

Ephesians - How to Walk (Live) Like A Christian



- Do you struggle with low self-worth and self-image?
- How well do you understand what it means to be a Christian and to live like one?

Most people struggle with their self-worth one time or another. People don't feel they are smart enough, attractive enough, talented enough, or likable enough. Some psychologists believe that healthy self-worth is important to mental health. Low self-esteem can contribute to depression, anxiousness, and a tendency to be withdrawn. The first half of Ephesians describes the many ways Christ has enriched our lives as redeemed people. It helps us to build a biblically healthy self-worth.

Bruce Wilkinson, author of *Talk Thru the Bible*, writes:

"Ephesians is addressed to a group of believers who are rich beyond measure in Jesus Christ, yet living as beggars, and only because they are ignorant of their wealth. Since they have yet to accept their wealth, they relegate themselves to living as spiritual paupers. Paul begins by describing in chapters 1-3 the contents of the Christian's heavenly 'bank account': adoption, acceptance, redemption, forgiveness, wisdom, inheritance, the seal of the Holy Spirit, life, grace, citizenship—in short, every spiritual blessing. Drawing upon that huge spiritual endowment, the Christian has all the resources needed for living 'to the praise of the glory of His grace' (1:6). Chapters 4-6 resemble an orthopedic clinic, where the Christian learns a spiritual walk rooted in his spiritual wealth." (p.400).

Next to the book of Romans and Galatians, the book of Ephesians is the third most important epistle in the New Testament. It is a must-read (and study) for any Christian serious about growing in discipleship.

Central Lesson:

Our identity & resources in Christ enable us to behave like a believer.

Author: The book identifies the Apostle **PAUL** as the author (1:1; 3:1). The book of Acts records Paul in Ephesus in Acts 18:18-21; 19:1-41; 20:16-38. A great revival broke out in Ephesus and many turned to Christ.

Date: Ephesians was written about A.D. **60** from Rome while Paul was in prison. Ephesians is among a group of letters called "Prison Epistles" because it was written while Paul was in a Roman jail around A.D. 60-62 for preaching the Gospel. The Prison Epistles are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. They each make reference to Paul being in prison (cf. Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Philippians 1:7, 13-14; Colossians 4:3, 10, 18; Philemon 9-10, 13, 23) and all fit well in the background of Acts 28:16-31.

Title: The title of the book is named after the recipients—Christians living in the area of **EPHESUS**. The epistle was a circular letter circulated among several churches in the region of Asia Minor. The words "*in Ephesus*" (1:1) are not found in some of the oldest and best Greek manuscripts. Also, several of the Early Church Fathers write that the words "*in Ephesus*" were not in most of the manuscripts of their day.

Key Verses: The key verses are:

- Ephesians 1:3 which fits the first section—our **wealth** in Christ. "*All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.*" NLT
- Ephesians 4:1 which fits the second section—our **walk** in Christ. NLT "*Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to (Gk. walk) **lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.***"

Key Chapters:

- Chapter **1**. The Christian's riches in Christ.
- Chapter **4**. The Christian's responsibility to walk (live) worthy of who they are in Christ.

Key Words:

- **RICHES** (1:7, 18; 2:4, 7; 3:6, 8, 16).
- **WALK** ["live" in the NIV, NLT] (4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15).

Outline: Bible teacher, Warren Wiersbe, outlines the book as:

- I. **Doctrinal: The Believer's Blessings in Christ (Chapters 1-3)**
- II. **Duty: The Believer's Behavior in Christ (Chapters 4-6)**

My suggested outline of Ephesians is as follows:

- I. **The Christian's **WEALTH** - Riches—Chapters 1-3**
- II. **The Christian's **WALK** - Responsibilities—Chapters 4-6**

Warren Wiersbe writes: "Ephesians balances doctrine and duty. First Paul reminds us of what God has done for us; then he tells us what we must do for Him in response to His mercies. Christian living is based on Christian learning. The believer who does not know his wealth in Christ will never be able to walk for Christ. Our conduct depends on our calling. Too many Christians live in chapters 1-3 and study the doctrines but fail to move into chapters 4-6 and practice the duties" (p.535).

Bruce Wilkinson writes: "Paul wrote this epistle to make Christians more aware of their position in Christ and to motivate them to draw upon their spiritual resources in daily living (4:1; see 2:10)... There are no imperatives in chapters 1-3, which focus only on divine gifts. But chapters 4-6 include thirty-five directives in the last half of Ephesians that speak of the believer's responsibility to conduct himself according to his individual calling. So Ephesians begins in heaven, but concludes in the home and in all other relationships of daily life." (*Talk*, p. 402).

Conclusion

Approximately thirty years after Paul wrote this epistle, the Apostle John confronted the Ephesians for having grown spiritually cold and for having *left their first love for Jesus* (Revelation 2:1-7). **If we fail to realize who we are in Christ and neglect to utilize all the resources that God has given us to live in victory**—our hearts will also grow cold spiritually. We, too, will lose our first love for Jesus. *What condition is your heart? Have you left your first love?*

Central Lesson:

Our identity & resources in Christ enable us to behave like a believer.

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.