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## Ephesians Chapter 4, Verses

All right let's open our Bibles tonight to the Book of Ephesians, Chapter 4, Verse 1. As we continue our verse by verse study through the Book of Ephesians, tonight looking at verses 1, 2 and 3 and then next week with communion looking at verses 4, 5 and 6. You know whenever you join an organization, it doesn't really matter what the organization is you are always obligated to some kind of rule. Whether it is the aims of the group or the objectives of the group, if it's an athletic team you got certain practices you got to be at and certain weight requirements maybe certain athletic ability that you got to maintain. If it's a service club there are rules and dues and meetings and even if it's a religious organization of some kind there are rules that you follow that cause the group to be that group. Everybody gets a hat a shirt, they all look the same whatever but there is always something. The pit falls of being in conformity to a group are obviously the fact that pressure to conform is binding on most people and blinding to many. You remember that young man that had been born blind there in John Chapter 9 that Jesus had healed and the Pharisees were just up in arms. They tried to discredit the healing by just saying, well you're a liar you weren't really blind or else how in the world could you see now. So they finally called for his parents and they said is this your boy? They said yeah. Well was he born blind? Absolutely. Then how in the world can he see now? Then they did this, well he's old enough to answer for himself, why don't you just ask him how he can see now? We don't know what happened and then you read there in John they answered this way because they feared the Jews. There was already a rule in town that if anyone would confess Christ they would be put out of the synagogue and so even the parents of a boy who had been healed from blindness with which he had lived all of his life, somehow couldn't overcome the pressure to conform. They couldn't rejoice in the healing to the point where they could stand against, if you will the pressure of that peer pressure of that community and that religious status. There is a good side of course to belonging to a group and that is if you're in the right group, peer pressure can keep you doing the right thing. It can keep you walking upright and it can be a real positive influence.

Certainly one of the things that you find in the Bible about going to church is that it is suppose to keep you right, hard to be sinning in church. I've very rarely heard someone use a four letter word in service. Oh it's happened but very rarely. We had a funeral here a couple of years ago where a man came up to speak about the fellow that had died and he used the "s" word from this pulpit. I almost died, ahhh, with holy water you know, but he wasn't saved and he came with a family and his brother had died and he just that's what he was all about and he came out and we all twitched but we survived. But from the believer's you don't get a whole lot of that kind of pressure. In fact there is pressure to behave the worst of people seem to do very well in church. They seem to behave themselves in a manner that just honors the Lord. So there are some good things from being involved in the church and being a part of the body. Unfortunately there are a lot of folks who will go to church just to get the blessings but they don't really want to make the commitment. They don't want to follow the Lord and keep Him first and seek the Lord with their whole heart, confess that He's the Lord of their life but they do want the blessings that God supposedly can provide and they don't adhere to His word to walk in faith and obedience and all. For three chapters Paul has been writing about God's view of the church. What He sees when He looks at you and we tried to emphasize to you how important that you take His view. In other words you look at yourself the way God sees you. Not the way the world does, not even the way your friends do, look at yourself the way God does. How blessed you are, how honored He is to call you His own. How He sees you in that light and boy if you can get through all those chapters and learn those truths, you get to feeling pretty good about being a part of the group, that God would love me that way with that much compassion and all. So for three chapters that's what you get. You get doctrinal truths, they are not sermonettes, they are not historical narratives they are just one verse, and one upon the other here is how God views you as the church. But having written all of those things we come tonight to the word, therefore. I therefore and as Paul almost always does, he now switches gears from doctrinal truth to practical application. Chapter 4, 5 and 6 could best be described as what God would like to have the world see in you. In other words when the Lord has the world watch His people, His group, His organization, what should they conclude about God? What should they see of

God? What should they learn of Him? All in light of those folks in the group, behaving themselves according to the knowledge of what they had learned about themselves in the first three chapters. Paul does this a lot he strikes this great balance if you will between doctrine and duty. What we have, what we are and then how should we behave as a result. It is always in that order. God never asks for action until the action is based upon knowledge. Knowing these things, what should I do? So for example in Romans, you will read in Chapter 1, Verse 1 Paul beginning to write about doctrine. He'll do it in Chapter 2 and 3 and 4 and 6 and 8 and 10 and it isn't but for 11 Chapters one verse upon another doctrine. It doesn't really require anything of you it just says learn this, know this, get this, and put this in your mind and then you get to Chapter 12, Verse 1 and he says therefore. Therefore, learning all of these things now you should therefore present yourself to the Lord as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, have your mind renewed. Know the heart of God and he begins then in Chapter 12 to say now, do these things practically. Here are the rules of the organization, here are the promises of its Founder, here are the assurances of the God that you serve now behave yourself like this. You go to the Book of Galatians Chapter 1, 2, 3 and 4, doctrine, doctrine, doctrine, doctrine therefore. You go to the Book of Colossians, Chapter 1 doctrine all the way to Chapter 3, Verse 4, Chapter 3, Verse 5 Paul stops with the doctrine and gets down to the duty, therefore. You find this repeated over and over again. Why? Because ultimately the Christian life that God asks you to live is always one of response. In other words, it falls under the, we love Him because He first loved us. Everything I do is in response to what I know about God and His ways. It is an action that is based upon doctrine which is why you really can't ever tell people what they have to do for the Lord until you've taught them what the Lord has done for them. You can't teach duty without doctrine because doctrine says here is what God has done for you. If people know what the Lord has done for them the duty part comes easy. If they don't it's just a big pressure, well you ought to forgive them, you ought to be nicer, you ought to be kinder you're so unforgiving. It is a difficult sale unless you're able to say to people but look what God has forgiven you for. As you begin to make that list all of a sudden the forgiveness is a little easier. All of a sudden that molt that is in your eye comes out. All of a sudden that awareness of how

much in debt you are to God makes you willing now to submit to God, help me Lord to be forgiving. I don't want to keep a record of debt so You don't keep a record of mine. The duty moves the behavior or I should say the doctrine moves the behavior. So you get one before you always get the other. I know what God has done, what God will do, what God has promised then all I'm left with is response. Unfortunately for most Christians they hate doctrine. They shy away from it, it's too dry, it's too hard, and it requires thinking. I actually have to think that through and apply that. Is there three points? Oh not three points that's a lot of points and so I don't really like doctrine very much. But they are the facts upon which the foundation of your behavior should rest. So never shy away from the doctrinal parts of a book. When Solomon wrote in Proverbs he talked about wisdom is being like a hidden treasure and he said there in Chapter 2, you should seek after the knowledge of God like you would hunt down hidden treasure. In other words you should throw yourself into the doctrine because it is indeed the basis upon which you live your life. The prophet Hosea wrote in Chapter 4, my people are being destroyed because they have a lack of knowledge. No base for their behavior, no movement of truth to undergird the way that they would respond and that's really what God wants to do. So we finish, if you will the list of the blessings and the privileges and the rights and the honors and the promises and now we get to Chapter 4, 5 and 6 and the Lord through Paul says, now let's live it out. He takes and applies the doctrine of Chapter 1, 2 and 3 to the daily life of the believer in Chapter 4, 5 and 6. We've studied what He's done for us now we look at what He expects from us. Paul would write to the Philippians early on in the Book, which is short on doctrine and long on duty by the way. But he writes there in Chapter 1 of Philippians, let your conduct be worthy of the Gospel of Christ. With one mind, one Spirit stand fast striving in the Gospel. So you get the word therefore, in Verse 1. The reference to everything we **study**, therefore.

#### Verse 1

I, Paul say, as a prisoner of the Lord beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.

Now Paul mentioned in Chapter 3 when we started a couple of weeks ago and he mentions it again here that he sees himself as God's prisoner not the Romans or the Jews, though both had a part in getting him locked up. He saw his life in God's hands and so wherever you will read of Paul's incarceration it is always it is God's will that I'm here. I'm God's prisoner, I'm God's guy on the inside, and I am locked up for Him. He didn't have any problem with that at all. He didn't blame anyone, had a great perspective, saw the circumstances of his life completely under God's control. So he says I'm a prisoner of the Lord and I want to beg of you, the word beseech means just that, to beg. I just plead with you it is a very intense word, please with all that you've been given act like it. With all that you have act like it, be like a king's kid who has a great future. Act like a person whose life has been washed clean by the Spirit of God and who has an eternal hope, act like someone who has nothing to fear from Heaven. Act like someone who understands what is coming down the road and how long this life is in comparison to eternity, act like someone who has been handpicked by God since before the world began. I therefore, as a prisoner beg you to walk worthy of the calling in which you've been called. Now the word walk at least in most of the Bible usages is a word that just means live your life. In other words the walk that the Bible describes is always just your daily living. Day in and day out your attitude, your conduct, your actions walk in a way that is worthy of the calling. The word worthy is a very interesting word because literally it means to balance the scales. It's a word that means to equal the weight but it is applied often times to the believer to say, the way that you behave should be equal to your identity as God's kid. Or that your behavior should balance out the truth of what and who you are. Live your life in such a way every day that when people see you they see Chapters 1, 2 and 3 lived out in you. Here's a guy who is at peace with God and forgiven by God and whose name is in Heaven, whose angels watch over him, who has a God that doesn't leave him or forsake him, who has a joy of the Lord and peace that is indescribable. Here he is, balanced out in his life. Live your life in such a way that you balance or equalize your calling and the word literally is divine invitation. Act like someone who has been invited by God because you didn't get saved just because you're smart, I don't think. You didn't one day, I heard somebody once say and then I got saved, I came to my senses and I went ahhh, wrong. You didn't

come to you haven't yet come to your senses apparently. You didn't get saved because you're smart, you didn't figure this out. Salvation isn't a mental exercise or a school project or the invention of man's mind, it is an invitation from God. Behold I stand at the door and I knock. Look this is God's idea, isn't it? Let me in, hey, really, come on let me in, seriously, would you let me in please. I'd like to come in. Then when you let Him in do you go yeah, I was pretty smart I opened the door, no this is God's calling. You were called by the Lord, you were chosen when you were dead in your sins, lost in your turmoil, in darkness, separated from God there was a divine calling and God allowed you by His grace to respond. So act like that, behave yourself in that way so that every day your life equalizes the identity you have as a believer and is very different from the world that has none of those things. It's almost as if when the Lord saved you, He stamped on your forehead the words I'm a child of God watch me and learn of Him. Walk worthy of your calling, live your life in a way that balance is who you are with what you've been invited to as God's child. I read that and I immediately go, well as a worthy walker, is it really possible? How can you live up to that, how can you be worthy of that? But apparently it must be available because God never asks something of us but that He also doesn't help us to do it. I think John was in his 90's when he wrote his first little Epistle there at the end of your Bible but he wrote in Chapter 2, Verse 6, if you say that you abide in the Lord you ought to walk like He walked. There ought to be a corresponding behavior. How do I walk worthy of this? By walking in the understanding of the truth of Chapters 1, 2 and 3 and then allowing the Lord to change in my life so that my behavior, my daily behavior reflects my understand of who God is. Now from Verse 2 to Verse 16 there is only one focus, the unity of the body. The oneness that God has made in the church, how it works what church growth is all about, in fact starting in Verse 7 all the way down to Verse 16 is the best book on church growth that you'll ever find. I know there has been tons of thousands of books written the last 25 years on church growth. Just throw them away and read nine verses. Look at what God has to say it is absolutely viable. One focus though, the unity of the body of Christ in distinction to the world but here he focuses in the first six verses on the individual response to God's work in your life. I've heard and years ago Watchman Yee wrote a book called, "Sit Walk and Stand" the Book of Ephesians. Chapter 1, 2 and 3 is where

you sit with God and you make a list of all you have. It is inventory control. Verse 4 walk therefore worthy of your calling and in Chapter 4 and 5 and a little bit of Chapter 6 you will get the descriptions of how to live your life and then when you get to Chapter 6, I think its verse 13, the Lord will then finally say and stand fast in the Lord by His power. So you get this Sit Walk and Stand. Sit in the truth, walk in it and then stand fast not being moved. Well here are some of the descriptions of a worthy walk and we're going to look just at these two verses tonight and you can memorize them fairly easily because they are described in five basic words. Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called

### Verse 2

With all and here are the words. Lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing one another in love and

### Verse 3

Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

In other words, if the church as individuals will all begin to respond to what God has done for them individually the result will be a church that is at peace with each other. There will be a unity and a relationship in the organization that is so unique to the world that it just stands out. That it is so bright in its light that no one can help but notice because the world doesn't have peace to offer they just have fight and infighting and politics but the church shouldn't be like that. Well here are the five words that should describe the response of the worthy walker to the promises and to the work of God.

The first component is, walk worthy with all lowliness. In Greek this is basically two words that mean to judge you lowly. Now I don't know how much any of us do that. I know there is that false lowliness; no no I'm nothing, I'm really terrible and keep the applause coming. But how much do we truly see ourselves before God with that kind of humility that this word describes. In fact, this elusive kind of attitude about you is so foreign to the world that in Greek and Roman languages there really is no word for humility, before the birth of the church. What you do find are words like self confidence and self assurance but you don't

find this word for humility or lowliness, it is almost a word that is coined by the Lord particularly for His people. It is that ability of an individual to be truly aware of his own unworthiness and God's grace that leaves you just awestruck that you belong at all. Humble, overwhelmed, dependent without any self applause, just are you sure I'm on the list? Yes you are. I can't believe I'm on the list. You sure it's me? Let's check the spelling one more time. It's Abeelen or so it seems, I think that's the right pronunciation. For us as Christians it is the correct view of ourselves in light of the word of God and the salvation that God has freely offered to us when we were dead in sin. It ought to blow your mind that you were saved when you were lost. God came to find you, didn't He? He came to find you, you could never get out but He came to find you. It is an ingredient that goes along with being saved. When Jesus spoke to the Disciples there in Matthew 18, He said to them look unless you are converted and become like this little child you'll by no means be able to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child, they'll be the greatest in the Kingdom. But the emphasis was upon the dependency of a little child upon his parent. The Lord said this is the kind of relationship I've got to have with you. You've got to have that kind of reliance and trust on Me. That's the way God wants us to walk in a worthy walk. Not march in here all proud and thrilled with ourselves but looking around just saying, look at all these people on the list. Look at everyone that got in, isn't God wonderful. We're going to go, we're going to make it and we're going in. It leaves you just humbled, you judge yourself very lowly. When Jesus sat the Disciples down and He began to go over those beatitudes the very first one that He mentions to the Disciples were, blessed are the poor in spirit or literally those who are broke spiritually. Blessed are those who are poor in spirit for theirs will be the Kingdom of Heaven. So you start there, don't you lowly? If you haven't gotten to lowly, you're not saved. Because you've got to get to lowly to be saved. Like the little kid, like the poverty of spirit, Lord save me I've got nothing to offer. I have nothing on the list. What's on the list? It's just a blank piece of paper I just as soon not write down my failures, You know them all. Peter meets the Lord, God get out of my boat. Isaiah meets the Lord, I'm undone. Daniel meets the Lord, I don't think I can get up. Job meets the Lord, I've heard about you with my ears now I see you with my eyes there is nothing in me that I



can find attractive if You can just leave me alone that would be great. Live a worthy walk what's the first thing that should happen to us when we understand these chapters is it ought to leave us humble about our own stance. Jesus is the perfect example, isn't He? Well what did Matthew write there, Jesus said to the people take My yoke upon Me, you have learned of Me I am gentle and I am lowly in heart, you'll find **rest**. Paul wrote to the Philippians about Jesus being equal with God that He laid it all down so that He could come and die for us. You go through the Gospels, you see Jesus the God of the universe born in a stable, no place to lay His head, owning only the clothes on His back, borrowing a grave to be buried in. Well, He was only going to need it for a few days. Sat the Disciples down there at the Last Supper and He began to wash their feet. He's hours away from the crucifixion but He binds up His garments and He washes their feet and when He's all done, He says do you know what I've done for you? Nobody answered and the Lord said, well you call Me the Teacher and the Lord and you've said it right, so I am but if I'm your Lord and Teacher and wash your feet than you ought to wash each other's feet. I've given you an example; do what I've done to you. Follow this way, I say to you a servant is not greater than his master or is He who is sent greater than He who has sent Him. If you know these things blessed are you if you do them. Walk worthy of your calling therefore, Paul says in all lowliness examine what you see in yourself. One of the characteristics of a worthy walk is to really see you as you truly are and follow after God's example through His Son, who humbled Himself even to death. If all of us did that, what great unity there would be in the body. How good things could be in the church. Why aren't they always so good? Because we don't always do this. We don't always hang on to the therefore with all humility, worship God. The opposite of humility is the temptation to live in that old life of pride. It's not supposed to be in the church because we're all saved by the grace of God and it ought to humble us. But you still find it. People think their proud of being more saved than somebody else. I'm more righteous, I'm more holy, I'm more committed, I'm more prayerful, I'm more diligent, I'm more spiritual, pride. Hey you're lucky to be here at all. Oh. That ought to leave you humble pal. By the way you were invited here. Oh. So there is that conflict, economic conflict, a parent's conflict, a success conflict. The Pharisees were so into their spiritual pride that Jesus said,

you guys look like a bunch of tombstones. So white and beautiful on the outside but if we remove the dirt you're just a bunch of dead men's bones. That was His response to their pride. Paul says to the church look, you've got to realize how you got here it ought to leave you, just humble. Jesus talked about that sliver versus that beam that's in our eye, about comparing ourselves with others. Well if you don't like me you should have married the drunk next door. That's hardly going to bring peace. If you see what all you've been given like Paul, in Verse 8 in the last chapter, he saw himself as the least of all of the saints because of this grace. Oh it's just unsearchable to me and it left him lowly. Is your opinion of you, that way tonight? Do you see yourself as just fortunate to be here? Or do you walk around with a little chip and a little pride and a little thing, are you walking worthy, is your lifestyle balancing out the truth of God's work?

Second of all in Verse 2, and the second component of a worthy walk is the word gentleness or sometimes its translated meekness but it is literally best defined as power under control. What happens to someone who gets saved? They still have their power, their authority, their decision making capacity, their gifts, their talents and all but because of the humility of your salvation, they are now surrendered to God. Maybe the best definition I've ever heard of meekness is sitting on a horse and having the reins in your hand. The animal is still much stronger than you are, in fact if the horse could think it through clearly you would never ride on him again. He will be riding on you, tomorrow. But he obeys the reins so I give my life to the Lord and everything I have and all the talents and abilities I possess are now laid down at His feet and He now holds the reins. It is one of those byproducts of humility. It's like being domesticated of a wild animal, it's that surrendering of my life to the Lord. All right Lord my life is now Yours. I don't make any demands on You, I don't want to tell You how I should live, what You should give me. I am not only humble to be here but I'm so grateful that You are going to work this work in my life. Did you know if you look in the Bible that Jesus never went out of His way to defend Himself? People accused Him of all kinds of stuff. He said nothing. The only time you see Him getting really angry is when the Father's name was blasphemed there in the temple a couple of times where the den of thieves were dealing in their wares and people were being kept

from God through these little hustles of the enemy. Meekness is not weakness. That's what the world might say but the horse is still strong, it's just surrendered. It is that quality of life where you and I laid down all the tools that we used in the world to get ahead and we trade them in for faith in God. I used to be very slick, I could make a deal, sell an Eskimo a refrigerator, I could talk my way out of anything, I could just turn on the charm, it's the smile, it's the money it's the knowledge of people in high places and then I get saved and I am reduced to gentleness. Lord you open the door, Lord you find a way, Lord you work it out. Years ago when we were looking to buy this building the City Council, a least a couple of folks said, well we're not sure you know and someone came and said to me I know people on the City Council, I could call them for you. In fact here are the numbers at home of three of the members. We could just call them and put in the good word, I'm sure we'll be fine. I said don't, please don't call, don't call at all. I'll tell you what you can do go home, lay those names down and pray. Because if we get the building, we want to be sure it's the Lord's will not our will. There is always a way of man and then there is meekness. The second characteristic of a worthy walk is that surrender of the will to God. You still have all of those things but they are now tools in His hands not tools in yours. When Paul wrote to Timothy about witnessing to folks who were saved, in fact really contentious folks, he said to him as a servant of the Lord Timothy, and it was his last letter Paul wrote before he died. You must not quarrel with them he said but you should be gentle to them, able to teach, patient, humbly correcting those in opposition and maybe God would grant them repentance so that they might know of the truth. You just with kindness and gentleness stand fast but do it with humility, maybe the Lord will get through. That's your job Timothy, just gentle approach from the hand of God. His strength harnessing your life so you can be done with you and be all about Him. When James explained this kind of living in Chapter 1 he said you should lay aside all filthiness and wickedness and rather receive with meekness, same word, this engrafted words which are able to save your souls. Just let God handle it. Humility and gentleness.

Third One, Verse 2

Longsuffering, oh that's not a good word, is it? It's a compound word, it mean to be long tempered. It is the result, A) of humility and B) of meekness because in meekness I let God handle it and then in patience with God I'm able to handle it, even under adverse circumstance. So it is a life that then is submitted, how do I walk worthy with God? I let God handle it. What if He takes too long? He doesn't move fast enough, He doesn't work it out the way I want, it doesn't right away fix itself? Then I'm to be longsuffering. God didn't vacate the throne He has just pointed the timer a little down the road. He'll do it when He sees fit. It's that condition where I watch God's time not my own. It was Abraham I think who waited through all of those years like it is described there in Hebrews, isn't it Chapter 6. Where it talks about him receiving a sure promise from God and it says when God couldn't swear by anyone greater, He just swore by Himself. Then it says of Abraham and so as he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. This longsuffering idea literally says God knows best when the time is right. Moses spent 120 years building an ark. Never rained, wasn't cloudy, no like pre-showers to get everyone excited, oh another sunny day, great. Another news truck comes by, here's the idiot on the hill building a boat 100 miles from the water. You better get right with God I'll be done with this thing one of these years. God's timing. I accept God's dealing. I can be longsuffering without fretting or complaining because I believe that God is in charge of my life. That's what this word longsuffering means. In fact it literally applies itself to people, patience usually applying itself to circumstance but it isn't universal in its application. But that's what those two words mean. In their uses I'm longsuffering with people and with circumstance because I have found myself in the Kingdom of God, in the organization of God by invitation, saved and washed and cleansed and humbled able to just submit my life to God and now wait patiently for Him to work. Which is why when you go through the Bible and you read people being insulted or persecuted like Paul or slandered or criticized, treated unfairly you will very rarely find if ever, retaliation. You won't at all in the New Testament. You won't find folks, let's get even with them, you never saw the Apostles in a huddle planning an end around. We'll go over there when they're by themselves we'll pick them off one at a time. There was always that submitting to the Lord. Early on when Peter and John and those men were told

not to preach anymore in Jesus' name it says that they went home rejoicing they were counted worthy to suffer for His name's sake. Hoo hoo, they're after us now like they were after Him. We're with Him all the way, perfect. Longsuffering. It only comes from a life that has died to itself though. But God will get even you know, He can even the score and right the wrong. He'll do it much better job with it than you will. There is that great verse in First Peter I think it is in Chapter 2 where the Lord is talking about servants submitting yourself to your masters with all fear and not just to the good or the gentle servant but also to the harsh one. This is commendable because of your conscience towards God, you would endure and suffer wrongfully and you take it with endured grief but you suffer wrongfully. What credit is it if you're beaten for your faults and take it patiently but if you've done the right thing and you suffer and you take it patiently this is commendable with God for to this were you called. Then he adds the words Christ also suffered, giving us an example we should follow in His footsteps. Who committed no sin, no deceit was found in His mouth. When He was reviled He didn't revile again, when He was threatened He didn't respond, He just committed Himself to the One who judges righteously. Longsuffering. What a different life than most of us live. We do it like the old days. Why don't we have just step outside and we'll talk about it? Why don't we just figure this out, the two of us in the back of the yard? One of us will be going home and the other will be going to the hospital this will be good. This was the way I always dealt with it. Then you get saved it's so hard to go, oh Lord you handle it when you just want to handle it for Him, don't you? Lord can I help, can I just participate? A little foretaste of the wrath of God, will that be all right? Walk worthy of your calling with all humility and meekness and the ability to be long tempered. My life in God's hands leads to longsuffering and if we will do that with each other just imagine the unity we'd have rather than division that you find.

Fourthly he adds in Verse 2, bearing with one another in love and it literally reads forbearing one another in love. Forbearing love, the word bearing means to hold up or to sustain, this word love is the agape word. That love that God loves you with. It is best defined as His love for you. He loved you with that love when you weren't responding, He'll love you with that love if you don't respond it's not an

earned love, it's not a feeling love it's a commitment love that describes God's love for you. It's the love that the Lord said, if you have in your life it will be a witness to the world and to everyone else that you're saved. By this love they'll know you are My disciples. So unique is it because it doesn't respond by feeling. When the Lord says love your enemies you probably have read it and said how can I do that I hate my enemies? That's how I distinguish them from my friends. That's how I feel about them, I hate that guy. That's no friend I love this guy, friend. Love your enemies. How? Not emotionally by praying for them, doing good to them, blessing them, not speaking evil of them, supporting them, going out of your way forbearing one another in love. So bear one another up in this love is the fourth characteristic of a worthy Christian walk. The word bearing or forbearing is an action word in the present tense which literally means actively seek to sustain a loving relationship with others, with God' love. Actively seek. It doesn't say sit back and tolerate the junk that comes your way. Or put up with it no matter what. Boil within, endure without. But it does say reach out, actively to express the love God has expressed for you to others. So Peter writes in his letter, and above all put on this fervent love, one for another which will cover a multitude of sins. Wow. This is the way God would have the church to be, this is the way He would like to see in the world. Or the world to see I should say in you. The writer in Proverbs in Chapter 7 wrote, hatred will stir up strife but love will cover all sin. Ready to cover sin to forgive to hope for the best, that's what God would have from us. That's a worthy walk, why? Hey you've been let off the hook for everything, haven't you? So what are you going to keep on the list? What if the Lord said to you, if you won't keep a list I won't keep a list? But if I see you keeping a list, I've got a list. Isn't that what He says? He will have no mercy upon those who have shown no mercy. Look at Jesus, they crucify Him what does He do? Father forgive them. Look at Steven, throwing rocks at his head, that isn't a real winning attitude. Father lay not this sin to their charge. Forbearing love, what we usually do is we just tolerate it to the point where we just feel like we're justified to be hateful again. But it is agape love that means I should love when there is nothing coming back. You've heard it said Jesus said there in Matthew, love your friends hate your enemies. I say to you love your enemies. Bless those who persecute you, do good to those that despitely use

you, what? Do you want to walk worthy? I did good to you when you were spitefully using me. All right now imagine what would happen in the church if all of us did that. What could Jesus do with a church whose disciples were truly living in that way?

### Verse 3

Finally he adds you should endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in a bond of peace.

So with humility and with gentleness and the word is all, in Verse 2, longsuffering and forbearing love finally endeavor to maintain or to keep this unity in the bonds of peace. The word endeavor is an interesting word because it means to be eager or to be zealous or to have great ambition. In fact most of the places that it is used it speaks about someone that is as committed to seek something as anyone can be. It is a present tense word; daily do everything you can with great zeal to keep people together. Go after being a peace maker. Go after with zealous ambition this idea of bringing the body together. My goal ought to be, your goal ought to be to live in such a way that we can experience the unity that God has provided in saving all of us. It ought to drive you. That's the worthy walk. The next time someone wants to come up and speak evil of a brother, what are you going to do? Say to them this, my ears are not trashcans. That's a brother of mine you are talking about. Move along. Have you heard what he said? I don't want to hear it. I don't want to hear it. You know if you live long enough as a pastor you can look out at the church and know everybody's secrets. This guy over here is cheating on the wife. Girl over here is pregnant and her parents don't know it. That guy over here has got a drug problem. You see it all if you're a pastor. You can stand up here and just look around and oh this is never going to work with what we got here. This is the butt side of the church right here, I'm telling you. This is as terrible as it gets. We all got this junk going on and how in the world are we ever going to get anything done. Then you look up and you realize God's always used people like us. We're one man, in His grace, with all of our problems and all of our weaknesses. We should strive, endeavor, present tense be fully committed to do so with ambition and great diligence to maintain

unity. Driven by humility, meek before the Lord, longsuffering and forbearing in love so that the oneness that I have with you in Jesus will honor the Lord and be a witness to the world. That bond of peace and the word bond means ligament. It's the word for belt or ligament depending on how it's used but Paul pictures the members of the body all pulling together, bound by the peace that they found with God through His Son. Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. Paul calls us in light of all that we've learned to a worthy walk that is worthy in deed of all He has given us but it's a life of response, isn't it? To the goodness of God. If someone just said to you hey, love your enemies you might say, hey forget it pal. Until you realize God loves you, alright I guess so. If He'll help me I'll do it. I owe Him that much but it's that attitude of the heart with great excitement, be a peace maker to the glory of God. That's what Verse 3 says. Be a peace maker to the glory of God. So rather than listening to the garbage pray for those who stumble, support the weak, cover a multitude of sins. It's so easy to point out faults. We'll start with you, you stand up here we'll talk about you first. Then if we have time we'll get to someone else but we'd like to start with you first. Hey we can all fall but God has brought us life. We're one in this thing, aren't we?