

A WORTHWHILE WALK

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AUTONOMOUS STUDIES

Aim: 'to learn how to walk worthy of the high calling'

COURSE PLAN

TITLE: **Worthwhile Walk**

(based on the 55 instructions in Ephesians 4 to 6)

AIM: 'to learn how to walk worthy of the high calling'

sample below for preview

SESSION 1 - **on the path of unity**

for the rest of the course contact us

SESSION 2 - **on the path of maturity**

SESSION 3 - **on the path of truth**

SESSION 4 - **on the path of morality**

SESSION 5 - **on the path of light**

SESSION 6 - **on the path of submission**

SESSION 7 - **on the path of strength**

For other courses see www.genuineimitation.org.uk

SESSION 1 - on the path of unity

① Read the whole of Ephesians if time permits

② to start

- in this letter it is evident that the writer, Paul, wants to give & encourage others to give glory to God

1. by telling Christians in the first three chapters what God has done for them (explanations) and what is prepared to do (prayers)

- summary:

* chapter 1: vv.3 to 14 = spiritual blessings for those in Christ
vv.15 to 23 = Paul's 1st prayer; thanksgiving & request
(revelation & wisdom in knowing God)

* chapter 2: things to remember = what we were & what we are now

* chapter 3: God's grace to Paul = vv.1 to 13

Paul's 2nd prayer = to be strengthened with power (14-19)

* conclusion 3:21 = 'to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations, for ever and ever'

2. by telling Christians how to live to bring glory to God in chapter 4 to 6 = 55 instructions, urging them 'to walk (live) in manner worthy of this calling (bringing glory) they have received' (4:1) [see 1 Cor.10:31]

* these instructions can be divided in 7 different areas in which they can step in that would give glory to God:
unity - maturity - truth - morality - light - submission - strength

③ Read Ephesians 4 verses 1 to 6

④ UNITY

- the first steps they are urged to keep on taking concern unity

- is it just a coincidence it is mentioned first?

- what is its definition?

④ (unity continued)

- what does Paul say about its various significant characteristics in Eph.4:2-3?

1. 'of the Spirit'?

2. 'to keep'?

3. 'make every effort'?

4. 'bond of peace'?

5. what about verse 2?

⑤ to sum up: counting on the help of the Holy Spirit to ...

- know that the Spirit wants & works for all Christians to be united, to be at peace with each other at all times

- to make sure we make every effort to grow in humility, gentleness, patience and tolerance, cooperating with the Holy Spirit

- understand that any failure in any of these areas requires repentance and/or reconciliation attempt from all concerned

SESSION 2 - on the path of maturity

① Read Ephesians 4 verses 4 to 16

② to start

- no direct command in the whole passage but a number of indirect ones; v.12 'to prepare God's people...', end of v.13 'attaining to the whole...', v.14 'no longer be infants', v.15 'speaking the truth...', end of v.15 'grow up into Him'
- in verses 4 to 6, following the instructions on 'unity' in vv.2-3 Paul gives other entities which are "one"
 - then in verses 7 to 11, what is the significance of the word 'but' in v.7?
 - what is it about?
 - what is 'grace' generally associated with?
 - what is it clearly linked to here?
 - would you agree that, then in Eph.4 verses 12 to 16, Paul continues by giving the purposes and the results of the 'gifts of Christ' in operation?
 - what is Paul's main concern?
 - this aspect of grace is generally known as the 'gifts (or ministry gifts) of Christ'

③ THE GIFTS OF CHRIST

- what does Paul say about the 5 aspects he underlines?

1. the diversity of 'the gifts of Christ', verse 7?

- 'but'?
- 'to each one of us'?

③ (gifts continued)

- 'as Christ apportioned it'?

- a good understanding and acceptance of the diversity of 'grace given' is a great help to maintain the bond of peace, unity

2. the reason for 'the gifts of Christ', verses 8 to 10?

3. the nature of 'the gifts of Christ' in verse 11?

- a short and unique list of nouns (only here); what are they?

- 5 different descriptive words:

- no actual definition; considering their original meanings (literal translation) give a good and basic understanding of these various roles:

'apostles' = ?

'prophets' = ?

'evangelists' = ?

'pastors' = ?

'teachers' = ?

- fine tuning: more precise definitions can be done by taking into consideration

other aspects referred to elsewhere in the rest of the New Testament

- could it be a continuation of Jesus' ministry?

[see * Matt.4:23-25 and 9:35 = ?

* John 20:21 = ?

* John 10:11 = ?

- is it traceable in the early church of Antioch in Acts 11:19-30?

- finally: **nowhere** in the New Testament the words of this list in Eph.4:11 are used as titles, so we should not either (see Mat.23:5-12, Rom.16 [lots of names but no title])

4. the purpose of 'the gifts of Christ', verse 12?

- 3 successive phrases = taken on their own not too difficult to understand

③ (gifts continued)

* 'to prepare God's people'?

* 'to the works of service'?

- the word 'service' ('diakonias') and its related words 'serving / to serve / servant' is a very ordinary & common Greek word, used extensively in the New Testament for all types of 'serving' among Christians (see 1 Pet.4:10)

* 'so that the body of Christ may be built up'?

- difficulty: due to limitation of punctuation (commas) in the Greek language, determining the relation between these 3 phrases is a great difficulty for translators;

is it 3 purposes (one for each phrase) just for the gifted people of verse 11?
or is it 1 purpose (to prepare) leading to 2 effects (service & building up)?

- today's most common view is the latter; a common purpose of all five types of gifted people of Eph.4:11 are to prepare (equip) all Christians so that they can exercise their service in the Christian & wider community which will contribute and enable the church to grow (as seen in Eph.4:16)

- what has this re-immersing important biblical concept been called lately?

5. the main and ultimate goal of 'the gifts of Christ', verse 13?

③ (gifts continued)

- this verse establishes that the main and ultimate goal of 'to prepare' of all Christians coming from the five types of gifted people of Eph.4:11 is not just equipping Christians for 'service' but maturity in Christ to its full measure (serving being one aspect of it: see Mat.20:26-28)]

- what does verse 14 specify?

- how does verse 15 tells us it is done?

- final question: are the 'gifts of Christ' still relevant today?

④ to sum up: counting on the help of the Holy Spirit to ...

- accept that 'grace' is differently apportioned to each Christian in regard to abilities and functions
- recognise that some are specifically given to the preparing and maturing of God's people
- make sure to expose ourselves and let others expose themselves to the truth being preached and taught by all 5 types of specifically gifted people
- respond and help others to respond to God's leading and enabling regarding serving others around

SESSION 3 - on the path of truth

① Read Ephesians 4 verse 17 to 5 verse 02

② to start

- v.17 starts with 'So' or 'Therefore' making the link with previous passage
- having underlined the importance, the necessity (not infant, not blown here and there, v.14) and the means (v.15 'speaking the truth in love') of growth and maturity for Christians in the previous passage Paul continues from chap.4:17 all the way to 6:20 by instructing and explaining what is needed and what 'growing up into Him who is the Head, that is Christ' (4:15) looks like
- these instructions and explanations can be subdivided and the first subdivision is chapter 4 verse 17 to chapter 5 verse 2
- **what does Paul in these verses particularly wants to emphasise?**
- Paul uses 16 different instructions (some double or treble) with explanations to start drawing a sketch of this contrasting way of life or the various steps on the path of truth in the worthwhile walk

③ TRUE IMITATION

- **how does Paul follow 3 lines of thoughts to develop this theme?**
the first 2 are general directions giving broad principles and the third one is about specific and practical steps to implement the broad principles.
- 1. not walking in steps with those who are classified as 'Gentiles'?**

③ (truth continued)

- **in v.17b what description does Paul give of how the Gentiles live?**

- **how in v.18 & 19 does Paul expound this concept?**

i. 'being darkened (having been) in their understanding'?

ii. 'separated from the life of God' ?

iii. 'the ignorance that is in them' ?

iv. 'the hardness of their heart' ?

v. 'given themselves over to sensuality' ?

- describing how **all** 'gentiles' (including us; note 'no longer' in v.17) are in that desperate situation in relation to God; cause to effect / domino effect

- not surprising Paul wants to insist on not modelling ourselves on such people

2. walking in steps with the truth of Jesus, chap.4 verses 20 to 24?

a. put off our old self (v.22)?

③ (truth continued)

- instruction of v.22? see

* Rom.6:11-13?

* Rom.13:14 ?

* Col.3:5 ?

* Col 3:9 ?

* 1 Pet.2:11 ?

- a lot of the verbs are in the imperative (commands) and present continuous so something Christians have to pay attention to and keep doing all their lives]

b. to put one the new self (v.24)?

- see Rom.6:11 ?
Rom.6:13b ?
Rom.13:13a ?
Rom.13:14 ?
Col3:2 ?
1 Pet.1:15 ?

- again the verbs are present continuous indicating that it is something that will also preoccupy Christians all their lives]

c. to be made new in the attitude of your minds (v.23)?

[see Rom.12:2b ?
Col.3:10 ?

- *so not just a question of just thinking, desiring and doing automatically the opposite of others and what we used to be before conversion*

③ (truth continued)

3. specific steps (4:25 to 5:02)?

- finally Paul gives examples of every day life where this sharp contrast can and is expected to be evident

- v.25 ?

- v.26-27 ?

- v.28 ?

- v.29 ?

- 4:30 to 5:02 ?

④ **to sum up: counting on the help of the Holy Spirit to ...**

- realise and accept that the Christian life is expected to be distinctively different

- remember not to rely and trust our religious and secular cultures for godly standards

- not accept and leave our behaviour unchanged after our conversion

- recognise and be open that God will change our mind regarding our every day life and conduct

- be willing to drop whatever is shown to us to be sinful

- be willing to start doing whatever is shown to us to be righteous

SESSION 4 - on the path of morality

① Read Ephesians 5 verses 3 to 7

② to start

- Paul continues with the concept of contrasting life style he introduced in the previous passage: not like unbelievers (4:17) & not following our former way of life (4:22-24)
- having given a number of specific areas with brief explanations (4:25-5:2) he now introduces and explains at greater length a new and what some might think awkward subject matter
- in the Roman world, sexual practices of all sorts were very much part of the worship of their various gods
- Ephesus had a temple dedicated to the goddess Diana, with male and female prostitutes who gave themselves at a price to any worshippers
- that was part of normal life so Paul no doubt felt and was inspired to also give instructions (5 in all) on this still relevant subject matter of sexual practices, more precisely of sexual immorality

③ SEXUAL IMMORALITY

- how does Paul write to highlight four aspects?

1. its contrast?

2. its designation?

- God's original and unchanged perspective: Matt.19:4-6 (Gen.2:24)?

a. important & exclusive combination, v.4?

b. threefold aspect of marriage, v.5?

③ (immorality continued)

i. *'leave mother & father'?*

ii. *'be united to his wife'?*

iii. *'the two will become one flesh'?*

iv. God's silence?

- coming back to Paul 3 words in Eph.5:3; meanings;
 - * 'sexual immorality' = 'porneia' (greek), sometimes 'fornication', but experts suggests any 'sexual deviances' = 'sexual activities outside marriage'
 - * 'impurity' = other than natural man with woman sexual practices
 - * 'greed' = in 4:19 is 'continual lust for more' = 'addiction' to previous 2
- whatever the exact meanings would refer to all practices outside marriage

3. its implications?

4. its reasons?

④ to sum up: counting on the help of the Holy Spirit to ...

- accept for God to give instructions on sexual morality
- have and hold a good perspective on God's institution of marriage
- not give in to regarding what the Bible classifies as sexual immorality
- to accept and keep in mind the reasons why Christians are expected to have nothing to do with it in deeds and words

SESSION 5 - on the path of light

① Read Ephesians 5 verses 8 to 21

② to start

- as seen in previous sessions Paul tackled several specific and practical issues from 4:25 to 5:7, from lying to sexual immorality, where Christians are expected to behave in contrast from unbelievers who don't know God
- **could he have dealt with many more?**
[see Mk.7:14-23, Rom.13:13, 1 Cor.6:7-11, Gal.5:19-21, 1 Pet.4:3]
- in our passage he goes back to writing in more general terms, hammering the point he had done in 4:20 to 24, with the life long treble principle of putting off, putting on and renewing of mind
- still wanting to point out to the sharp contrast he now writes in terms of light and darkness and gives them few more instructions (11 more) and explanations
- in these instructions are spelt out other principles that apply to Christians all through their lives
- let us consider all these life principles

③ LIFE PRINCIPLES

- **what does Paul say re his 1st instruction and main life long principle?**
- the beginning of v.8?

③ (principles continued)

* what are they in the Lord?

- **how then in verses 10 to 21, does Paul continue in giving 7 other life principles?**

explaining what it means in practice, the various instructions / steps to live as children of light, leading to 'goodness, righteousness and truth': there are

1. **'find out what pleases the Lord' (5:10)?**

2. **'have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness' (5:11a)?**

3. **'expose the deeds of darkness' (5:11b)?**

4. **'be very careful how you live, not as unwise but as wise' (5:15)?**

③ (principles continued)

5. **'making the most of every opportunity for the days are evil'** (5:16)?

6. **'understand what the Lord's will is'** (5:17)?

a. the "common" will of God?

b. the "individuals" will of God?

7. **'be filled with the Spirit'** (5:18) = **'keep being filled with the Spirit'**?

[- the word "be filled" in the Greek is
in the imperative mood (God's command),
in the plural form (for all Christians),
in the present continuous (not just a one-off),
in the passive voice (let ourselves be filled)

- as excessive drinking leads to fruitless deeds like debauchery, being filled with the Spirit leads to fruitful works like those indicated by the 4 other actions in verses 20 and 21 [more results in other passages]

- **in the original all the verbs in the present participle, what results do they indicate?**

- 'to submit' in a non military context = 'to cooperate voluntarily'¹

- one word that keeps appearing in the context of 'submission' that encapsulates the right attitude is 'respect'; see Rom.13:1 & 7 [1 Pet.2:7], Eph.5:33, 1 Tim.6:1, 1 Pet.2:18] = mutual respectful cooperation

④ to sum up: counting on the help of the Holy Spirit to ...

- accept and remember that because God is light, the expectation is for His children to walk in the light, pursuing goodness, righteousness and truth at all times
- always try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord and keep away from any works of darkness however insignificant it might be
- let our behaviour be shining example to those around us especially those who do not know God
- make every effort to know and put in practice the will of God whether it is individual or general
- let ourselves be influenced and led by the Holy Spirit in whatever direction He might choose

¹ <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/hupotasso.html>, accessed on 22/02/2017

SESSION 6 - on the path of submission

① Read Ephesians 5 verse 22 to 6 verse 09

② to start

- in the previous passage Paul gave details of what it is to live as children of light, giving 7 other life long principles / instructions for what it means in practice
- the last instruction and general life long principle is 'being filled with the Spirit' in chapter 5 verse 18
- Paul stated four results of letting ourselves be filled with the Spirit [not an exhaustive list]
- for the fourth one is that being filled with the Spirit also leads to 'submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ'
- no doubt knowing that it is an area where people, even Christians might struggle, Paul is inspired to give a more detailed explanation in our passage as to what it means for various categories of people
- let us look at this important subject of submission

③ **SUBMISSION**

1. what general observations can be made re submission from Eph.5:21?

- * who is concerned?
- * is it a question of authority over others?
- * what about the recurring aspect of respect?
- * what is the opposite of submission?

③ (submission continued)

2. what specific instructions for submission from Eph.5:22 to 6:9?

- in the online Thayer's dictionary for 'submission' in non military context as well as 'to cooperate', it also gives 'assuming responsibility'
- Paul not content to make a general statement re 'mutual submission' within christian interactions (irregular?) but feels the need to specify the responsibilities to assume for various groups of people in their incessant so more difficult situations (marriage, home and work)

a. to wives, Eph.5 verses 22 to 24 & 33b, 'ladies first'?

- * is Paul honouring women?
- * responsibility to assume?
- * reason?
- * extent?

b. to husbands, Eph.5 verses 25 to 33a?

- * responsibility to assume?
- * extent?

③ (submission continued)

c. **in the family**, (children and fathers): Eph.6 verses 1 to 4?

i. 'children'? not just 'tell the children' but 'children' (addressed directly)

* is Paul honouring children too?

* responsibility to assume?

ii. fathers? _why just 'fathers'?

* opting out?

* malfunctioning?

* responsibility to assume?

d. **at work**, Eph.6 verses 5 to 8?

i. 'slaves'?

* are slaves honoured?

* responsibility to assume?

* extent?

* *freedom*?

ii. 'masters': Eph.6 verse 9?

* responsibility to assume? =

* extent?

* abolition?

④ to sum up: counting on the help of the Holy Spirit to ...

- remember that being under the influence (being filled) of the Holy Spirit leads all Christians to submission, to respectful cooperation, to assuming responsibilities toward others
- ascertain and assume our God given responsibilities within the church without exercising and imposing authority over people whatever our positions
- discover and fulfil our God given responsibilities within our marriages and our homes
- realise and not neglect that our respectful cooperation is also expected by God in our places of work

SESSION 7 - on the path of strength

① Read Ephesians 6 verses 10 to 20

② to start

- following the steps of unity, maturity, truth, morality and light in the previous step, Paul wrote about the step of submission
- having given the general statement of 'being submitted to one another in the fear of Christ' (Eph.5:21) he went on to write about the specifications and implications to different people, different 'pairs'
- in our passage starting with 'finally' in v.10 until verse 20, Paul goes on to the next and final step in the 'walk worthy of the calling we have received' (Eph.4:1) he is going to mention in this letter [v.21-24 = clearly final greetings]
- Paul follows his regular pattern of making a general statement / giving an instruction and then giving an explanation about it
- **what is the main instruction?**
as it is accompanied with 'in the Lord' we know Paul is not talking about a physical but a spiritual 'strengthening'

③ STRENGTHENING

1. what does Paul say about the 'timing'?

2. what are the 2 different aspects?

- a. first aspect: 'in the Lord'; what does he mean?

③ (strengthening continued)

- b. second aspect: 'in his mighty power' or 'in the strength of his might'?
- having underlined what needs to happen, to keep being strengthened, Paul in the next verses also explains how = 2 provisions for it

3. what are the provisions available Paul mentions?

i. the armour of God: v.14-17? *7 equally vital parts?*

- * these 7 God given elements need are indispensable in our being strong and fight against our enemies & their schemes (v.11-13 + v.16b)

ii. praying: could have been included in armour, more noticeable on its own?

- * v.18a ?
- * v.18b ?
- * v.19 ? praying for others specifically: Paul not above having to be prayed for]

④ to sum up: counting on the help of the Holy Spirit to ...

- be aware of the need to having to be strengthened through our lives to keep firm in our faith and persevering in doing God's will
- understand that our enemy will do his utmost to stop us in our faith and/or in doing what is right before God
- accept and rely on God's provisions for our strength in supplying us the different vital elements of his armour and giving us the possibility and privilege to pray