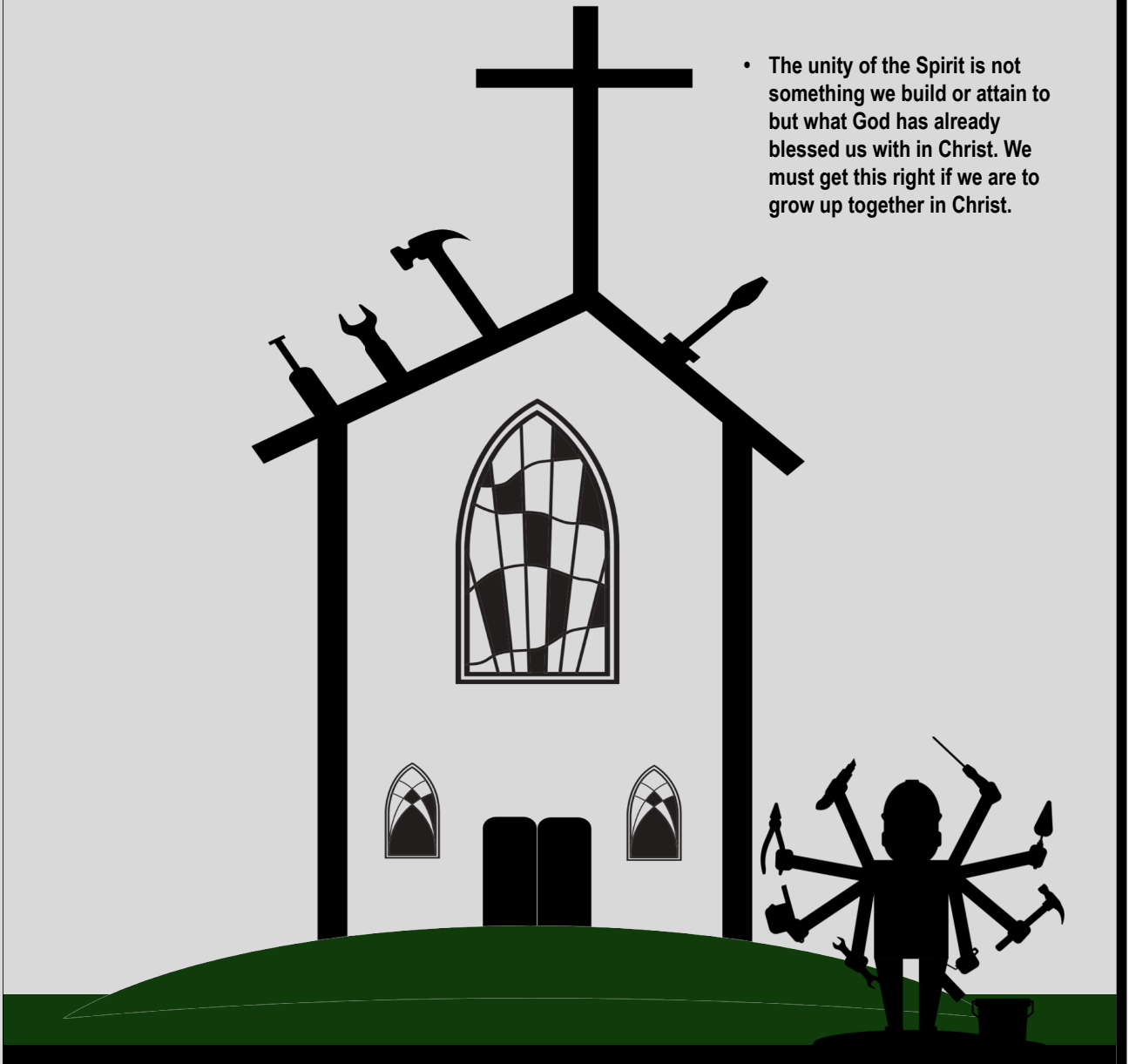




## EPHESIANS 4: GOD'S MAINTENANCE MANUAL FOR UNITY

- The unity of the Spirit is not something we build or attain to but what God has already blessed us with in Christ. We must get this right if we are to grow up together in Christ.



**HONORING GOD IN LEADERSHIP: GETTING UNITY RIGHT**

- To me one of the major tragedies of the hour, and especially in the realm of the church, is that most of the time seems to be taken up by leaders in preaching about unity instead of preaching the gospel that alone can produce unity. [Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Banner of Truth*]

## 1. We are exhorted to walk worthy, 4:1.

- (Ephesians 4:1 ESV) I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, **urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.**

An exhortation is an address or communication emphatically urging someone to do something; the act of strongly encouraging or an earnest attempt to persuade someone to do something.

### WE WALK WORTHY BECAUSE ...

#### A. We have been chosen to be holy and blameless before Christ.

- (Ephesians 1:3–4a ESV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.**

#### B. We have redemption through the blood of Jesus.

- (Ephesians 1:7 ESV) **In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses,** according to the riches of his grace.

#### C. We were dead and God made us alive with Christ.

- (Ephesians 2:1 ESV) **And you were dead in the trespasses and sins.**
- (Ephesians 2:4–5 ESV) But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 **even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ**—by grace you have been saved.
- (Ephesians 2:8 ESV) **For by grace you have been saved through faith.** And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.

#### D. He is able to do more in our lives than we can ask or even imagine.

- (Ephesians 3:20 ESV) **Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think,** according to the power at work within us.

#### E. And many more reasons from the first three chapters of Ephesians alone ...

## 2. We are to understand and live according to our calling as it is explained to us in the Scriptures.

### A. We are exhorted to consider our calling.

- (1 Corinthians 1:26–30 ESV) **For consider your calling,** brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 **But God chose what is foolish** in the world to shame the wise; **God chose what is weak** in the world to shame the strong; 28 **God chose what is low and despised** in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 **so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.** 30 **And because of him you are in Christ Jesus,** who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

### B. Our calling is a holy calling.

- (2 Timothy 1:9 ESV) **Who saved us and called us to a holy calling,** not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.

### C. Our calling is a heavenly calling.

- (Hebrews 3:1 ESV) Therefore, holy brothers, **you who share in a heavenly calling,** consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.

## 3. From Paul's other writings we find valuable "how-tos" for walking worthy.

### A. We are able to walk worthy when we are filled with the knowledge of God's will.

- (Colossians 1:9–10 ESV) And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking **that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,** 10 **so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord,** fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

### B. We are able to walk worthy when we are built up in Christ and established in the faith.

- (Colossians 2:6–7 ESV) Therefore, **as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith**, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

**C. We profit in our efforts to walk worthy by looking to the kingdom and glory of God.**

- (1 Thessalonians 2:11–12 ESV) For you know how, like a father with his children, 12 we **exhorted** each one of you and **encouraged** you and **charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God**, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

**D. We have incentive to walk worthy and stand firm because of the character of the gospel of Christ.**

- (Philippians 1:27 ESV) **Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ**, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you **that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel**.

**4. The manner of the worthy walk is described, 4:2.**

- (Ephesians 4:2 ESV) With all **humility and gentleness**, with **patience, bearing with one another in love**.

Three (*or four*) manners of the worthy walk are listed here: humility, gentleness and patiently bearing with one another in love. In today's study we will focus on humility as it is the beginning step to a life that honors God.

**A. If we are to honor God in maintaining the unity of the Spirit, then we must first pursue humility.**

- (Proverbs 15:33 ESV) The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and **humility comes before honor**.
- (Proverbs 18:12 ESV) Before destruction a man's heart is haughty, but **humility comes before honor**.
- (Proverbs 29:23 ESV) One's pride will bring him low, **but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor**.

A biblical, accurate working definition of humility is to think low of oneself.

**B. The truly humble person believes God and has considered his calling.**

- (1 Corinthians 1:26a, 28–29 ESV) **For consider your calling**, brothers ... God chose

what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 **so that no human being might boast in the presence of God**.

Humility is the Spirit given ability to value or assess oneself appropriately so as to see oneself as God sees him or her.

**C. The person who believes God and considers his calling is able to think with sober judgment in appraising his life.**

- (Romans 12:3 ESV) For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you **not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment**, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

**D. The truly humble person submits to God and receives grace from God while the proud person does not humble himself and submit to God and so does not resist the devil and cause him to flee.**

- (James 4:6–7a ESV) But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, **"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."** 7 **Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse** your hands, you sinners, and **purify** your hearts, **you double-minded**.

**E. The truly humble person does nothing from selfish ambition or conceit.**

- (Philippians 2:3–4 ESV) **Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.** 4 **Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

**5. The one who walks worthy focuses on maintaining, not attaining, the unity of the Spirit, 4:3–6.**

- (Ephesians 4:3–6 ESV) **Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** 4 There is **one** body and **one** Spirit—just as you were called to the **one** hope that belongs to your call— 5 **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism, 6 **one** God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

**Unity is not uniformity.** Unity comes from within and is a spiritual grace, while uniformity is the result of pressure from without. [Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 35). Victor Books.]

- **NOT** UNDERSTANDING THE EXHORTATION IN THIS TEXT IS WHERE SO MANY GO WRONG. ...

- We are exhorted to be eager to maintain (keep) the unity of the Spirit.
- We are not exhorted to strive to attain unity.
- We already have unity as demonstrated in the “one” declarations in verses four through six.
- The unity of the Spirit flows from believing in and standing firmly in one gospel.
  - (Galatians 2:5 ESV) To them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.
  - (1 Timothy 1:3 ESV) As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine.

- **NOW** WE MAKE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT AND SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE ...

6. The one who walks worthy speaks the truth in love knowing that builds up the body of Christ which maintains the unity of the Spirit, 4:11-13.

- (Ephesians 4:11–13 ESV) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.
- This person understands that speaking the truth in love is essential to maintaining the unity of the Spirit.
  - The unity of the faith speaks not of personal belief but of the biblical doctrines that comprise what we believe—e.g. the “one” doctrines in verses 4-6.

C. The pastor/teacher’s responsibility is to grow the saints up in the faith until all come to a full understanding of what we have and who we are in Jesus Christ.

7. The one who walks worthy speaks the truth in love knowing that is how we grow up together in Christ so that we may no longer be children, 4:14-15.

- (Ephesians 4:14–15 ESV) So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.
- We speak the truth in love so that we do not remain spiritually immature, wavering in the faith, falling prey to human cunning and easily deceived.
  - When as the body of Christ we speak the truth in love, we grow up in every way into Christ.
  - We speak the truth in love because we are interested in building up the body of Christ since we are members one of another.
    - (Ephesians 4:25 ESV) Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

- *Paraphrasing Ephesians 4:25 ...* So let’s realize what is at stake and quit lying to each other, lying either by disguising our true intentions with our words or lying by speaking under the guise of tactfulness and sensitivity when in reality we are deceiving and hiding the truth with our silence. Instead, let’s grab some perspective in view of our Lord and our eternal relationship with each other and speak the truth.

**one**

<sup>4</sup> There is **one** body and **one** Spirit—just as you were called to the **one** hope that belongs to your call— <sup>5</sup> **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism, <sup>6</sup> **one** God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4–6 ESV)