

Living Worthy of Our Calling
A Study through the book of Ephesians
Ephesians 4:1-2

Every one of us who put our believing trust in Jesus has been born-again into an amazing new kind of lifestyle calling, where living it out in a worthy manner becomes our purpose. So, we must ask, “what is that calling? How do we live worthy of it?” Let’s talk about this today.

Welcome back to our journey through the book of Ephesians, as we begin the second half of this letter, we find that the focus changes from who we are positionally in Christ, to how we are to live for Him.

Do you remember that funny movie called the Princess Diaries starring Anne Hathaway and Julie Andrews. It’s a coming to age story about how an awkward - clueless young American teen discovers that she is next in line to become the queen of a small European country called Genovia. It chronicled all that she had to go through to learn to look and behave the part.

In a lot of ways, we are like that. Because we are now born into the Kingdom of God with all of its inherited rights, the Holy Spirit draws our attention to how we too are to look and behave our part. Today we will jump into His first exhortation found in Ephesians 4:1-2.

Ephesians 4:1. As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

To understand why we are to live worthy of the calling we have received, we must first understand what that calling is.

Our calling that this passage is referring to, has to do with what the Holy Spirit told us in chapters 1-3 concerning what we are born into because of our salvation in Christ. Let’s review:

Because we are born again, we are now blessed by God (1:3). We are now chosen by God (1:4). We are now adopted by God (1:5). We are now accepted by God (1:6). We are now redeemed by God (1:7). We are now forgiven by God (1:7). We are heirs of God (1:11). There’s more!

Because we are born again, we are now sealed with the Holy Spirit by God (1:13). We are now made alive in Christ by God (2:5). We are now receiving God’s grace (2:7). We are now positioned in Christ’ finished work by God (2:6). We are now a workmanship of God (2:10).

On top of all of that, we are now brought near to God (2:13). We are now included by God (2:19). We are now indwelt by God through His Spirit (2:22). We are now empowered by God through His Spirit (1:19, 3:14-20). We are now made for His glory by God (3:21-22).

One of the great challenges of our Christian life is to learn to actually accept that this is who we are in Christ, where living out its reality is how we now do life. There’s a way that God wants us to live that promotes this calling in our lives. The next verse begins to show us how.

Ephesians 4:2. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Do these qualities look familiar to you? I am sure you have noticed that these four dispositions describe Jesus as He ministered on earth. We live worthy of our calling by living like our Lord in these areas. Let's break these down.

2a. "Be completely humble..."

In the culture that Paul was writing to, being completely humble went against a core value that the Greek society held to. They had a term called "megalopsychia" that embraced hubris as a virtue; they valued and applauded things like pride, boasting, narcissistic tendencies.

Not Jesus, He told us in Matthew 11:29b that He was "humble in heart". "Humble" here means to think little about oneself, and to have a servant's attitude of being less-than. Though He is infinite God, this "less-than" is what Jesus did for us (see Phil. 2:5-11). We live worthy of our calling by being completely humble like Jesus.

2b. "Be completely... gentle"

In the original language of the New Testament, this word "gentle" and "meek" are the same word. The word suggests strength that is rein in and controlled. The word picture is one of a centurion's mighty war horse trained to trample men in battle, yet is able to give rides to the centurion's three-year-old daughter gently and harmlessly.

Think about the mighty power of Jesus, and yet it was prophesied of Jesus' gentleness that He would not break a bruised reed or snuff out a smoldering wick (see Matt. 12:20). We live worthy of our calling by being gentle like Jesus. Yield to the Spirit, gentleness is a part of His fruit.

2c. "Be patient..."

The word literally is "long suffering" (as the KJV puts it). Patience is willing to painfully stick it out with our brothers and sisters for however long it takes while their transformation in Christ is in process, like what Jesus is doing with us. It is also willing to suffer long for what we are waiting on God for. Biblically, patience is the art of being content and joyful while we wait.

Have you noticed how those in the Bible that were required to wait for a promise of God to be fulfilled, they were transformed for the better during their process of waiting? We live worthy of our calling by being patient like Jesus. Yield to the Spirit, patience is a part of His fruit.

2d. "...bearing with one another in love."

This means with Christ' love coming through us, we are to keep upholding our brothers and sisters in spite of their failings, flaws and idiosyncrasies. Again, isn't that what Jesus is doing for us, even now? In love He accepts us, He keeps helping us, He forgives us.

We live worthy of our calling by bearing with one another in love like Jesus does, (even though they drive us crazy at times). We are to accept each other, help each other and forgive each other. Yield to the Spirit, this kind of love is a part of His fruit.