

A Whole New Way of Life

In v. 1 and again in v. 17 we find the word *walk* used to describe our whole way of life. In v. 1 – walk *worthily of the calling to which you have been called*, In v. 17 – *you are no longer to walk in the way the Gentiles walk in the futility of their thinking*. Notice the elements of the old way of life – *darkened in thought, alienated from the life of God, devoid of feeling, self-indulgent, greedily practising every kind of impurity*.

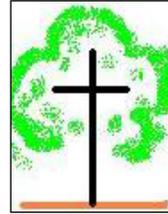
Becoming a Christian (described here as *learning Christ*) involves us in *putting away* the things that have been so much part of the old life, *being renewed in the spirit of your mind* and *putting on the new humanity*.

Reflect:

- What are the things that we need to “*put away*”?
- What are the qualities that we need to “*put on*”?
- How ever will we be able to *put away* the old and *put on* the new?

5. A Whole New Way of Life. Bible Reading: Ephesians 5.

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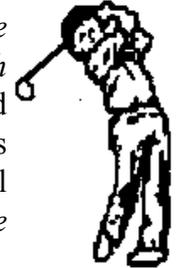
Alive in Christ!

Six Studies in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians
by Peter J. Blackburn

4. The Active Body

Reading: Ephesians 4

So the secret is out! There is only one gospel it is good news for both Jews and Gentiles! “*The Gentiles are co-heirs, part of the one body and sharing equally through the gospel in the promise in Christ Jesus!*” Perhaps we find it hard to imagine just how radical and exciting that news must have been to Paul’s first-century hearers. And Paul goes on to pray for them “*that you may be filled with all the fulness of God.*”



Now what does all this mean for the Body of Christ? Paul wrote about the Church as the Body of Christ in 1.22-23 with the focus of the Body being on Christ the head. He spoke of it again in 2.15-16 where his theme is Jew and Gentile being reconciled to God and to one another. Also in chapter 3 as noted above.

But being part of the Body is not just for security, happiness and encouragement. The Body is for **doing** how can that happen?

Chapter 4

¹Therefore I appeal to you – I the prisoner in the Lord – walk *worthily of the calling with which you have been called*. ²Always be *humble and gentle. Be patient, bearing with one another in love*, ³eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is *one body and one Spirit just as it is to one hope that you have been called* ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is the one over all things and through all things and in all things.

⁷Now to each one has been given grace according to the measure with which Christ gives. ⁸This is why it says,

“*Having ascended on high
he led captivity captive,
he gave gifts to men*” (Ps. 68.18).

(⁹Now the word “having ascended” what does it mean except that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰The one having descended is himself the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, in order that he might fill all things.) ¹¹Now he himself has given some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the purpose of equipping of God's holy people for the work of service and for building the body of Christ, ¹³until we all arrive at unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, at perfect manhood, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed about and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching and by the trickery of men who plot methods of deception. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love we are to grow in every way into the one who is the head, Christ himself. ¹⁶From him the whole body, fitted together and joined through every ligament with which it is supplied according to the proper operation of each part, makes the growth of the body for building itself up in love.

¹⁷Therefore I say this to you and strongly affirm in the Lord, that you are no longer to walk in the way the Gentiles walk in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸For they are darkened in thought and alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them through the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹Having become devoid of feeling, they hand themselves over to self-indulgence, greedily practising every kind of impurity. ²⁰But as for you – this not how you learnt Christ – ²¹assuming that you have heard him and been taught in him, in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²²Concerning your former way of life, you were taught to put away from yourself your old humanity which is being destroyed by deceitful desires, ²³to be renewed in the spirit of your mind and to put on the new humanity which has been created in God's image in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵Therefore putting away falsehood “let each of you speak truth with his neighbour” (Zech. 8.16), because we are members of one another. ²⁶“And be angry but do not sin” (Ps.4.4) don't let the sun go down on your animosity, ²⁷ and don't give the devil an opening. ²⁸The one who has been stealing must no longer steal. Instead he must work, doing good with his own hands, so that he will be able to share with the needy one. ²⁹Don't let any foul language escape your lips, but

instead what is good for building up others according to need, so that it will give grace to the hearers. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God you have been sealed in him for the day of redemption.

³¹Get rid of all bitterness and rage and anger and shouting and slander, together with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another and compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also has freely forgiven you in Christ.

The Active Body

We become Christians by an individual act of faith in God's saving grace. This individual faith has made us part of Christ's Body. All of a sudden our relationship with others takes on a new importance – hence our need to *be humble and gentle, patient, bearing with one another in love*

We are to *keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. Our unity flows from the unity of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The one Spirit creates us as one body on the basis of the one gospel – *one hope to which you have been called*. We have been brought into that one body through *one Lord, one faith, one baptism*. And behind the whole plan of salvation is *one God and Father of all, who is the one over all things and through all things*.

In 1.7 Paul wrote that “*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our transgressions, according to the wealth of his grace*”. He now speaks further of God's grace, but here in relation to his gifts *to each one* – that is, to every believer for the life of the whole body. Some gifts – *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers* – have a particular equipping role, but the gifts of all are directed to *the work of service and building up the body of Christ* The purpose is that we *grow in every way into the one who is the head, Christ himself*.

Reflect:

- What does the Lord expect of you so that the whole body will be built up in love?