

# General Study Of Ephesians – Part 3

**Ephesians 4:1-3** [New King James] *“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

**The end goal of all that Paul has been inspired by the Holy Spirit to write, is that the whole Church will reach maturity through faith in and knowledge of Jesus Christ, [verse 13].**

**To reach this maturity there must be love and peace that are the result of the active indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in each member.**

**Ephesians 4:4-6** [New King James] *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”*

**This unity in the Church is further defined in a series of creed-like formulations, all of them being given emphasis by the repetition of the word “one.”**

The “*unity of the spirit*” should be understood as “*the unity which the Holy Spirit makes possible.*”

The early Church formulated several creeds that became part of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, [1 Corinthians 15:3-7; Philippians 2:6-11; 1 Timothy 3:16].

**These concise creedal formulas contain the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith.**

They were most likely used to instruct baptismal candidates on the essential matters of faith.

They were also used to help distinguish essential Christian beliefs from pagan and heretical teaching, helped believers tell difference between orthodoxy and heresy.

**Ephesians 4:7-12** [New King James] *“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.’ (Now this, ‘He ascended’ — what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,”*

**All of these gifts are enclosed within the gift of the Holy Spirit, given by the Father at the request of Jesus Christ to be with His disciples constantly, working in them and through them, [John 16:5-15].**

The terms in [verse 11] denote a function more than an office, a gift that can be used by the Holy Spirit to bring the whole church to maturity, [Ephesians 4:13-16]. These gifts of the Holy Spirit is expanded by Paul in his letter to the church in Corinth, [1 Corinthians 12:4-11].

**Certain tests of the Church’s increasing maturity are given.**

**Ephesians 4:14-16** [New King James] *“that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”*

No longer acting like children who are easily influenced by any other person, **not** being firmly based on God's Word, the Christian Bible, lack the stability it can give.

By contrast the Church must maintain the truth, the words of Jesus Christ and His character, [**John 14:6**] and express the truth in love for all other human beings.

**Ephesians 4:17-24** [New King James] *“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”*

**One form of ethical challenge in the New Testament covenant with our Eternal Creator God is based on the contrast between our old life, characterised by pagan ways, and the new outlook and behaviour pattern which Christians accept at conversion and baptism, which should therefore be a complete, clean break from our past.**

**Romans 6:1-8** [New King James] *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **even so we also should walk in newness of life.** For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that **our old man was crucified with Him**, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,”*

Baptism by complete immersion is likened to our grave after old life has been crucified, [**2 Corinthians 5:17**].

**Romans 12:1-2** [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

The sacrifice that is referred to is the burnt sacrifice for sin when the animal offered was completely burnt up on the altar. The Greek word translated “*bodies*” is “*soma*” meaning the whole life, physical body, heart, mind and human spirit, [**Job 32:8; 1 Corinthians 2:11; Proverbs 20:27**]. Only then can the Holy Spirit re-educate our mind, [**Ephesians 4:23**].

**This theme of a complete change is reoccurring throughout the New Testament, Christianity cannot be a “one day in the week” way of life.**

**Ephesians 4:25-32** [New King James] *“Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbour,’ for we are members of one another. ‘Be angry, and do not sin’: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labour, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.** Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”*

The work of the Holy Spirit being so essential for our new Christian way of life, we must **not** do anything that will grieve Him.

Paul lists all the attitudes that were in our past life that have to be discontinued so as not hinder the work of the Holy Spirit in us, as He finds them wounding, denying in practice the meaning and reason for His indwelling presence in a believer.

The active presence of the Holy Spirit in us seals us [branded as God's own, secured] for the day of our final deliverance through Jesus Christ from the consequences of sin, eternal death.

Forgiveness within the family of God [**Ephesians 4:32**] is but one aspect of what life ought to be like.

**Ephesians 5:1-2** [New King James] *“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”*

Christian character finds its pattern and example in God the Father. “Dear children” finds its natural sequence of thought in the Father's well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, [**Ephesians 1:6; Mark 1:11**] who in turn demonstrated His love for the Church, [**Ephesians 5:25**] as well as His loving acceptance of God the Father's will, that included a painful death on the cross.

Jesus Christ's self-offering on the cross pleased God the Father as an acceptable offering as part of the plan to create children in the “likeness” of the Triune God, [**Genesis 1:26-27**].

Jesus Christ the Word [**John 1:1-3, 14**] knew of this part in God the Father's plan for humanity before anything was created, [**2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:18-20; Revelation 13:8**].

This is proof of the great love that the Triune God has for all humanity and should have the effect of eliciting from Christians a desire to “walk in love” to God and other human beings.

**Ephesians 5:3-7** [New King James] *“But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them.”*

**On Christian lips the note of praise and thankfulness to God is more appropriate than the coarseness of speech that is referred to in these verses.**

A clear statement of warning, drawing upon accepted Christian teaching, [**verses 5-6**].

The same unacceptable way of life is given as a warning in many other scriptures, [**1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Hebrews 13:4; Revelation 21:8; Revelation 22:14-15**].

The serious consequences of playing fast and loose with God's moral law speak for themselves.

Paul found it needful to spell out these warnings in view of contrary views to which Christians were listening, [*“let no-one deceive you”*].

These sentiments are directed against pagans who were urging new Christians to do what they did before they became Christians or misguided “Christians” in name only, who had perverted Paul's teaching, [**Romans 6:1-2** is an example of this].

**Or those who deny the Eternal God being the creator of all things by teaching the lie of evolution which is a world without a Creator.**

**Romans 1:18-22** [New King James] *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools,”*

[Please download and study all the articles on this website under the main heading ‘*Evolution – The Delusion Of*’. You will be eternally grateful that you did.]

**Ephesians 5:8-14** [New King James] *“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’”*

**All people are “children of darkness” until the Holy Spirit opens their minds to the truth, that Jesus Christ the Word of God is the source of all light, [John 1:1-5, 14].**

**1 Peter 2:9** [New King James] *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;”*

This is what can be said of all humans who are called by the Eternal God, [**John 6:44**] to have their chance of salvation through Jesus Christ at this time, not having to wait for a resurrection back to human life after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, [**Revelation 20:11-13**].

The calling of believers is then to live their lives as “children of light,” [**Matthew 5:14-16; John 12:35-36; Romans 13:12; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5; 1 John 1:5-7**].

**Ephesians 5:15-17** [New King James] *“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, **redeeming the time**, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”*

The warnings of **verses 1-14** have been mainly negative, but Paul now takes a positive direction with a call for Christians to take on Godly wisdom, to understand the will of the Eternal Creator God, which will be in contrast to the folly of the pagan environment.

**The path taken by a wise person has to be understood on its Old Testament background where wisdom is not an intellectual achievement, but an attitude of life which begins with a knowledge of the Eternal God and an avoidance of all that displeases Him, [Job 28:28; Proverbs 4:1-9; Proverbs 8:1-11].**

This is the practice of wisdom in everyday conduct and the recognition that life is short, and we need to grasp every opportunity to make the needed changes in our lives to become a person that pleases their Creator.

**Ephesians 5:18** [New King James] *“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,”*

Another sign of wisdom is the maintenance of self-control which sees intoxication through which the vigilance of the moral censor is lifted and the gate is opened to immorality.

**In a daring contrast Paul goes on to apply the lesson, let the infilling be of the Holy Spirit not the alcoholic spirit.**

**As over-indulgence in alcohol is a daily experience in the world we need the fullness of the Holy Spirit to be the Christian's constant preoccupation.**

**Ephesians 5:19-20** [New King James] *“speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,”*

**One hallmark of the indwelling Holy Spirit will be a desire to praise and thank the Eternal Creator God for who He is and what He has done and is still doing for all humanity.**

**Psalms that were part of the Old Testament worship and should be a major part of worship today.**

**Ephesians 5:21** [New King James] *“submitting to one another in the fear of God.”*

Consideration for the needs and desires of other human beings is the rock foundation of all relationships, as laid down by personal example of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Philippians 2:1-8** [New King James] *“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”*

**Every true Christian has developed the attitude of a servant, following the example of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**Ephesians 5:22-33** [New King James] *“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”*

**We have to read and apply this in the light of the sacred marriage of Jesus Christ to the true Christian Church.**

**Revelation 19:6-9** [New King James] *“And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!”’ And he said to me, ‘These are the true sayings of God.’”*

Note “*His wife* [the true Christian Church] *has made herself ready.*” **Remember this applies to both husbands and wives in the physical marriage which is the perfect training ground for the future spiritual marriage of Jesus Christ and the Christian Church.**