

## Walk Worthy of Your Calling

2025-10-19 – Ephesians 4:1-16



The church is the body of Christ, and we are called to walk in a manner worthy of our Lord and savior. We are only able to do this through his immeasurable power, grace, and love for us. This Sunday in Ephesians 4, we will look at what Paul says we need to mature in our faith and live up to what we have been called to in Christ.

Well, good morning, everyone. If you've got your Bibles, I want to invite you to open to Ephesians chapter four. We are starting today the second half of the book of Ephesians. And if you've been here the last four weeks, we have spent the last four weeks talking about what it means to be a believer and what it means for us because of all Christ has done.

Over the last four weeks, we have looked at how if you are a believer, a follower of Jesus, you are a saint. And that's language we're not used to calling one another. That's language reserved for the holiest of people. But if you are a believer through the work of Christ, through his immeasurable power and grace and love, you're part of the holiest people because you're part of the body of Christ.

We've talked over the last four weeks about how we were dead in our sins, and yet we've been made alive in Christ. We were walking in the ways of the world as children of wrath. But for all who believe by grace, we have been saved. And as believers, when we are saved, we are not just saved that we would sit around and say, "Someday we get to go to heaven." But in Ephesians 2, it says that we were saved by God's grace for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared ahead of time for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10).

By the end of Ephesians chapter 3 we've seen the picture of who we are but we haven't yet talked about how we're going to do the good works that he has prepared from before time for us to do and that's what we're going to talk about today and for the next four or five weeks of this series in Ephesians.

Because when Christ saved us, he saved us with purpose. Not that we would just say, "Someday in heaven, I'll get to do whatever I want or whatever, I'll worship or whatever," but that we in this life would follow and do what he has prepared from before time for us to do.

The challenge of Ephesians chapter four is that for the last four weeks, we've been talking about how we are unworthy of all Christ has done. We are sinners. We are dead in our sins on our own, in our own strength. We are children of wrath by nature and choice. And yet, by grace we have been saved because of God's great love and because of his mercy.

And in Ephesians 4, the passage shifts and Paul says, "If you are this because of what Christ has done, walk worthy of it" (Ephesians 4:1). And so today we're going to start talking about how we walk worthy.

### How to walk worthy of your calling

And as **we talk about walking worthy of our calling**, I want to encourage you that one of the hardest things as a believer is to believe we can walk worthy of that which we could never earn. And yet, if we believe in the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit and what Christ has done and what he does in us and through us, it is not us who are able to make ourselves walk worthy, but it is he who allows us and builds us up that we would walk worthy and stand before him.

So if you're a believer today, my prayer for you is that today you would come away thinking about what steps you need to take to walk worthy. And if you're here and you're not a believer, I wanna encourage you. This message, if you're not a believer, if you hear it through the wrong lens, you're gonna say, "I could never measure up to that. I should give up." But every believer in this room at one point said, "I could never measure up to that." And then they turned to the cross and they turn to the work of Jesus.

And so if you are here and you are a non-believer, my prayer is that this message about **how to walk worthy of our calling** would lead you to say, "I want to follow Jesus."

To that end, let us pray.

*Father in heaven, we thank you. We thank you that you chose us from before the foundation of the world as your children, redeemed by the blood of your Son, reconciled by him. You've richly poured your grace upon all who believe, and you've given us an inheritance and sealed us by your spirit. We thank you, God, that through your immeasurable power and grace and love, we are a part of your family, Lord, and we are a part of the body where Christ is the head.*

*Father, I pray that this morning that your spirit would give us ears to hear and eyes to see what your word is saying for us today. And I pray, Lord, that you would speak to me and that you would speak through me, that these would be your words and not mine. We praise you, Lord, that you have given us the gifts we need in order to walk worthy. And we pray we would recognize the call and we would seek to live out what you have called us to. We pray all of this in the holy and precious name of your son, Jesus, the head of the church. It is in his name we pray. Amen. Amen.*

### How to walk worthy of your calling

Make sure to measure yourself against the right mark

Well, we're talking about how to walk worthy of your calling. And the first thing we're going to see today is you need to make sure to measure yourself against the right mark. You need to make sure to measure yourself against the right mark. If we don't start with the right goal in mind, we're not going to know if we're walking worthy in the first place.

Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is **one** body and **one** Spirit—just as you were called to **one** hope at your calling—**one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism, **one** God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:1-6 CSB

To that end, Paul says in Ephesians 4:1, "**Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to live worthy of the calling you have been called to**". And I'm going to pause there before we go any further.

That word “worthy.” Paul says, “I urge you to walk worthy.” He’s already talked about walking before. In Ephesians 2:1-2, he says, “**you were dead in your sins. You walked in the ways of the world**” (Ephesians 2:1-2). In Ephesians 2:10, what I read earlier, **that through the work of Christ, we’re called to walk and do the works he has prepared for us from before time.** And so now he’s saying you need to walk worthy of the calling you have received.

And this is not about physically walking. This is about living in such a way where your love of God is evident and the work he has done is evident. In fact, that word “worthy” is a very important word. In the Greek, the word behind it is *\*axios\**, and it means *bringing up the other beam of the scales or bringing into equilibrium. The idea is equivalency. (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament)*

Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk **worthy** of the calling you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is **one** body and **one** Spirit—just as you were called to **one** hope at your calling—**one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism, **one** God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:1-6 CSB

And that’s a fancy way of saying when you’re called to walk **worthy** of the calling you have received, you have been made all of these things by Christ, chosen child of God, saint, masterpiece, live up to it.

Now, there’s two things you can do with this. First and foremost, you can say, “Well, Matt, I’ve been listening. I can’t.” And you’re right, you can’t live up to this calling on your own. But what you do in light of that matters.

I talk to Christians sometimes who have been, they’ve been made alive in Christ and yet they sit in their sin. They wallow in it. They’re like pigs in filth. Or maybe a kinder way of talking about this is they’re like a prisoner. But when Christ died and rose and reigns and made this person through the work of the Holy Spirit saved this person, it’s like Christ came and he unlocked the door. In fact, he took the door off. The only reason they’re still in their cell is because they don’t want to leave. But he died and rose that we would do the good works prepared for us from before time began.

If we’re going to walk worthy, we can’t sit in our sin and say, “Well, we were never worthy. There’s nothing we can do about it.” If you want to know who are the people I despise the most in the world, it’s Christians who say sin is not a big deal because Christ died to cover it, because they make a mockery of the gospel.

I sometimes talk to people who say, “Well, you can’t judge other believers because Christ died for their sins, so whatever they do, it’s permissible.” Read 1 Corinthians. Read 1 Corinthians well, don’t read it chapter by chapter. Read the whole book and you will see what Paul has to say about Christians who walk foolishly in their faith. And I would say, Paul would say, “Christians.” Because if you think you can walk in your sin in pride, you’re worshiping the wrong God.

Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk **worthy** of the **calling** you **were called to**, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to keep

the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is **one** body and **one** Spirit—just as you **were called to one** hope at your **calling**—**one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism, **one** God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

As Paul talks about walking worthy of the calling you have received, I want to make sure we talk about that word “calling,” because it shows up four times. And the word “calling” in modern Christian culture, usually in Western culture, we talk about it as pastors are called, or certain people are called to positions in the Lord and jobs of ministry. But that's not what Paul is referring to. He is talking about each and every saint. And if you're here and you're a believer, you're a saint, which means you have been called by God as his chosen child. It means you have purpose. It means you have value in the kingdom of God. And it means that there are good works prepared for you that you have been called to do.

With these words, make sure you understand ***you were called if you are a believer***. There is no way around this. Why would you want there to be a way around this? There's nothing more wonderful than doing what we were created to do.

And notice as we keep reading, ***as you were called to this, as we were all called to walk worthy as followers of Christ, we need to do so with all humility and gentleness and patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace*** (Ephesians 4:1-3).

Now, if you read these words with a critical eye, you will notice that in order to walk worthy of your calling, it involves other people in the body of Christ. It's easy to be humble and gentle and patient when you're alone, unless there's a fly in the room. It's easy to have unity when it's just you. But it's not just you. If you are a part of the body of Christ, you are part of the body where Christ is the head, and we together are called to walk worthy.

We're called to do this, the final part of this point **\*\*in verses one through six. *There is one body***, and if you're a believer, you're part of that body. ***There is one spirit***, and if you're a believer, it means you're connected through the one Holy Spirit. There aren't a bunch of different Holy Spirits. There aren't a bunch of different ways to follow the Holy Spirit. There is a Holy Spirit, and we are all saved through the Spirit. We are sealed by the same Spirit. ***Just as you were called to one hope at your calling***, the hope is in the work of Christ now and for all eternity, for the promises of what is to come, even as He is transforming us and maturing us today. The hope that we have in Christ is the same if you're a believer. We may argue and quibble over how exactly the end times are going to happen, but we know Christ is on the throne and he will always be. And for all who believe, we will spend eternity with him. There's one Lord. Now, this is something where in our modern culture, where everything is pluralistic and people say, “Well, you believe this and I believe this.” ***There's one Lord***, and that Lord is Jesus Christ. There is no one else on the throne of grace, and if you think there is, you are sorely mistaken. ***There's one faith***. This means that other religions that mention Jesus, it's not, “Well, they kind of work,” but the Mormons, they're not believers. Muslims talk about Jesus, but as a prophet. Hindus will say, “Well, he's one of the gods.” There's all of these different religions that will mention Jesus, but there is one faith, and that is faith that Jesus died and rose and reigns according to the word of God. If you believe anything other than that, you are outside the faith. And if you say, “Well, maybe there's multiple ways for different people.” Well, Jesus says, ***“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”*** (John 14:6). ***There's one baptism***. And I want to make this abundantly clear to you all. When it talks about baptism in scripture, over the course of church history,

some people argue, “Well, infant baptism or believer baptism,” it's believer baptism being talked about here. When you become a believer, you should get baptized. You're commanded, **“go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”** (Matthew 28:19). The call to be baptized is a call for each and every believer. And it's to do so out of obedience to Christ. And if you say, “Well, I don't want to public speak,” well, you can fly through that pretty quickly if you want. But what's more important is getting baptized, professing what Christ has done in your heart. And what's more important with baptism is we do it because our Lord and Savior, he did it first and he commanded us to do it as well. So there's one faith, there's one baptism. And lastly, **there's one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all** (Ephesians 4:4-6).

The God of the Bible is not one of a pantheon of gods like other religions or the Greeks or Romans of that day. The God of the Bible is the Creator who was before all things. And remember, that's when he chose you. He chose you before he said, “Let there be light.” And when he said, “Let there be light,” he knew the cost was the cross and he willingly paid it.

#### **How to walk worthy of your calling**

Make sure to measure yourself against the right mark

Make sure to measure yourself against the right mark. This is the standard for us as believers. We are called to live up to the body that we are part of, the body where Christ is the head. And if you say, “Well, Matt, this seems impossible,” just flip your Bible to Ephesians 5:1 **therefore be imitators of God**. Elsewhere in scripture Paul says **“imitate me as I imitate Christ”** (1 Corinthians 11:1). We are held to an incredibly high standard. The beauty of the gospel though is when we fall short it's an opportunity to praise the one who never fell short.

We are held to this high standard and we need to see it even as we don't always live up to it. This is why we need the body of Christ to help one another as we will see. But we need to start by recognizing and making sure we measure ourselves against the right mark. You are a chosen child of God by the work of Jesus Christ, and you are called to live and act like that. You are called to that standard, and again, it's impossibly high.

I want you to think about if you're a fan of basketball. The greatest shooters in basketball don't make 100% of their shots. They make like 40%, or in my case, a percentage smaller than 40%. We're talking layups right now too, but I joke, but I say this because the greatest shooters in basketball, when they miss a shot, their coach doesn't say quit shooting, their coach says shoot through it. It's a simple principle, but you need to set the mark of you want to make the basket, then when you fall short, you don't sit there and say, “Well, I fell short, never mind.” You keep striving. You keep growing, you keep gaining, and we need to set ourselves against that mark. And then again, as believers, when we fall short, it's an opportunity to give glory to God, because Christ did not. **He humbled himself to the point of death, even death on the cross** (Philippians 2:8).

We need to make sure to measure ourselves against the right mark. If we set our sights low, we're going to walk in a shallow form of Christianity that's worldly and man-centered. You know, in our modern world, I'm going to just take a little aside here. I was reading this week about, The Atlantic had an article about how we're watching just people in the United States get dumber and we see this in our education system.

And what stood out to me is that the article pointed out that a lot of what's happening, there are good schools and good teachers, but a lot of what's happening broadly in our culture, we blame it on smartphones, we blame it on social media, we blame it on all of these different things. We blame it on what COVID did to kids and all of these things. And none of these things are good. But the article near the bottom said, we can blame it on all these boogeymen, but there's a reality that we have set the bar so low for so many kids. And we're watching that low bar become the norm. And then when they don't measure up to that bar, because we're not even making them measure up to that bar, we're watching it go lower and lower and lower.

Body of Christ, we are called to an incredibly high bar. And if we want to walk well in this world, we need to not allow that bar to be influenced by Western society that says, "Well, if you don't measure up, it's okay. And it's okay. And it's okay. And it's okay." Again, we fall back on the grace of God because we sin and we fall short. But that doesn't mean we lower the measure of what it is to walk worthy of the gospel. Make sure to measure yourself against the right mark.

#### How to walk worthy of your calling

Make sure to measure yourself against the right mark

Use the gifts given by Christ to grow

This brings me to the second point. Use the gifts given by Christ to grow. As we talk about this measure that we will never reach in our own strength, Paul doesn't say, "All right, do that. Good luck." He then points out what Christ has done to prepare us to do this. Use the gifts given by Christ to grow. We see this in verses seven through 13.

Now grace was given to **each one** of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. For it says: When he ascended on high, he took the captives captive; he gave gifts to people. But what does "he ascended" mean except that he[c] also descended to the lower parts of the earth? The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, to **fill** all things.

Ephesians 4:7-10 CSB

**Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift** (Ephesians 4:7). Now, before I read any further, I want to point out it says each one. Before it was, there's one, there's one, there's one, there's seven times. There's one body, one spirit. We're all one in Christ. And now each one that's part of the one has been given gifts. Do you see there's a distinction? You individually, even as we talk about the body as a whole.

Here's what it says. **For it says, "when he ascended on high, he took the captives captive. He gave gifts to people." But what does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower parts of the earth? The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens to fill all things** (Ephesians 4:8-10).

The language in this passage, it's the incarnation of Christ. When he came, he died for our sins, and he rose, and he ascended back to heaven where he reigns. And when he did that, we have the measure of grace, which is our salvation. And then we have the measure of the spiritual gifts which he has given us.

In the Old Testament, our image of ascending and descending is Moses going up the mountain to get the Ten Commandments and coming down. And when you look at the image in the Old Testament, what you find when you see the law is you realize that through the law, no human will ever be worthy. But through the grace of Christ, we are no longer under the law, but we are under grace. And in grace, just like we were given the law in the Old Testament to tell us what it would look like to walk worthy, which we could never do, under grace we're given the gifts so that we indeed can walk worthy.

And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to **equip** the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's **fullness**.

Ephesians 4:11-13 CSB

As he goes on, he says, *And he gave some to the apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness* (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Now, one of my favorite words in Scripture is in this passage, and it's a word that I used to hate, "some". He gave **some** to be apostles, and **some** to be prophets, and **some** to be evangelists, and **some** to be pastors and teachers. When I was a young man in my faith, I was determined to have every spiritual gift. I was determined to be perfect. And you may say, "Well, Pastor Matt, you said we need to measure ourselves against that." And you're right. But then we need to recognize, right? And then we need to look to Christ who was perfect. And as we seek to follow him, we need to recognize that he gave us each one or some of the gifts.

This is important because one of the ways that Christians can fall out of balance is we can think we need all the gifts, but that's not how the church works. There are some who have certain gifts, the apostles, the idea that early church, the apostles were the authority connected to Christ. And then it became about those who were sent, like missionaries, different things, the prophets, those who were speaking the word of God in the early church. And then we see evangelists, those preaching the gospel to non-believers and pastors and teachers, shepherds inside the body.

These gifts were given for the edification, for the building up of the body of Christ. Notice it says that the reason he gave these things was to **equip the saints for the work of ministry**. If you're here today and you are a believer, what are you? A saint. Good, good. And if you're a saint, that means the purpose of my role as a shepherd, as a teacher, is to equip you to do the ministry.

And you may say, "Well, Pastor Matt, that's what we pay you to do." It's true. We can joke about it, but it's true. And then at the same time, what I want to tell you is if I'm doing my job well, it's going to lead to you being equipped to do the ministry.

In modern churches, something that is often lost is the idea is, "Well, the pastors do the ministry. We support the pastors." And the body of Christ has the wrong head when you do that. It is Christ who is the head.

As we think about this, as we pray about this, as we work through this, I want to encourage you that the work of those in leadership in the church is to equip you for ministry. Our elders are not successful if we say we're going to do it all in our own strength. No, we're successful when we're building up the body, when we see people using their gifts. And I will tell you, our elders rejoice when they see the gifts in use.

We have a text chain where every once in a while, someone... oftener than,... I make every once in a while sound like it's very far apart but something we rejoice in often is someone will tell us the way they shared their faith or the way they did something or the way they're teaching or the way they're learning and we share that with one another and rejoice because the saints are doing the work of ministry. If you are a believer you are called to use your gifts for the work of ministry this isn't just in Ephesians whenever we see the spiritual gifts the purpose is consistent:

**The purpose of spiritual gifts**

Ephesians 4 – ...to **equip** the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ...

1 Corinthians 12 – A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good...

Romans 12 - ...in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of the one another. According to the grace given to us, we have difference gifts...

1 Peter 4 - ... Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God...

Ephesians 4, **it says to equip the saints for the work of ministry to build up the body of Christ.** In 1 Corinthians 12, when Paul talks about the gifts, and I talked earlier this year about 1 Corinthians 13, the higher than the gifts is love. But inside the gifts, when Paul talks about what the purpose of the gifts are, he says they are a manifestation, or a **manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good\*\***, which is a fancy way of saying, “You're given spiritual gifts for the edification of the body, for building one another up” (1 Corinthians 12:7).

Romans 12 says, **In the same way, we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts.** We don't all have the same gifts and it's okay and it's good because that's our need for one another (Romans 12:4-6).

And 1 Peter 4 says **just as each one has received a gift use it to serve others as good stewards of the varied grace of God** (1 Peter 4:10). We've been given these gifts and we are called to use them with one another and this is not just an issue of you're supposed to do it it's an issue of stewardship. Christ when he talks about the parable of the talents where the one person's given ten and then five and the one guy has one the guy with ten takes his talents and he doubles it forgive me I'm gonna get the numbers wrong but he doubles it and then the guy with five doubles it and then the guy with one says hey I was worried so I buried it so I could return it to you and the master says well you could have put in the bank and at least got interest on it (Matthew 25:14-30).

You have gifts and you're called to steward them and to use them for the good of the body of Christ. That's our job as saints, is to use our gifts with one another.

And you may say, “Pastor Matt, I don't know my gifts.” And one of the problems in the modern Western world, and I'm being very critical of the modern Western world, but you know, when you go on Facebook and it's like, “which one of these characters from this show are you? Or which one of these?” something that we do unintentionally. We do Myers-Briggs or all these personality tests there's all of these different examples of things we do. We do these with spiritual gifts and we turn it into a survey. And when you turn it into a survey one of the problems is it's about how you answer it. And then we can trust the Holy Spirit to be in that. But a problem with that is there was a time in my life if I would have taken the survey I had every gift. Again I was a really talented 21-year-old. It's all downhill from there. I joke about this, but I did a spiritual gift survey where I had a five out of five on every single one. And I blame it on how the questions were asked. Would you like to do this? Would you like to do this? I had every gift.

I'm joking here, but what I want to make sure is abundantly clear, is that this is why we need the body. Because if you looked at me at 21, striving, you would have seen someone striving in his own strength, not in the spirit. And when we look at the spiritual gifts, the way that I know the gifts that I have is not because I filled out a survey, it's because I was in proximity with other believers. And as I was working with other believers and as I was growing in my faith and serving alongside others, things emerged.

I remember the first time a pastor asked if I wanted to teach. And I was like, “Okay.” And then I remember teaching being like, “I kind of like that.” And then he said, “Here's all the things you did wrong, but good job.” And then I grew. Because that's how we sharpen one another, how we disciple one another. But that pastor saw gifts in me that I did not see. And we need that from one another.

I think of one of the most incredibly gifted men I've ever known. He had the gift of encouragement at the second church I worked at. He would invite me every Monday morning to a Bible study. And how he started it is he said, “Matt,” I was a youth director at the church and I was burning the candle at both ends. I was struggling.” And he said, “Hey, I know youth group ends late on Sunday, 6 AM, we're doing this Bible study.” And every week he's like, “Matt, you need to pour into yourself and you need to be poured into by others. You need to spend this time.” And every week I would show up later. I wouldn't show up. And over a while, I was discouraged because I was doing all the other things. I was leading a Bible study, serving, getting involved in everything, but all of it was the outward-facing, none of it was the inward-facing, and he kept pushing on me. And for about six months, and I say pushing on me, but it was in love, it was, “Matt, you need this.” And I came a little bit more often by the end of my time at that church, and every time I came, there wasn't a comment of, “Oh, he's finally here!” There's a comment of, “I'm so glad you're here.” And it's such a small thing, but I always look back to that man and how he helped foster me to help me go from using my own strength to starting to lean on the Lord.

And you may not be the person ready to preach or to teach or ready to be upfront, but you can be the person grabbing someone and saying, “Hey, come join me.” Or you might need to be the person who says, “Fine, I'll join you, even though I'd rather sleep in.” But the point here is, we need one another.

You're not gonna be equipped to walk worthy, you're not gonna live to this standard on your own because you don't have all the gifts to do it. If I can say boldly here, because the other side of this is that the gifts are not for you to be self-glorified. Because this is the other thing, if I come up every Sunday and preach and say, “Look, I have the gift of preaching, look how great I am,” what am I doing? I'm not walking in

humility. I'm walking in foolishness. And if I think that my reward is how I use my gifts, I am missing out on what Christ has done.

My prayer and the reward for me as a pastor that is the best. A few weeks ago, a woman, she borrowed a book because she wanted to know some things about praying. And so I gave her a book and she read through the book. And she told me after reading through this and having some discussions in my small group, "I'm praying in front of my family for the first time." And that is wonderful. That is a blessing. That is the Lord maturing his body.

#### How to walk worthy of your calling

Make sure to measure yourself against the right mark

Use the gifts given by Christ to grow

See the growth of the whole body as our shared worthwhile goal

We're to be equipped to do the work of ministry. It's something we need to do together. And this brings us to the final point. See the growth of the whole body as our shared worthwhile goal.

See the growth of the whole body as our shared worthwhile goal. In everything Paul says in Ephesians 4 through 6, there's the individual responsibility and how it affects the body as we grow in maturity in Christ.

Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ. From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of [each individual \(one\)](#) part.

Ephesians 4:14-16 CSB

**\*\*Paul says, *then we will no longer be little children tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness and the techniques of deceit*** (Ephesians 4:14). Paul is talking here about how it is the job of the church to raise up those who are newer in their faith, that they would not fall astray to false teachers. If you're a believer and you're immature in your faith, let me say this boldly. It's your job to make sure other believers don't go off the deep end because of YouTube and TikTok and whatever. Take that seriously. Because when a believer says to you, "Oh yeah, I saw this guy online and I was watching this thing," and you hear it and go, "That's kind of weird." If you walk away from that, their algorithm didn't.

I know that sounds like a little thing. But something I've found, especially over the last five years in the church, is that people see something and they're like, "Oh, that's kind of interesting. I've never thought about that." And then, you know, the algorithm says, "Well, if you like this one, you'll like this one, and you'll like that." And what happens is that people outside the body of Christ, we are shaped and grown. Iron sharpens iron, but that is not always people.

This is an important thing that we need to consider because if our shaping is not tied to the proximity we have to one another, we're going to watch people get flung around by waves and wind. People need to be

aware of human cunning with cleverness and the techniques of deceit. There are false teachers out there. There are many. There are wolves in sheep's clothing. We need to be aware of that. We need to be lifting one another up.

And Paul with these words, in the ancient culture he's writing in, an individual being told, "don't be a little child, tossed and blown around," that was normal. But to say it's the responsibility of a community was a radical thing in that day. We need to lift one another up and care for one another and make sure we are maturing one another.

How do we do that? ***We speak the truth in love. Letting us grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ. From him, the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part*** (Ephesians 4:15-16).

The key language here, we still see individual, each individual. Each of us are called to this individually, but we're part of the body of Christ. I haven't taken a biology class in years, but I think a ligament is like your ACL, right? Like that's one. Good, good. Thank you.

We have all these different body parts and the imagery that we should read into this is every single one of them matters in the kingdom of God. And your part in the body matters. You're called to walk worthy. You're called to be a part of the body and you may be a visible part, you may not. It doesn't matter to me. What matters is, are you using your gifts for the body and are we building one another up?

Growing in your own spiritual maturity requires that you're in the word on your own and that you're around other believers. You cannot do this in a vacuum. You cannot do this in a silo. You cannot do this if you're always serving and never being served. And in every community, you're doing everything in your strength, but not letting others serve you. Because we're all called to do this together.

#### **How to walk worthy of your calling**

Make sure to measure yourself against the right mark

Use the gifts given by Christ to grow

See the growth of the whole body as our shared worthwhile goal

It is so important that we take this seriously. **We need to see the growth of the whole body as our shared worthwhile goal.** The image for this series is the shield wall, the armor of God in action, where each member of the body of Christ has the shield of faith, and we move together. And from Ephesians 4 through Ephesians 6, we're building towards that image, where we want each and every member of the body of Christ to stand ready as a soldier with their shield ready.

So when the evil one fires his fiery darts, we're there to block them. To do that, we all need to know how to hold our shield. We all need to understand what our shield is in the first place. And we all need to walk forward, trusting and building one another up. This is the picture of Christian maturity.

Sometimes believers think “I’m going to go do I’m going to go watch more things or I’m going to go read more things on my own,” and that’s good. I don’t want to disparage that. But do not do that at the cost of proximity with other believers and growing in community together. We need discussion with one another. We need to have chances for others to speak the truth in love to us, even as we need to speak the truth in love to others.

If we don’t have that, we’re not going to mature in Christ. If we don’t have that, we’re going to fall short of walking worthy because we’re going to trust in our own blind spots. We’re going to trust that we’re enough when we know on our own we are not. It is only by his immeasurable grace and power and love. But this is what he’s called us to. We’re called to walk worthy together.

So what do you need to do with this? First off, If you don’t spend any time studying the Bible with anyone else, start there. If it’s another person or if it’s a Bible study, we have some options. We have Ironman on Saturdays. We have Bible studies throughout the week. Start there. Because when we gather together and when we’re in the word, one of my favorite things that happens is someone says something and then people look and go. It’s not what I would say. And then we talk through it, and sometimes it’s someone with a keen insight, and sometimes it’s someone off the deep end. But in either case, if you speak the truth in love, it builds up the body. And we need to be able to do that.

And one of my favorite things is when I talk to men, and they’re humble and say, “hey, I’m struggling with this, or how do you handle this?” And we’re able to walk through something together. And there are men here that I say, “hey, I’m struggling with this. How do you handle this?” Because we need to be able to talk about these things together.

Serve. If you’re able, we have spots in Children’s and Awana. We have a lot of spots in Awana, especially with the older kids, the kind of easier ones. The ones who you can kind of look in the eye and talk to and they listen. We have spots there if you’re interested in serving. Oh, that’s maybe got a few people. But I encourage you to this because it’s important that we serve together. Because even as we serve, the purpose is not just, “all right, we’re childcare.” The purpose is we’re equipping these little saints for ministry. And the purpose as we do that is for those who are in leadership in those ministries to help sharpen and lift up the saints serving in the ministry as well.

If that’s not your thing, I’ve got a couple simple ones right now. One, in November, we’ve got Operation Christmas Child. We’re going to have boxes available for people to go fill, but more importantly in the near term, we’re a drop-off site, so people are going to be showing up from our community to drop off boxes. And when they do that, we need people ready to carry the boxes and pack the boxes. And we also need people to stand there with a hospitable smile or sit. There’s sitting rules too. But we need people that are ready for all of these different positions because last year we had a guy come in and I will never forget, he was like, “yeah, my daughter went to this thing and they gave us a box and I guess I had to turn it in.” And he’s like, “I’ve never really walked through a church before” and so I got to like take him on a tour. And it’s like the simplest thing, but you hear that and go, “wow, what an amazing moment that came from this little organic thing.”

We need people to serve. There's a sign up across from the water fountain. And when you're there, there's also a lot of dead time where you'll be sitting with the other people serving and just talking. Because a lot of our growth happens when we're just organically around one another.

Lastly, if you like grilling, or hanging out this Wednesday we've got our Awana family meal and I'm going to be at the church at four and I could use anyone just show up and I'll put you to work we got to set up tables we got a grill but if you're interested in that it's an opportunity to just come serve and hang out together. Our Awana ministry last year at this time had like 60 kids and now we have 110 we have a lot more families so there's going to be a lot more grilling which means there's going to be a lot more taste testing. But I say this because these are simple opportunities, and you may say, "Well, Pastor Matt, I don't know what my gifts are." Your spiritual gift is not grilling, but if you come hang out, one of the things is as we talk, we'll connect and we'll look to find ways to connect further and to grow and to get connected into more things.

I'm glad I didn't use my first spiritual gifts inventory as my guidance for life because I would have assumed I was perfect, and I am not. Thank you for the laughter. But I say this because as we grow in the body, the gifts emerge. As we spend time together, as we're in proximity together, as we seek the Lord on our own and in community, we see these things develop. That's how we mature in Christ. It's not do X, you get Y. It's be built up together and grow.

So I want to encourage you to do that. You're a saint if you're a believer. Take seriously the call that you are to be equipped to do the ministry of the church.

Let's pray.

*Father in heaven, we thank you that while we were sinners, while we were dead in our sins, while we walked in the ways of this world, while we were still children under wrath, because of your great love and because of your grace, we have been saved. And we thank you, Father, that you saved us to do the works that you have prepared for each and every believer from before the foundation of the world.*

*I pray, Lord, that we would take seriously the call that Paul has for us to walk worthy, that we would rely on one another even as each one of us strives individually to follow after you. I pray we would spend our time in your Word and in prayer, and I pray we would come together to grow, and that we would see this community as a place to mature and help others to do the same.*

*We praise you, Father, for the work of those in ministry that you have used. I praise you for the men in my life and women in my life who have trained me up, and I praise you for the men and women that are the foundations for the men and women of this church now.*

*We thank you, Lord, for the way that you grow your body, and we pray that we would take seriously our call to be a part of that body, maturing and looking more and more like you.*

*We thank you for the work of Jesus Christ, and it is in his holy and precious name we pray. Amen.*



Digging Deeper – **Walk Worthy of Your Calling**– Ephesians 4:1-16

1. What stood out to you from the sermon?

**Read Ephesians 4:1-16**

2. What stands out to you as you read through the passage?
3. What are you called to as a follower of Christ?
4. How often do you think you live up to your calling? What evidence is there for the answer you gave?
5. What are all the characteristics Paul calls us to have in Ephesians 4:1-6? Which of these do you do well? Which do you struggle with?
6. Do you know what your spiritual gift is? If so, share it with the group. If not, ask your group to share what they think your gift is.
7. What are the roles Paul talks about in verses 11-12? Who in our church are in those roles?
8. Why are people put in those roles?
9. There is an adage in ministry (and probably other places) that 20% of people do 80% of the work. What would Paul say about this adage? How would he challenge it?
10. Do you feel like a child in your faith or mature? Why do you answer the way you do?
11. How can this group be a place where people mature in their faith and stand strong? How can we help one another with this endeavor?
12. Do you currently serve anywhere? Why or why not?
13. What is a good reason not to serve? (are there any good reasons not to serve?)
14. If you don't serve anywhere, where could you serve with your gifts to edify the body?
15. Take some time to end in prayer by sharing prayer requests and praying for one another.