whom [are] all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom [are] all things, and we by him."

Because there was none greater, God swore by Himself.

He is above all the earth.

1 John 4:13 "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

Romans 11:36 "For of him, and through him, and to him, [are] all things: to whom [be] glory for ever. Amen."

God dwells within every believer, molding their lives the way He would have them.

The tabernacle of God is with men.

Revelation 21:3 "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God."

The basic doctrine of Judaism has always been, "The Lord is our God, the Lord is One!" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

God the Father is often used in Scripture as the most comprehensive and inclusive divine title, though it is clear from many New Testament texts that He is never separated in nature or power from the Son or the Holy Spirit.

Paul's point here is not to separate the Persons of the Godhead but to note their unique roles and yet focus on their unity in relation to each other and in relation to the church.

Ephesians 4:7 "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

"But":

This draws a sharp contrast with the preceding "unity" (of verse 3), expressed in the sevenfold "one" (of verses 4-6), and in the fourfold "all" (of verse 6).

The contrast (in verses 7-16), shows that there is a diversity within Christian unity: while the church is one, there is a variety of spiritual gifts within, given for the church's benefit.

"But unto every one":

This could be translated "in spite of that," or "on the other hand," contrasting what has just been said with what is about to be said, moving from the subject of the unity of believers ("all" in verse 6), to that of the uniqueness of believers ("each one").

"Grace":

This is a single word definition of the gospel, the good news of God's offering salvation to sinful and unworthy mankind.

God is the God of grace because He is a God who freely gives, His giving has nothing to do with anything we have done, but is unmerited, unearned, and undeserved.

"Grace" is a spiritual gift.

"Every one of us" has been granted some spiritual capability to serve God and contribute to the church's growth.

The nature of grace is giving, and the bible tells us much more about giving than getting, because God's nature is to give.

God is a God of grace because He is a God who freely gives.

It has nothing to do with anything we have done or have failed to do; it can only be received. God owes nothing to sinful men except judgment for their sin.

He does not owe men the smallest blessing or favor.

Yet in His grace He has given us the blessing of all blessings, the immeasurable blessing of intimate shared life (2 Peter 1:3-4).

This grace is the enabling power that makes the special gifts function to the glory of God.

This distinction is very clear for the rest of Paul's statement.

Enabling grace is measured out to be consistent with what is necessary for the operation of Christ's gift which is linked with the exact proportion of enacting faith on the part of each believer; and God is the source of both.

"According to the "measure of the gift of Christ":

Each believer has a unique spiritual gift that God individually portions out according to His sovereign will and design, The Greek term for "gift" focuses not on the Spirit as the source like the term used (in 1 Cor. 12:1), nor on the grace that prompted it in Rom. 12:6, but on the freeness of the gift.

Two persons may be given the same gift, but one may have a greater measure of that gift than does the other.

Each believer is given the measure of grace and faith to operate his gift according to God's plan.

Add individual personality, background, education, influences in life and needs in the area of service and it becomes obvious that each believer is unique.

Believers' gifts are like snowflakes and fingerprints; each one is therefore completely distinct from all others.

Thank goodness, He measures with His measurement, and not with ours.

It is not the amount of grace that we want that Christ gives us, but the amount that He feels is right for us.

The next Scripture gives a little more insight into this.

When a believer does not minister his gift properly as God's steward (1 Pet. 4:10), God's work suffers to that degree, because God has not called or gifted another Christian in exactly the same way or for exactly the same work.

That is why no Christian is to be a spectator. Every believer is on the team and is strategic in God's plan, with his own unique skills, position and responsibilities.

Not to use our gift is an affront to God's wisdom, a rebuff of His love and grace and a loss to His church.

If we do not use it, His work is weakened, and His heart is grieved.

Ephesians 4:8 "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."

"When he ascended up on high":

Paul used an interpretive rendering (of Psalm 68:18), as a parenthetical analogy to show how Christ received the right to bestow the spiritual gifts (verse 7).

"Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them".

Psalm 68 is a victory hymn composed by David to celebrate God's conquest of the Jebusite city of Jerusalem and the triumphant ascent of God up to Mt. Zion (2 Samuel 6-7; 1 Chron. 13).

After such a triumph, the king would bring home the spoils and the prisoners.

Here Paul depicts Christ returning from His battle on earth back into the glory of the heavenly city with the trophies of His great victory at Calvary.

This is cited as an illustration of Christ's bestowing spiritual gifts on His church.

The Old Testament text pictures God as a victorious warrior returning to Mount Zion.

"He ascended up on high":

Leading Israel's defeated foes in triumphal procession ("He led captivity captive"); He then distributes to Israel the spoils of war ("gave gifts unto men").

Similarly, when Jesus returned to heaven ("He ascended up on high"), He conquered Satan and his entire demonic horde ("He led captivity captive").

This phrase depicts a triumphant Christ returning from battle on earth back into the glory of the heavenly city with the trophies of His great victory.

“And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15).

Jesus is the one who led captivity captive, when he brought them out with Him from Paradise.

The victory of the Lord Jesus was on the cross.

He defeated sin and the devil on the cross.

He descended to preach to those in Paradise.

His other reason for being in Paradise was to take the keys of hell and death away from Satan.

An Israel king who won a triumphant victory would bring home the spoils and prisoners to parade before his people.

One feature of the victory parade would be the display of the king’s own soldiers who had been freed after being held prisoner by the enemy.

These were often referred to as recaptured captives, prisoners who had been taken prisoner again, so to speak, by their own king and given freedom.

The picture is vivid in its demonstration that God has yet unsaved people who belong to Him, though they are naturally in Satan’s grasp and would remain there had not Christ by His death and resurrection made provision to lead them into the captivity of His kingdom into which they had been called by sovereign election.

The following Scripture is printed in red in the Bible, which means that Jesus, Himself spoke the Words.

Revelation 1:18 "I [am] he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Unto every believer is given some gift of grace, for their mutual help.

All is given as seems best to Christ to bestow upon everyone.

He received for them, that he might give to them, a large measure of gifts and graces; particularly the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Not a mere head knowledge, or bare acknowledging Christ to be the Son of God, but such as brings trust and obedience.

The gifts given to men were through the Holy Spirit of God, and are called the gifts of the Spirit.

He distributes the spoils throughout His kingdom.

After His ascension, came the spiritual gifts empowered by the Spirit, who was then sent. (see John 7:39; 14:12; Acts 2:33).

Early church dogma taught that the righteous dead of the Old Testament could not be taken into the fullness of God's presence until Christ had purchased their redemption on the cross, and that they had waited in this place for His victory on that day.

Figuratively speaking, the early church fathers said that, after announcing His triumph over demons in one part of Sheol.

He then opened the doors of another part of Sheol to release those godly captives.

Like the victorious kings of old, He recaptured the captives and liberated them, and henceforth they would live in heaven as eternally free sons of God.

Verses 9-10

Jesus' ascension into heaven signifies that He previously descended from heaven, (verse 9).

And the person who cared enough to descend for man's redemption is the very same person (namely Jesus), who was equally concerned for the church's well-being.

So that, upon returning to heaven, He equipped His church with all the spiritual gifts prerequisite for her growth, verse 10.

Ephesians 4:9 "(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?"

"Ascended":

Jesus' ascension from earth to heaven (Acts 1:9-11), where He forever reigns with His Father.

"Into the lower parts of the earth":

These are in contrast to the highest heavens to which He afterward ascended (Psalm 139:8, 15; see Isaiah 44:23).

The phrase here does not point to a specific place, but to the great depth, as it were, of the incarnation, including Christ's descent, between His crucifixion and resurrection beyond the earth, the grave, and death, into the very pit of the demons, "the spirits in prison".

Before the death of Christ, both the lost and the saved went to Hades (Hebrew Sheol) although it was divided into the place of torments and the paradise of God (also called Abrahams bosom, Luke 16:19-31).

When Jesus hung on the cross, He consoled the penitent thief that he would be in paradise with Christ on that day.

One of the accomplishments of the Resurrection was to lead “captivity captive,” that is, to remove Old Testament saints from Abraham’s bosom (Hades) and lead them to heaven.

When a Christian dies today, he goes immediately into the presence of God (Phil. 1:23).

Also see Psalm 16:10: “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

This is speaking of the time after Jesus had completed payment of the law on the cross.

Victory was on the cross.

There was nothing else to pay.

When Jesus said; it is finished, it meant just that.

The law had been completely fulfilled; there was no more suffering to do.

Jesus deliberately went into Sheol to preach, and bring out the captives with Him.

He had already defeated Satan, but Satan had to turn over the keys to hell and death.

This does not refer to preaching the gospel but to making a triumphant announcement, in this case Christ’s announcement of His victory over all of the demons even while they tried to hold Him in death.

Ephesians 4:10 "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)"

Between Jesus’ death on Calvary and His resurrection in the garden tomb, he was “put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.”

He was physically dead but spiritually alive.

During the three days He was in that state “He also descended” and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison.

“That he might fill all things”:

After the Lord ascended, having fulfilled all prophecies and all His divinely ordained redemptive tasks, He gained the right to rule the church and to give gifts, as He was then filling the entire universe with His divine presence, power, sovereignty and blessing (Phil. 2:9-11).

This is still speaking of the victorious Jesus.

We know in the 1st chapter of Acts, He ascended into heaven while the apostles gazed at Him.

Acts 1:9 "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

Read several more verses here to get the full impact.

Jesus must fill our life, or we are dead.

He is life.

He is the One who sent the Comforter.

He is also, the one who fills us with the Holy Spirit.

Paul's point (in Ephesians 4:8-10), is to explain that Jesus' paying the infinite price of coming to earth and suffering death on our behalf qualified Him to be exalted above all the heavens.

That is, to the throne of God, in order that He might rightfully have the authority to give gifts to His saints.

By that victory He gained the right to rule His church and to give gifts to His church, that He might fill all things.

Does all things mean all prophecies, all assigned tasks, and all universal sovereignty?

Surely the answer is yes in regard to each of those aspects.

But the context would dictate that His filling all things primarily has to do with His glorious divine presence and power expressed in universal sovereignty.

He fills the entire universe with blessing, particularly His church, as the next verse illustrates.

Ephesians 4:11 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;"

"He gave some":

As evidenced by His perfect fulfillment of His Father's will, Christ possessed the authority and also the sovereignty to assign the spiritual gifts (verses 7-8), to those He has called into service in His church.

He gave not only gifts, but gifted men.

Christ not only gives gifts to individual believers but to the total body.

This verse identifies some of the spiritual gifts given to the church.

These are the God given abilities enabling some Christians to have functioned as “apostles”, some as “prophets,” some as “evangelists”.

And still others in the role of “pastors and teachers.”

The Greek construction for the last mentioned should be rendered pastors-teachers.

This indicates that a pastor-teacher has a dual function: he pastors in overseeing his parishioners’ spiritual lives, and he teaches by instructing them in the Word.

“Apostles”:

A term used particularly of the 12 disciples who had seen the risen Christ (Acts 1:22), including Matthias, who replaced Judas.

Later, Paul was uniquely set apart as the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal. 1:15-17), and was numbered with the other apostles.

He, too, miraculously encountered Jesus at his conversion on the Damascus road (Acts 9: 1-9; Gal. 1:15-17).

Those apostles were chosen directly by Christ, so as to be called “apostles of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1).

They were given 3 basic responsibilities:

1. To lay the foundation of the church (2:20).
2. To receive declare and write God’s Word (3:5; Acts 11:28; 21:10-11); and
3. To give confirmation of that Word through signs, wonders and miracles (2 Cor. 12:12; Acts 8:6-7; Heb. 2:3-4).

The term “apostle” is used in more general ways of other men in the early church, such as Barnabas (Acts 14:4); Silas, Timothy (1 Thess. 2:6); and others (Romans 16:7; Phil. 2:25).

They are called “messengers (or apostles) of the churches” (2 Cor. 8:23), rather than “apostles of Jesus Christ” like the 13.

They were not self-perpetuating, nor were any apostle who died replaced.

“Prophets”:

Not ordinary believers who had the gift of prophecy but specially commissioned men in the early church.

The office of prophet seems to have been exclusively for work within a local congregation.

They were not “sent ones” as were the apostles (see Acts 13:1-4), but as with the apostles, their office ceased with the completion of the New Testament.

They sometimes spoke practical direct revelation for the church from God (Acts 11:21-28), or expounded revelation already given (implied in Acts 13:1).

They were not used for the reception of Scripture.

Their messages were to be judged by other prophets for validity (1 Cor. 14:32), and had to conform to the teaching of the apostles (verse 37).

Those two offices were replaced by the evangelists and teaching pastors.

“And some, pastors and teachers”:

The phrase is best understood in context as a single office of leadership in the church.

The Greek word translated “and” can mean “in particular” (see 1 Tim. 5:17).

The normal meaning of pastor would be “shepherd” so the two functions together define the teaching shepherds.

He is identified as one who is under the “great Shepherd” Jesus (Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Peter 2:25).

One who holds this office is also called an “elder” and “bishop”, or “overseer” (Acts 20:28; and 1 Peter 5:12), bring all three terms together.

The word “evangelists” is used only three times in Scripture.

Meaning, men who proclaim the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ to unbelievers.

Therefore, relatively little can be concluded about this person’s role.

Philip, who planted churches, is called an evangelist (Acts 21:8), and Timothy was instructed to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5).

Some have the gift of evangelism and are given to the church (verse 11).

The root meaning of evangelist is to bring good tidings or to bring the gospel message.

This is spoken of as the five-fold ministry.

A church is really not complete, until afterwards God calls someone to fill all of these ministries in the church.

Many people confuse the apostles and the disciples.

There was a much larger group of disciples than there were apostles.

All apostles were disciples, as well.

Not all disciples were apostles, however.

One of the requirements for being an apostle was that they had to have personally seen Jesus.

The apostle had to be called directly of Christ.

The 12 apostles were chosen by Jesus and taken from the larger group of disciples, after He had prayed all night.

Apostle means delegate or ambassador of the gospel.

It indicates (with miraculous powers). It also means a messenger, or he that is sent.

An ambassador does not bring his own message, but he does bring the message of the One who sent him.

"Prophets":

These are foretellers or inspired speakers.

"Evangelist":

This is a preacher of the gospel.

An evangelist usually has one message, and that is how to receive salvation.

A pastor differs from the evangelist, in that after the person is saved, he or she watches over them to lead them into Christian growth.

They may also, lead the person to salvation.

They are like a good shepherd which leads the flock.

Teachers in the sense that we would understand would be like Sunday school teachers and Bible study teachers.

They would keep the Word of God ever before the people.

Elder emphasizes who the man is, bishop speaks of what he does, and pastor deals with his attitude and character.

All three terms are used of the same church leaders, and all three identify those who feed and lead the church; yet each term has a unique emphasis.

Ephesians 4:12 "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"

(We see in verses 12-16), they teach in its most succinct form, God's plan by which Christ produces church growth.

Matthew 16:18(b) "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Obviously, the building must be according to His plan and attempting to build the church by human means only competes with the work of Christ.

“Perfecting”::

This refers to restoring something to its original condition, or it's being made fit or complete.

In this context, it refers to leading Christians from sin to obedience.

Scripture is the key to this process.

God has given four basic tools, as it were, for the spiritual perfecting of the saints.

These are spiritual means, because the flesh cannot make anyone perfect (Gal. 3:3).

The first is His Word, the Bible.

The second tool is prayer.

A third tool is testing and a fourth is suffering.

Suffering is also a means of spiritual equipping.

Peter uses this word near the close of his first letter: “And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you” (1 Peter 5:10).

God “comforts us in all our affliction,” he says, “so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

The sending of tests and suffering are entirely God's operation, and He gives them to His saints according to His loving and sovereign will.

But the two agents of spiritual equipping, prayer and knowledge of scripture, are the tasks of the gifted men.

“Saints”:

All who believe in Jesus Christ”.

“For the work of the ministry”:

The spiritual service required of every Christian, not just of church leaders (1 Cor. 15:28).

This verse discloses the purpose for the gifted individuals of (verse 11).

Their responsibility is “the perfecting of the saints,” that is, to train and equip the rank and file Christians to do “the work of the ministry.”

The aim of this ministry of Christian service is “for the edifying of the body of Christ.” That is, to build up the church numerically and spiritually.

Christianity is a growing experience in Jesus.

It is a way of life.

The more we are taught, the more we grow in the Lord.

The object of course, is the perfecting of our faith.

We either go forward or backwards with the Lord, we never stand still.

The ministry cannot really function properly, until these ministry positions are filled.

When there is no one taking care of one of the ministries, it puts an extra load on the pastor.

All of this is to build up the body of Christ.

All of this is to help the Christian in his walk with God.

“For the edifying of the body of Christ”:

The spiritual edification, nurturing and development of the church (Acts 20:32).

The body is built up externally through evangelism as more believers are added, but the emphasis here is on its being built up internally as all believers are nurtured to fruitful service through the word.

The maturation of the church has been tied to the learning of and obedience to the holy revelation of Scripture.

Just as newborn babes desire physical milk, so should believers desire the spiritual nourishment of the Word (1 Peter 2:2).

Ephesians 4:13 "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:"

“Unity of the faith”:

Faith here refers to the body of revealed truth that constitutes Christian teaching, particularly featuring the complete content of the gospel.

Oneness and harmony among believers is possible only when it is built on the foundation of sound doctrine.

The solution to the divisions in Corinth was for everyone to hold the same understandings and opinions and to speak the same truth (1 Cor. 1:10).

Only a biblically equipped, faithfully serving and spiritually maturing church can attain to the unity of the faith.

There can never be unity in the church apart from doctrinal integrity.

As (in verse 5), faith does not here refer to the act of belief or of obedience but to the body of Christian truth, to Christian doctrine.

The faith is the content of the gospel in its most complete form.

“The knowledge of the Son of God”:

This does not refer to salvation knowledge but to the deep knowledge of Christ that a believer comes to have through prayer, faithful study of His Word and obedience to His commands (Phil. 3:8-10, 12; Col. 1:9-10; 2:2).

“The fullness of Christ”:

God wants every believer to manifest the qualities of His Son, who is Himself the standard for their spiritual maturity and perfection.

The edifying of the church (verse 12), is to continue “till we all come in the unity of the faith,” that is, until all Christians attain spiritual maturity.

Since new believers are constantly being added to the church, this objective will not be realized until the Lord returns.

The call to the ministry is a lifetime call.

We should never stop working, trying to bring unity of the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Knowledge is accumulated learning, as we have said before.

We must learn all we can about the Word of God.

We need to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the meaning of the Scriptures.

The goal that we set for ourselves should be to be perfect in Jesus.

We will never be perfect on this earth, but it should be the desire of our heart to be perfect.

With our example being Jesus, we should try to be more and more like Him every day.

Romans 8:29 "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

As individuals, we should desire to become more like Jesus every day.

The entire body of Christ (all believers), should be working toward being like Jesus.

We are to radiate and reflect Christ's perfections.

Verses 14-15

Two results occur when Christians reach spiritual maturity.

- (1) Negatively, they will no longer be “children,” that is, immature believers easily deceived by “every wind of” (false) “doctrine”; and
- (2) Positively, they will “grow up into him,” that is, fully grown in “all” aspects of Christian living; doctrine, conduct, service, and so on. “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up” may be read “by lovingly teaching the truth, we will grow up.”

Christian maturity is attained, in part, by thorough instruction in sound doctrine given in a very loving manner.

Ephesians 4:14 "That we [henceforth] be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, [and] cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;"

“Carried about with every wind of doctrine”:

Spiritually immature believers who are not grounded in the knowledge of Christ through God’s Word are inclined to uncritically accept every sort of beguiling doctrinal error and fallacious interpretation of Scripture promulgated by deceitful, false teachers in the church.

They must learn discernment (1 Thess. 5:21-22).

The New Testament is replete with warnings of such danger (Acts 20:30-31; Rom. 16:17-18; Gal. 1:6-7; 1 Tim. 4:1-7; 2 Tim. 2:15-18; 2 Peter 2:1-3).

The immature Christian is gullible; and in the history of the church no group of believers has fallen into more foolishness in the name of Christianity than has much of the church today.

Despite our unprecedented education, sophistication, freedom and access to God’s Word and sound Christian teaching, it seems that every religious huckster can find a ready hearing and financial support from among God’s people.

The number of foolish, misdirected, corrupt, and even heretical leaders to whom many church members are willing to give their money and allegiance is astounding and heartbreaking.

Just as many families today are dominated by their children, so are many churches.

It is tragic when the church’s children, spiritually immature believers (1 John 2:13-14), who change their views with every wind of doctrine and continually fall prey to men’s trickery and Satan’s craftiness and deceitful scheming, are found among its most influential teachers and leaders.

When we are brand new Christians, we have to be fed on milk and honey.

When we get stronger in our walk with Christ, we feed on the meat of the Word.

When you are a new Christian, you are easily persuaded, and might fall for false doctrines.

The strong Christian, grounded in the Word of God, is like a big oak tree that cannot be blown over with every wind of doctrine.

We are told that in the end time nearly everyone will be deceived.

Mark 13:22 "For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if [it were] possible, even the elect."

Matthew 24:24 "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if [it were] possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

The only way to keep from being deceived is to be fully grounded in the Word of God.

Study to show thyself approved of God.

Ephesians Chapter 4 Questions

1. What is Paul telling them they must do in verse 1?
2. What was the high calling of these Ephesians?
3. Salvation is a _____ of grace from God.
4. What does it mean to "walk worthy"?
5. What does "vocation" in verse 1 mean?
6. This is not a job to make a living by, but to make a _____ by.
7. Describe the way a true Christian conducts his life.
8. A Christian is a _____ of and a _____ in the Lord Jesus Christ.
9. What word does "love" in verse 2 stem from?
10. What does the word mean?
11. What is the unity of the Spirit in verse 3?
12. What does "endeavoring" mean?
13. Who is King of Peace?
14. What type of peace does He bring?
15. There is one _____, and one _____, even as ye are called in the hope of your calling.
16. Who is God the Father of?
17. Our sonship is by _____.
18. What tells us that we dwell in Him and He in us?
19. Where is the tabernacle of God spoken of in Revelation chapter 21 verse 3?

20. Unto every one of us is given grace according to what?
21. When He ascended up on high, he led _____.
22. Where was the victory of Jesus won?
23. Who has the keys of hell and death in Revelation chapter 1 verse 18.
24. What is verse 9 speaking of?
25. Name the 5 ministries in verse 11.
26. What is the difference in an "evangelist" and a pastor?
27. What is a "prophet"?
28. What is the object of studying the Word of God?
29. In verse 13, we see that the ultimate goal of the Christian is to measure up to what?
30. What are young Christians called in verse 14?
31. What can you compare the strong Christian to?
32. What is the only way to keep from being deceived?