

# Candlelight Christian Fellowship

Ephesians 4:1-6

Ephesians 4:1–6 (NKJV)

*“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, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 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.”*

Inasmuch as Paul has communicated the awesome grace demonstrated toward us in Christ, (Ephesians 1-3) he now calls upon the Ephesian believers to walk worthy of the calling he has described. The blessing, privilege, and wealth of every believer should motivate us all to *live* for the Lord. Sadly, many who understand the blessings we have in Christ have not translated that from the head to the heart and as a result have allowed themselves to live for self – selfishly clinging to the promises and blessings of salvation without growing to be the worshippers God has called them to be.

A similar plea for salvific faith to be manifested in a life of worship was given to the Romans when Paul taught them of God’s blessings. He said, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”* Romans 12:1 (NKJV) His call to the Ephesians, the Romans, to you and to me is that we live for the Lord and not for ourselves.

The Corinthians who were also recipients of the Gospel are a prime example of believers living for self – after the flesh. They were lacking in true biblical unity and were competitive with one another; they thought far too highly of themselves; they lacked discernment and were driven by carnality – so much so that they allowed for fornication, adultery, divorce, and even an incestuous relationship to exist within the church. They were allowing lawsuits between brothers and sisters in Christ; they were gluttonous and uncaring for others around them, and even misused and misappropriated the gifts of the Spirit. Even still, Paul did not tell them they were unsaved – but to the contrary. He told them that as believers who had been sanctified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that they were called to a higher standard of living – a standard that would compliment who they were.

Paul called the Ephesians to walk in *“lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.”* (vs. 2) He purposefully communicated that these attributes would enhance and assist them to *“keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* (vs. 3)

The four attributes named herein are itemized by Paul.

The first in his list is *“lowliness.”* Lowliness is not self-deprecation and false humility but is a genuine humility that sees one’s self in the proper perspective – esteeming others over ourselves. Paul told the Philipians, *“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”* Philipians 2:3 (NKJV)

The second attribute Paul listed is *“gentleness.”* Gentleness is the disposition we should have when dealing with others. We are not to handle others rudely or with harshness. James said that *“the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”* James 3:17 (NKJV)

The third attribute listed is *“longsuffering.”* Longsuffering describes restraint in the face of opposition. It is calmness and patience under provocation or misfortune.

The fourth attribute is seen as *“bearing with one another in love,”* which he indicated goes hand in hand with keeping *“the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* To bear with another’s weaknesses and shortcomings is to have patience and toleration for the weaknesses and shortcomings of those around us. Paul told the Romans, *“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”* Romans 15:1 (NKJV)

Some people seem naturally gifted with a calm, quiet, patient, and gentle disposition. For others these attributes don’t come so easily. However, as we see in Paul’s letter to the Galatians, all these manifestations are manifest in the believer by work of the Spirit. He said, *“...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...”* Galatians 5:22–23 (NKJV)

We don’t need to point out that fruit grows on a maturing tree even as the fruit of the Spirit grows in the life of a maturing believer.

The lack of spiritual maturity in the Western Church has given place for disunity and unhealthiness. Rather than seeking to strive for *“the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,”* many choose rather to jump from relationship to relationship and church to church looking for what makes them feel comfortable rather than for those things that will provide them with depth and breadth as a believer. It is no surprise that divisions and offenses will come; however, as maturing believers we are called to work together for the common good and live peaceably with all.

Those who are maturing in spirit will grow to greater and greater peace with others who are likewise growing. We learn to be patient and forgiving. We learn to find ways to communicate with wisdom and gentleness. However, there are times when rebellious or immature believers resist the grace and fruitfulness of the Spirit and choose to walk after the flesh. Therefore, Paul tells the mature, *“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”* Romans 12:18 (NKJV) When we find ourselves in unreconciled conflict, it is best to give the person(s) space and time in the Lord. This removes us from the situation and allows God to work in their lives without our interference. It may also allow for the mature to pray, evaluate, and grow themselves. Even “mature” believers fall short.

If divisions and offenses are unresolved, and if those who have caused the division remain unrepentant, we are commanded to withdraw ourselves completely. Paul said, *“Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.”* Romans 16:17 (NKJV) To Titus he said, *“Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition.”* Titus 3:10 (NKJV) To Timothy he said, *“If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, <sup>4</sup> he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, <sup>5</sup> useless 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 Timothy 6:3–5 (NKJV)*

Unity is based upon truth. Truth is found in the Lord. As we grow in *“the calling with which [we] were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,”* based upon the truth, we will give greater glory to the Lord. For, *“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.”*

The *“body”* Paul refers to is the Church. The *“Spirit”* is the Holy Spirit. The *“one hope”* is life everlasting, with *“one Lord,”* our Savior Jesus Christ. The *“one faith”* is the Gospel and doctrines of the Bible. *“One baptism”* is immersion into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, and finally the *“one God and Father of us all”* is the only living and true God – there is no other. (See Isaiah 44:6-8, Isaiah 45:5-6)

The *“all”* Paul refers to herein is not a general statement of all mankind but is in reference to the redeemed. In our last lesson we read that many believe God is the *“Father of all”* men. However, there are certain persons and certainly (fallen) angels who would be referred to as *“of their father the devil.”* Therefore, as stated, the popular notion that we are all children of God needs defining. God is not *“Father”* to the rebellious and unbelieving. Those who refuse to believe remain among those who are *“of their father the devil.”* (John 8:44) They are not named among those who have been adopted into the family of God and therefore cannot cry out *“Abba, Father.”* (See Galatians 3:26-4:7)

Paul says that God dwells *“in you all.”* This certainly refers to the Church. God works *“through”* the Church (*“you all”*) for His own purposes and is certainly *“above all”* in the sense that He is King, Lord, and God. It is true that God is above all of His creation. Therefore the expression *“above all”* may properly apply to the redeemed as well as to that which is not. However, contextually herein Paul is referring to His redeemed – the Church.

It is of note that Paul mentions all three persons of the Trinity here in this exhortation.

Over the centuries religious leaders and scholars have debated and analyzed what Christians call the doctrine of the Trinity. The teaching asserts that there is only one God and that He has revealed Himself as the personal, transcendent, eternal, sovereign Creator of all things. He is the first and last, the only Savior and Lord; there is no other. He is eternally self-existent and has revealed Himself as a Tri-unity of three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three persons, yet one God.

Among the many aberrant teachings about the Trinity are the following: A) God is a Tri-unity of three personalities - not persons. B) Jesus is not God or is a lesser god - a created being. C) There are other Gods. D) The Holy Spirit is not a distinct member of the Godhead but a force or energy. E) That Jesus is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Space limits a continuing list. However, our aim is to document what the Bible does teach about the triune nature of God not that which is in error. Let’s look at three basic points.

**1) The Scriptures teach that there is only one God and He is the Father.**

In the Scriptures God asks the following question, "To whom will you liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?" Then He answers, "...**I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me.**" (Isaiah 46:5 and 9 NKJV) God said, "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." (Isaiah 43:10 NKJV) He said, "**I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.**" (Isaiah 44:6 NKJV) Jesus taught His disciples to pray using these words, "**Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name...**" (Matthew 6:9 NKJV) Paul when writing to the Ephesians declares there is "**One God and Father of all, who is above all...**" (Ephesians 4:6 NKJV) It is clear from these verses there is only one God, the Father.

## 2) The Bible teaches that Jesus is God, the Son of the Father.

Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. He Himself is God incarnate (in flesh) and in Him the fullness of the Godhead dwells and is revealed to man. John when writing his gospel reminds the reader, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God.** The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men... **the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.***" (John 1:1-5 and 14 NKJV)

Isaiah recorded God saying, "**I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.**" (Isaiah 44:6 NKJV) Jesus speaking to John in the book of Revelation says He is the first and last, "...**Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that lives and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for- evermore, Amen...**" (Revelation 1:17-18 NKJV)

If we carefully compare these verses we are forced to conclude that Jesus is either a liar, God was a liar, or **Jesus is God: "the first and the last."**

Secondly, God tells us in the Old Testament, He is the only Savior. "*You are my witnesses, says the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am He: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. **I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no Savior.***" (Isaiah 43:10-11 NKJV) In the New Testament letter to Titus, Paul called Jesus our Savior. "...*looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and **Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us...***" (Titus 2:13-14 NKJV) Peter called Jesus the Savior. "...*our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*" (2 Peter 1:11 NKJV) He also said we are to "...*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.*" (2 Peter 3:18 KJV) John called Jesus the Savior. "*And we have seen and do testify that **the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.***" (1 John 4:14 NKJV)

Just as earlier identified, if we carefully compare these verses we are forced to conclude that either God was lying; Paul, Peter, and John were lying; or **Jesus is the one and only living God and Savior of the world.**

## 3) The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is God.

When Jesus was publicly baptized an interesting series of events occurred. Matthew records, "*When He [Jesus] had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well*

*pleased.*" (Matthew 4:16-17 NKJV) Please note here the presence of the Son (Jesus), the Father, and Holy Spirit. Here present are all three members of the Godhead.

Secondly, we see the Holy Spirit referred to as God when Peter was questioning Ananias and Sapphira, following a carefully planned act of deception. He said, "*Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the **Holy Spirit...***" He continued, "*...Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men **but to God.***" (Acts 5:1-4 NKJV) Clearly Peter refers to the Holy Spirit as God.  
**Three in One, One God – Three Persons.**

*"For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one."* (1 John 5:7)

*"You are my witnesses, says the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am He: before me there was no God formed, **neither shall there be after me.** I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no Savior."* (Isaiah 43:10-11)

#### **Read:**

Ephesians 1-3  
1 Corinthians

#### **Questions**

- 1) True or False: Paul believed that all Christians should walk in a way that demonstrates the one true faith.
- 2) True or False: If I try hard enough I can be longsuffering and gentle with everyone.
- 3) The inner strength we have in Jesus is the result of the \_\_\_\_\_ work in us.
- 4) True or False: Lowliness means to think poorly of yourself.
- 5) True or False: Lowliness is genuine humility, and genuine humility is to think correctly and honestly about yourself.
- 6) God desires that we are patient with one another and thereby protect the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit.
- 7) True or False: All true believers are humble, gentle and longsuffering.
- 8) True or False: God is Father to all men and dwells in everyone.
- 9) True or False: Baptism into the body of Christ is water baptism.
- 10) True or False: Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the baptism Paul speaks about in verse 5.
- 11) True or False: God is a Tri-unity of three persons – not three personalities.
- 12) True or False: There is only one true God.