



## **“Unconventional Living ” Devotional Guide**

### **Day 1: Identity Before Action**

Have you ever noticed how our culture constantly pushes us to define ourselves by what we accomplish? From childhood, we're asked what we want to be when we grow up. As adults, one of the first questions at social gatherings is, "What do you do?" Our world has convinced us that our value comes from our achievements. But Paul begins Ephesians 4 with a powerful shift. After three chapters explaining who we are in Christ, he says "therefore" - connecting our actions directly to our identity. This small word carries a revolutionary message: as believers, we don't work to earn our identity; we work from our secure identity in Christ. This perspective changes everything. When we understand that we're already loved, accepted, and empowered by God, we can serve from a place of security rather than striving for approval. Our good works become a response to grace, not an attempt to earn it. Today, remember that you don't have to prove your worth through what you accomplish. In Christ, you are already valued beyond measure. Let that truth transform how you approach your work, relationships, and ministry.

Bible Verse: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." - Ephesians 2:8-10

Reflection Question: How might your approach to work, relationships, or ministry change if you truly believed that your identity in Christ is secure regardless of what you accomplish?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me based on who I am in Christ, not what I accomplish. Help me to live from my secure identity rather than striving to earn Your approval. Transform my perspective so that my actions flow from Your love rather than from insecurity. In Jesus' name, amen.

### **Day 2: Walking Worthy Through Virtues**

When we think about living a life worthy of our calling in Christ, we might imagine grand gestures or significant achievements. But Paul paints a different picture in Ephesians 4. The worthy walk isn't about impressive accomplishments but about character transformation. Paul highlights four specific virtues: humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with one another in love. These qualities don't naturally grab headlines or earn applause. In fact, our culture often views them as weaknesses rather than strengths. Yet these are precisely the virtues that create the environment where unity can flourish. Humility puts others first. Gentleness approaches differences with care. Patience gives people room to grow. And bearing with one another acknowledges that we all have rough edges that require grace. These virtues don't come naturally to us. They require intentional cultivation and often feel counterintuitive in a world that rewards self-promotion and quick results. But they reflect the character of Christ, who modeled the ultimate example of strength expressed through seeming weakness.

Bible Verse - "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called." - Ephesians 4:1

Reflection Question - Which of the four virtues Paul mentions (humility, gentleness, patience, or bearing with one another in love) do you find most challenging to practice, and how might focusing on that virtue change your relationships this week?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for modeling true strength through humility, gentleness, patience, and love. Forgive me for the times I've pursued the world's definition of success instead of developing the character that pleases You. Help me to walk worthy of my calling by cultivating these virtues in my daily life. In Your name I pray, amen.

### **Day 3: United in Essentials**

Unity can seem like an impossible ideal in our divided world. Even within churches, differences in preferences, politics, and perspectives often create friction. How can we possibly achieve the unity Paul calls for in Ephesians 4? Paul provides the foundation by listing seven essential "ones" that bind believers together: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all. These core truths transcend our differences and remind us what truly matters. Notice that Paul doesn't call for uniformity in all things. Unity isn't about erasing our differences or avoiding difficult conversations. Rather, it's about recognizing that what unites us in Christ is far stronger than what divides us. This unity requires effort. Paul urges us to be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The word "eager" suggests enthusiasm and diligence. Unity doesn't just happen; it must be actively pursued and protected. When we focus on these essential "ones," we create space for diversity within unity. We can disagree on secondary matters while standing firmly together on what matters most.

Bible Verse: "[Be] eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." - Ephesians 4:3-7



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Reflection Question: How might focusing on the seven "ones" Paul mentions change how you view and interact with fellow believers who differ from you in non-essential matters?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the unity we have in Christ. Forgive us when we allow secondary issues to divide us. Help us to be eager in maintaining unity, focusing on the essential truths we share rather than magnifying our differences. Make our unity a powerful witness to a divided world. In Jesus' name, amen.

### Day 4: The Power of Our Words

Our words carry immense power. They can build up or tear down, heal or wound, unite or divide. In Ephesians 4, Paul gives specific guidance about how believers should use their speech to foster unity and growth in the body of Christ. He instructs us to speak truth to our neighbors, avoid corrupting talk, and use words that build others up and give grace. This balanced approach combines honesty with kindness - neither harsh truth without love nor empty flattery without substance. Finding this balance isn't easy. Sometimes we prioritize "telling it like it is" without considering how our words affect others. Other times, we avoid necessary truths to keep the peace. Both extremes ultimately damage relationships and hinder growth. Transforming our speech patterns requires the Holy Spirit's guidance. Before speaking, we can pause to consider: Is this true? Is it necessary? Is it kind? Will it build up or tear down? Does it reflect Christ's character? Imagine the impact if an entire community of believers committed to speaking truth with kindness. Our conversations would become spaces where people feel both challenged and cherished, where growth happens in an atmosphere of grace.

Bible Verse: "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." - Ephesians 4:29

Reflection Question: Think about your conversations over the past week. When have your words built others up, and when might they have torn down? What specific changes could you make to better align your speech with Paul's guidance?

Prayer: Lord, set a guard over my mouth and keep watch over the door of my lips. Help me to speak truth with kindness, to build up rather than tear down, and to give grace through my words. Forgive me for the times my speech has caused division or hurt. Transform my communication to reflect Your character. In Jesus' name, amen.

### Day 5: Putting Off the Old, Putting On the New

Change is rarely easy, especially when it involves deeply ingrained patterns of thinking and behaving. In Ephesians 4, Paul uses the imagery of changing clothes to describe the transformation that should mark a believer's life - putting off the old self and putting on the new. This isn't about superficial adjustments but a complete renewal. Paul tells us that we must be "renewed in the spirit of our minds" - suggesting that transformation begins with how we think. As our thinking changes, our actions follow. The specific examples Paul provides are practical and relational: replacing lying with truth-telling, stealing with honest work, corrupt speech with words that build up, and bitterness with kindness and forgiveness. These changes directly impact how we function in community. Importantly, this transformation isn't something we accomplish through sheer willpower. It flows from our new identity in Christ. We can put off old patterns because we've already been made new in Christ. We're not trying to become something we're not; we're learning to live out who we already are. Each day presents fresh opportunities to choose the new over the old - to respond with forgiveness rather than bitterness, to build up rather than tear down, to give rather than take.

Bible Verse: "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; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." - Ephesians 4:20

Reflection Question: What is one "old self" pattern in your life that you need to intentionally put off this week, and what "new self" quality will you seek to put on in its place?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for making me new in Christ. Help me to put off the old patterns that no longer reflect who I am in You. Renew my mind through Your Word and Spirit so that my actions increasingly display Your character. Give me the courage to embrace change and the humility to depend on Your strength. In Jesus' name, amen.