

I. TRANSITION FROM KNOWING TO DOING

- A. Following his second intercessory prayer, in which he asks that the church would truly experience and comprehend the spiritual riches God has given them in Christ, Paul now transitions from prayer to exhortation, calling them to move from doctrine to duty.
- B. After spending the first three chapters unfolding God's saving work in Christ, and establishing both the individual and corporate identity of the believer, Paul transitions to the practical implications of the gospel. He calls the church to live in a manner worthy of its calling by cultivating the attitudes and spiritual maturity necessary to preserve the unity of the family of God.

II. EPHESIANS 4:1-7

- 1. ***I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ² with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³ endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all ⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.***

III. VRS 1

- 1. ***I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,***
- B. The word Paul used "Beseech" has a range of meaning including, "Imploring, exhorting, appealing earnestly, coming alongside to call to action."
- C. This word is important because it shows not just an exhortation from Paul but more of heartfelt appeal from a shepherd that cares and loves them.

1. "Walk worthy of the Lord"

- D. To **"walk worthy of the calling"** is to live in a way that is consistent with the believer's identity, inheritance, and calling in Christ found in chapters 1-3..
- E. God responded to our desperate need for salvation and deliverance and He requires a response back. We must continue to deny a false gospel that only focuses on what God has done for us, and requires nothing in return.
 - 1. ***Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ-Philip 1:27***
 - 2. ***that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.-1 Thess 2:12***

IV. VRS 2

1. "With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love"

- B. Paul describes a life worthy of all God has given us that includes Christ-like character that ultimately manifests itself in sincere love.
- C. These characteristics not only reflect the mind and attitude for what God has done for us, but just as important will help keep the unit of the Spirit in God's family called the church.

V. LOWILNESS AND GENTILENESS

- A. Lowliness is another word for humility. It is the Christlike attitude of having a right view of ourselves before God, recognizing that every blessing we possess is a gift of His grace that we don't deserve.
 - 1. True humility frees us from pride and self-exaltation, enabling us to esteem others above ourselves.
- B. Gentleness does not mean weakness. The word describes power that is restrained and submitted to God.

- C. The ancient Greeks used this word to describe a powerful horse that had been trained and brought under control. The horse still possessed great strength, but its strength was disciplined and directed.
- D. A gentle spirit is patient with difficult people, responds calmly instead of harshly, is firm without being harsh, and uses strength to serve rather than dominate.
- E. Humility describes how we view ourselves before God and others while gentleness describes how we treat others because of that humble view.

1. Humility is the inward attitude. Gentleness is the outward expression.

- F. Jesus is the greatest example of this. He possessed all authority, yet He exercised it with humility, self- control and love.

1. ⁵Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. -Philip 2:5-7

2. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." -Mt 11:29

VI. VRS 2B

1. "With longsuffering bearing with one another in love"

- B. Long suffering and bearing with one another in love is to endure with one another in our weaknesses, continuing to patiently tolerate areas our brothers and sisters have not grown in yet, and holding oneself back from prematurely judging things in one another before God's work is complete in a person.

- 1. It does not mean merely tolerating someone with annoyance, rather it carries the idea of patiently enduring another person's weaknesses, failures, and imperfections out of love.

VII. VRS 3

1. *"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"*

- B. Paul tells us when we have a right mindset of ourselves in humility and express that mindset in gentleness to others it will keep a church in unity in the Spirit
- C. Paul earlier taught us that unity of Jew and Gentile is something Jesus purchased on the cross, but it is our responsibility to preserve that unity by walking in humility, gentleness, patience, and love within a church family.

VIII. THE POWER OF UNITY IN A CHURCH BODY

- 1. IT REFLECTS THE NATURE OF GOD
- 2. IT POSITIONS THE CHURCH FOR BLESSING AND POWER (Acts 2)
- 3. IT ALLOWS EVERY PART OF THE BODY TO FUNCTION BECAUSE WE HONOR EVERY PART
- 4. IT BECOMES A WITNESS TO THE WORLD

a) that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.-Jn 17:21

- 5. IT ALLOWS THE CHURCH TO STAY ON ASSIGNMENT

IX. THINGS THAT CAN BREAK UNITY IN A CHURCH

- 1. In our reading today Paul laid out how to keep unity in the Spirit but there are also destructive mindsets and behaviors that can break that unity.

X. FIVE THINGS THAT THREATENS UNITY

1. PRIDE
2. SELFISH AMBITION

a) ¹⁶***For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.-James 3:16***

3. FALSE DOCTRINE
4. GOSSIP THAT PLANTS SEEDS OF DISCOURSE
5. **EVIL SUSPICION (The one I want to highlight)**

XI. 1 TIMOTHY 6:5-6

1. ³***If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the ^[a]doctrine which accords with godliness, ⁴he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, ⁵useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.-1 Tim 6:3-5***

XII. WHAT IS EVIL SUSPENSION?

- A. Evil suspicion is a feeling or belief that someone or something may be guilty, dishonest, dangerous, or wrong, even though there is not enough evidence to prove it.
- B. It's a state of uncertainty that leads a person to think something may be true or someone may be acting improperly, without sufficient proof.

1. **IN MANY OF OUR CHURCHES TODAY, SINFUL SUSPICION IS OFTEN DISGUISED AS SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT**

- C. Suspicion becomes sinful when it moves beyond wise discernment and begins to assume evil motives without sufficient evidence.

D. Once that happens, it rarely stays in the heart, it spreads through words and actions, eventually producing gossip, conflict, and division. This progression is exactly what Paul describes in 1 Timothy 6:4–5.

1. ***"envy, strife, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction"***
2. Notice the progression. Suspicion is not the starting point; it grows out of pride, unhealthy judgements, and a heart that is no longer governed by love.

XIII. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF EVIL SUSPICION

A. KING'S SAUL SUSPICION OF DAVID

1. This is perhaps the clearest biblical example. After David defeated Goliath and gained favor with the people, Saul became suspicious and jealous.

a) *"Saul eyed David from that day forward." (1 Samuel 18:9)*

2. His suspicion was demonic in nature and it grew into paranoia leading him to:
 - (1) Believe the lie that David wanted his throne causing him to repeatedly attempt to kill David.
 - (2) He slaughtered the priests at Nob because he suspected they were helping David (1 Samuel 22).
 - (3) His suspicion eventually consumed his leadership and destroyed his kingdom.
- (a) Lesson from Saul- Suspicion fueled by pride and insecurity can blind a person to reality and lead to devastating sin.

B. ABSALON (2 Sam 15)

1. Absalom teaches us that one of the quickest ways to divide God's people is to plant suspicion about the motives and integrity of their leaders.
2. Absalom cultivated suspicion toward David's leadership.

a) "If only I were judge" 2 Sam 15:4

3. He misjudged David and planted seeds of discourse by causing people to doubt David's leadership resulting in a rebellion and civil war.

XIV. A CHURCH FREE FROM SUSPICION

- A. A church remains free from evil suspicion when its members choose love over assumptions, truth over rumors, humility over pride, and biblical conversation over whispered speculation.
- B. We must learn to view one another through the lens of the cross and the love of Christ. Biblical love neither ignores sin nor abandons discernment, but it refuses to assign evil motives or draw conclusions without clear evidence. Instead, it seeks the truth with humility, extends the benefit of the doubt, and pursues restoration rather than suspicion.