

Living Worthy

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Day One

Are you living a life worthy of The Lord? Have you ever wondered what it means to live a worthy life?

Often we are tempted to measure our lives by our achievements, financial success, our relational status, or perhaps climbing the corporate ladder. But let's look to God's Word to see what it says about living a worthy life.

In Paul's letter to followers of Jesus in Ephesus he says, "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Ephesians 4:1). What does he mean?

Living worthy doesn't mean defining your value or earning your worth or status. That has already been declared by God. By the blood of Jesus you have been made whole, holy, righteous and worthy. You are 100% approved. Living worthy isn't about earning God's favor. You already have it because of Jesus. That is an amazing truth.

Living a life worthy of the Lord is not about our **position** before God. It is about our **conduct** before God and others, The way we live our lives. When Paul urges believers to live a life worthy of the calling they have received, he is saying, "live in such a way that you are a credit to the message of Christ. Behave as a citizen of heaven. Live in a godly way that reflects Jesus."

As the Passion translation says, "walk holy, in a way that is suitable to your high rank, given to you in your divine calling."

When you and I live in a manner worthy of the gospel it means we stand out—we live set apart. People look into your life and can tell that you reflect gospel principles. There are far too many people who claim to be Christians but their lifestyle, words, choices, behaviors and actions reflect anything but Christ. When we are true followers of Jesus we read the Bible, obey God's instructions, and grow more and more in the likeness of Jesus. We don't conform to the patterns of the world or social norms. We conform to Christ.

If your co-workers were to look in on your life and conduct, would they know that you love and follow Jesus? Do you respond differently under pressure, act gracefully in challenging circumstances, display kindness when others criticize? Would your neighbor notice there is something different about you? When there is a long line at the checkout counter, would the store clerk experience Jesus in you?

When we live worthy of our calling, we live as one loved, chosen and appointed by God to put the glory of God on display.

Day Two

In Ephesians 4:2 Paul says, "be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

Ok—first off, did you notice the word completely? That’s a REALLY high bar Paul is setting for us as followers of Jesus. He didn’t say be sort of humble, a little bit gentle, be patient when you feel like it, only bear with people in love when it’s easy. Paul uses a word that means, **each and every time**, with everyone, in all things and always!

I don’t know about you but I can already recall a couple of times this past week where I didn’t meet this gospel standard.

You and I cannot live our high calling in our own strength. We need Jesus and the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. When we read God’s Word, it is the standard for living as a follower of Jesus and God knows that we are all works in progress. Our lives are a constant work of God’s grace and sanctification, conforming our hearts, minds and lives to the will of God, as we daily strive to become more and more like Christ.

Lamentations 3:40 instructs us to test and examine our ways and return to the Lord. To take a good look at the way we’re living and reorder our lives under God. So as we are called to be humble, let’s invite the Lord to examine our ways and highlight where we have missed the mark.

When Paul says to be humble it means not proud or arrogant, thinking that you are better than someone else. If I am honest I wouldn’t say I lack humility, but when I am reminded of the definition of being humble, I am quickly confronted with the fact that I can be judgmental and that is a form of lacking humility. Someone will do or say something that I don’t agree with and it can be easy to think I am better than them. It’s the “get the log out of your own eye first” that we see in Matthew chapter 7. There are a lot of us walking around with logs in our eyes but we keep pointing the finger at each other. I wonder what the world would be like if we all examined our lives and ate some humble pie before pointing out the faults in others.

My friend has a saying that really hit home for me, “If we both took the log out of our own eyes, we could build a bridge.”

Where is humility lacking in your life? Let’s aim to give a true picture of Jesus and be humble.

Day Three

When you hear the word meek, what comes to mind? Do you think weak? Timid? Being a doormat?

In Ephesians 4:2 the Apostle Paul’s call to walk worthy of our calling in Christ includes meekness.

Actually in most translations of this verse we see the word gentle, but the word gentle and meek are both translations of the Greek word *praus* (*prowse*) which means mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness.

We see this same Greek word used in the familiar sermon on the mount in Matthew 5:5 when Jesus says, “Blessed are the **prowse** - the meek, the gentle - for they shall inherit the earth.”

Matthew 11:29 says “Take My yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle (*prowse*) and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Since Jesus is our example and we are called to follow and image him, that means we follow his lead in gentleness and meekness.

So what does it mean to be gentle, to be meek? We know that Jesus was not a pushover. He had some pretty poignant and convicting things to say in his lifetime. He was not all rainbows and butterflies

but he did model strength under control, and that is meekness. When he became angry it was at the right time, in the right measure, and for the right reason.

I would suffice to say that a majority of us do not have the level of constraint or strength under control when we come face to face with a co-worker that has gotten on our last nerve, or when we work for an overly demanding boss or with an unreliable team member. Our tendency can be to lash out. To lose our temper when we are driven to the edge.

To see another portrait of meekness we can look to James 1:19–21 which says, “Know this, my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God.” I once heard it said that “meekness is the power to absorb adversity and criticism without lashing back.”

How and with whom will you demonstrate meekness? Where will you display gentleness and live in the likeness of Jesus?

What blessing comes to you when gentleness lives in you! (Matthew 5:5 The Message)

Day Four

Are you living worthy of your calling in Christ Jesus?

In the book of Ephesians chapter 4, the apostle Paul instructs us to be patient, bearing with one another in love. The mark of a true follower of Christ, evidence that we love and follow Jesus, is when we demonstrate generous love toward one another, especially toward those who may try our patience.

The idea of bearing with one another is to show tolerance to each other, again and again. The NLT translation says, “be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love.” The Greek word means to endure or to put up with difficult people or circumstances.

This is an important expression of the love believers in Christ should have for one another, and for others. And yes, even for those we deem hard to love. The reality is, we are all hard to love at times. If we look to our example for love and holy living, Jesus, we see he loved and loves us when we are acting in ways that are “unlovable.”

When was the last time someone tried your patience? Maybe your spouse did something that irritated you. Your children did something that got on your last nerve. Or a neighbor, friend, parent, co-worker or boss tested your tolerance.

How did you respond? Did you respond with grace, and forbearance, dealing with the difficult person or situation without becoming angry? Or did you have a short fuse and say some things you regret?

Our words matter. We should not just say anything that comes out of our mouths. Proverbs 18:21 says, life and death are in the power of the tongue.

When your patience is tested, what comes out? We need to choose our words carefully, which requires the fruit of the Holy Spirit—self-control—which helps us with our tongue control. And it’s not just our words we need to be mindful of, impatience and lack of tolerance show up in silence, facial expressions, body language.

Our thoughts about people will determine how we treat them. It is not possible to be loving toward someone if our thoughts about them are unloving. Ask Jesus to reorder your thoughts and put them in alignment with his.

John 13:35 Jesus says, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

When we demonstrate love and patience it is evidence that we have the Holy Spirit living in us. As we mature in our faith, our patience and love should also be maturing. People will see the way that we love one another, bear with one another, and say, "They must be followers of Jesus!"

Day Five

Your position before God is holy, righteous, accepted. Because of Jesus, you have peace with God, you are forgiven and blameless! He calls you his beloved, dearly loved. So no matter what circumstances you are facing today, know that you are loved, seen, and highly favored. God is on your side and he is for you, working out your circumstances for your good and his glory.

This week we have been talking about living worthy of the gospel and today we are going to take a look at one more instruction the apostle Paul gives us in Ephesians 4:3: "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

As followers of Jesus, as Christians, if we are serious about our relationship with the Lord we will be committed to living by his Word. And his word says, to be eager...be diligent, do everything you can to keep unity and peace with others.

It doesn't mean absence of conflict or disagreement. It means when there is tension and conflict we act quickly to address and resolve it. We own our part. We both see where we have contributed and are responsible and we work towards reconciliation, towards unity, towards love and connection. This requires forgiveness. Unresolved hurt will result in bitterness and unforgiveness. And, God's Word has a lot to say about both. We seek restoration in our relationships...and peace.

Peace binds us together; discord separates us. Unresolved tension and conflict destroys marriages and friendships. It disrupts boardrooms and classrooms. Unresolved conflict tears families apart.

In Ephesians 4:31-32 we read: "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Listen, the enemy, satan, does his best work when he gets us to be at odds with one another. Do not give the devil a foothold!

Whenever you are tempted towards bitterness and unforgiveness, when you feel discord and disconnection with someone, be alert to the devil's schemes and say, "Not today satan. I am not going to let you use me to sow dissension and discord. I choose the Holy Spirit bond of peace."

Romans 12:18 says, "If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all."

And remember: "By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life."