

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Ephesians 4:1–3

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

Ephesians chapter four begins the practical part of Ephesians. Chapters 1–3 form the doctrinal portion, revealing the believer’s standing in Christ, chapters 4–6 then shift to how believers are to *walk worthy* of their call to Christ. The reason that the apostle Paul is beseeching the Ephesians to walk worthy of their heavenly call, is because it is now their religious duty to do so. The more enlightened the Christian becomes to the hope of heaven,¹ the more eagerly he should strive to enter into it.² This is why there is no such thing as truly being saved by the Son of God, if a person refuses to take up his cross to properly follow Him. This is what Jesus instructed His faithful followers to do, and if any do not, then they are practically denying the very One sent to save them. To refuse or neglect to take up one’s cross, which every saved man is responsible to bear, is to put in jeopardy relationship with the very One Who died upon it. (Matt. 16:24–25) *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up*

his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

(*Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary*, Matt. 16:25) A true disciple of Christ is one that does follow him in duty, and shall follow him to glory. He is one that walks in the same way Christ walked in, is led by his Spirit, and treads in his steps, whithersoever he goes. Let him deny himself. If self-denial be a hard lesson, it is no more than what our Master learned and practised, to redeem us, and to teach us. Let him take up his cross. The cross is here put for every trouble that befalls us. . . . If any man will have the name and credit of a disciple, let him follow Christ in the work and duty of a disciple. If all worldly things are worthless when compared with the life of the body, how forcible the same argument with respect to the soul and its state of never-ending happiness or misery! Thousands lose their souls for the most trifling gain, or the most worthless indulgence, nay, often from mere sloth and negligence. Whatever is the object for which men forsake Christ, that is the price at which Satan buys their souls. (END QUOTE)

(*Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*, Matt. 16:24) *Let him deny himself, and take*

1 Eph. 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

Phil. 3:20 *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*
II Cor. 5:1 *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

2 Phil. 3:13-14 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Luke 13:24 *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Heb. 4:11 *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

up his cross.—Our common thoughts of “self-denial,” *i.e.*, the denial *to* ourselves of some pleasure or profit, fall far short of the meaning of the Greek. The man is to deny his whole self, all his natural motives and impulses, so far as they come into conflict with the claims of Christ. If he does not so deny himself, he is in danger, as Peter was (it is significant that the same word is used in both instances), of denying his Lord. The self-denial here commanded has, accordingly, its highest type and pattern in the act by which the Son of God, in becoming man, “emptied Himself” (see Note on Philippians 2:7³) of all that constituted, if we may so speak, the “self” of His divine nature. The words “take up his cross,” which the disciples had heard before (see Note on Matthew 10:38⁴), were now clothed with a new and more distinct meaning, by the words that spoke so clearly of the death of which the cross was to be the instrument. (END QUOTE)

It is important to note, as we begin our expositional study of the practical part of Ephesians, that it is impossible to truly walk in fellowship with God, if there is also not unity with, and love for, other Christians.⁵ Jesus said that on two commandments,⁶ and not just one, hang all the law and the prophets—instructing us that it is not enough to hold an affection for God, if we negate Christ’s second commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves. Ultimately for the Word of God to be kept, then complete love for God, and

the people of God must be possessed. So that if either of Jesus’ two commandments is not kept, or adhered to, then true unity with the Father, will be broken. Thus, if any break Jesus’ first commandment to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, which undoubtedly would be sin, then it is foolish to presume that to break Christ’s second commandment, by not loving our neighbor as ourselves, will not be viewed by the Lord, just as equally as sin.

Ephesians 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

After beseeching the Ephesians to walk worthy of their high spiritual calling,⁷ the apostle begins laying the foundation of how this is to be practically realized. It begins with the believer walking in *lowliness* and *meekness* of heart. The Greek word for *lowliness* is #5012 *tapeinophrosune* (tap-i-noff-ross-oo'-nay). *Strong's Lexicon* reveals its meaning as “having a humble opinion of oneself, a deep sense of one’s moral littleness, and a modest view of one’s importance.” The word is used in direct contrast to human pride. It is the opposite of internal exaltation, and the lifting up of oneself, as exhibited in Jesus’ parable of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:9–14.⁸ To possess a humble

3 Phil. 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

4 Matt. 10:38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

5 I John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

6 Matt. 22:37–40 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

7 Phil. 3:13–14 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Phil. 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

8 Luke 18:9–14 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. ¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹²I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. ¹³And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but

spirit is to see ourselves as we truly are, sinners saved by unmerited grace, and granted salvation as a gift from God.⁹ This same spiritual behavior is revealed in Romans 12:3—*For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.* There is no greater sin that will bar men from heaven, and prohibit the possibility of gaining any true knowledge of God, than the overesti-

mation of one's own personal importance and ability. It is correct to believe what we have been made to be in Christ; it is incorrect to allow human pride to esteem ourselves greater and more spiritually important than we really are.¹⁰ Thus, to come to perceive what true spiritual lowliness is, it is necessary to understand its contrasting counterpart, pride.¹¹ The Bible contains an abundance of Scripture revealing how opposed the Lord is to those both ruled and governed by pride.¹² So much so that the world has been provided the

smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴*I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

9 Eph. 2:8-9 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

Rom. 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Rom. 5:15 *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.* John 1:12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

Rom. 5:10 *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

10 Gal. 6:3 *For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*

11 Ps. 10:4 *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*

Job 33:17 *That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.*

Job 35:12 *There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men.*

Job 41:34 *He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.*

Prov. 21:4 *An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.*

Mark 7:20-23 *And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²²Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: ²³All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*

Obad. 1:3 *The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?*

Ps. 101:5 *Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.*

Ps. 73:6 *Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.*

Dan. 5:20 *But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:*

1 Tim. 3:6 *Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*

12 Prov. 29:23 *A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*

Prov. 16:5 *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.*

Dan. 4:37 *Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.*

Dan. 5:20 *But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:*

Ps. 138:6 *Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.*

Isa. 23:9 *The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.*

Lev. 26:19 *And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

revelation that there exists in the future, an actual day and time, for all who are proud and lofty in heart to be brought low. (Isa. 2:12) *For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low.* It is not simply that sinners and those who are wise of heart will not enter heaven, but that heaven's wrath will one day be poured out upon them. Ultimately it is pride that keeps men from seeking the Lord,¹³ and is the very essence of what God deems as sin.¹⁴ C. S. Lewis once said, "According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind."¹⁵ Scripture also states that the *pride of life*, does not originate from God,¹⁶ but has its genesis in the devil¹⁷ and fallen man.¹⁸ Understandably it is only the Spirit of

God that can truly reveal to men their genetically inherited conceit, and only the same Spirit of the Lord, which is able to transform them out of it. No man's soul is a vacuum, and something must fill it. If it is not lowliness of mind,¹⁹ which is a product of the Spirit of God, then it shall be, being proud of heart, which has direct connection to the devil²⁰ and fallen man. Jesus also declared in respect to pursuing lowliness and meekness, that it is something that must be learned from Him. (Matt. 11:29) *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

(Benson Commentary, Matt. 11:29) *And learn of me—Μαθετε απ' εμου (man-THAN'-oh ah-PO eh-GO), Be my disciples; be taught by me, namely, all things pertaining to your acceptance with God, your duty, and your happiness: for I am meek and lowly in heart—Meek toward all men, lowly toward God. As an instructor, I will show myself to be most mild, gentle, and forbearing; kind and con-*

Isa. 2:11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.

Isa. 13:11 And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Luke 14:11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Prov. 6:16–17 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: ¹⁷A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

Prov. 16:18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

13 Prov. 10:4 He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

14 Prov. 21:4 An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.

*15 Lewis, C. S. Mere Christianity. HarperCollins, 2001, Chapter: "The Great Sin." Qtd. in "The Dangers of Pride in the Bible and Tips for Overcoming It." *Abundant Life*, 1970. <https://livingproof.co/the-dangers-of-pride-in-the-bible-and-tips-for-overcoming-it/>. Accessed 25 Dec. 2024.*

16 1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 Isa. 14:13–14 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

18 Gen. 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

19 Prov. 16:19 Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Zeph. 2:3 Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.

Matt. 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Phil. 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Prov. 29:23 A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

20 1 Tim. 3:6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

descending toward all my disciples, directing them with tenderness, patience, and lenity, in the way to pardon, life, and salvation, not imposing on them any unnecessary burdens: and, as an example, recommending by my practice both meekness and humility; meekness by bearing all kinds of injuries, and humility by condescending to do the meanest good offices to the meanest of mankind. Learn, then, of me to be meek and humble, both in disposition and behaviour; *and ye shall find rest to your souls*—That composure, tranquillity, and satisfaction which nothing but humility and meekness, with an entire subjection to me, can give. The original words may be properly rendered, *Ye shall find refreshment to your souls*, such as you would in vain seek elsewhere; refreshment, arising from clear manifestations of the divine favour, consoling influences of his Spirit, lively hopes of his glory, and sensible communion with him. (END QUOTE)

Because being *lowly and meek* is the Lord Jesus' true heavenly nature, then only He

can instruct men as to why it is so critical to keep unity in His church. It is also only through the Son of God and His divine nature, that sinners can discover what a broken and contrite Spirit actually is,²¹ leading a truly godly man to hate pride,²² whatever form it takes, either in himself or in others. Just as love is the first evidence listed in the fruit of the Spirit,²³ so will lowliness of heart characterize those, who are truly being led by the Son of God, and the humble and gentle Spirit He baptizes men with.²⁴

Meekness. The Greek word for *meekness* is #4240 *prautés* (prah-oo'-tace). *Strong's Lexicon* states that the word's origin is "Derived from the Greek adjective *πραῦς* (*praus*) (prah-oose), meaning 'gentle' or 'meek.'" *HELPS Word-studies* states that "It is a divinely-balanced virtue that can only operate through faith (cf. 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22-25²⁵)."²⁶ The *NAS Exhaustive*

21 *Isa. 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

Ps. 51:16-17 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. ¹⁷*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

Isa. 66:2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Matt. 5:3-4 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

Luke 18:13-14 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴*I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

Ps. 34:18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.
22 *Prov. 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*

23 *Gal. 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

24 *Matt. 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

Luke 3:16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

Acts 1:4-5 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. ⁵*For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

25 *I Tim. 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*

II Tim. 2:22-25 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. ²³*But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.* ²⁴*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,* ²⁵*In*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Concordance defines the word as simply “gentleness.” While the King James translation of the Greek word for “lowliness” and “meekness” appears close in meaning, there is a distinct difference in that “lowliness” is a condition of the internal mind and spirit, whereas “meekness,” and/or “gentleness,” is that heavenly kindness which is directed towards others.

Other translations help in strengthening the true essence of the Greek word *prautés* (prah-oo'-tace).

(NIV) *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

(NLT) *Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.*

(ESV) *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,*

(BSB) *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,*

(NASB) *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,*

There is no doubt that both *meekness* and *gentleness* are Christian virtues, but the emphasis here is not merely a continuation of the thought of *lowliness* of mind, which is an internal condition of the heart, but rather that *meekness* and *gentleness* which is purposed to be manifest towards all of God's creatures.

Longsuffering. The Greek word for *longsuffering* is #3115 *makrothymia* (mak-

roth-oo-mee'-ah). *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word as “Patience, Long-suffering, Forbearance.” *HELPS Word-studies* states of the word “properly, long-patience, i.e. waiting sufficient time before expressing anger. This avoids the premature use of force (retribution) that rises out of improper anger (a personal reaction).” *HELPS Word-studies* also states that “(*makrothymía*) (mak-roth-oo-mee'-ah) embraces steadfastness and staying-power.” Whenever Christians are under trial, or whenever exposed to sin, either in themselves or in others, they shall be under a degree of spiritual pressure. But this pressure or affliction should never be responded to with retaliation, vengeance, retribution and/or anger. This is not to say that sin should not be addressed, or that it is wrong to stand against evil men. Sadly, there are many sinners who will never change, yet still patience is to be manifested towards them, with the spiritual hope that they will recover themselves from their sin, and the snare of the devil.²⁶

The culture and historical background of the word is revealed in *Strong's Lexicon* as—

In the Greco-Roman world, patience was not always considered a virtue, as strength and immediate action were often valued. However, in Jewish and early Christian thought, patience was seen as a reflection of divine character. The concept of *makrothymia* (mak-roth-oo-mee'-ah) was counter-cultural, promoting a lifestyle of endurance and forgiveness rather than revenge or immediate justice. This virtue was particularly important for early Christians who faced persecution and needed to maintain their faith and witness under pressure. (END QUOTE)

meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

²⁶ II Tim. 2:26 *And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

A manifestation of believers being long-suffering is that they will not, and shall not consider, rendering evil for evil. (I Pet. 3:9) *Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.* It is as believers are patient and long-suffering under trial, and do not render evil for evil, or railing for railing, but instead respond with blessing, that they ensure their own spiritual blessings in the future. All men reap as they have sown;²⁷ consequently, even when under great spiritual attack, it is never appropriate to respond to evil, with evil. Vengeance is to be left to the Lord and His wisdom,²⁸ and is never to be engaged in those saved by Him.²⁹ Ultimately, good is to be sought, with the intention of overcoming evil with good.³⁰ Scripture also makes it abundantly clear, that bestowing blessing, and not cursing, is the duty of the saved.³¹ (Rom. 12:20) *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.* The same thought is revealed in Exodus. (Exod. 23:4) *If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.* A good tree cannot bear evil fruit,³² and neither should a good and just man assume that there is ever an appropriate time to recompense evil for evil. To do so, will only prove that he is not truly good himself.

27 Gal. 6:7-8 *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

28 Deut. 32:35 *To me belongeth vengeance and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.*

29 Rom. 12:19 *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

Prov. 20:22 *Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.*

30 Rom. 12:21 *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

31 Matt. 5:44 *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

Rom. 12:14 *Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.*

Rom. 12:17-20 *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. ¹⁸If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. ²⁰Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*

32 Matt. 7:18 *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

Forbearing one another in love. The Greek word for *forbearing* is #430 *anechó* (an-ekh'-o). *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word "To endure, to bear with, to tolerate, to hold up." *Strong's* also reveals in regards to the cultural and historical background of the word—

In the Greco-Roman world, endurance was a valued virtue, often associated with strength and resilience. The early Christian community, living under Roman rule and often facing persecution, would have understood "*anechó*" (an-ekh'-o) as a call to steadfastness and patience. This endurance was not passive but active, reflecting a commitment to maintain faith and unity despite external pressures. (END QUOTE)

At the base of *forbearing one another in love*, lies possessing spiritual love for our fellow man.

The Greek word for love is #26 *agapé* (ah-GAH-pay). *Strong's Lexicon* defines its usage as—

Agapé (ah-GAH-pay) is a term used in the New Testament to describe a selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love. It is the highest form of love, often associated with the love of God for humanity and the love that believers are called to have for one another. Unlike other Greek words for love, such as "*eros*" (éh-raws) (romantic love) or "*philia*" (fee-LEE-ah) (brotherly love), *agapé*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

(ah-GAH-pay) is not based on emotions or feelings but is an act of the will, characterized by a commitment to the well-being of others. (END QUOTE)

What is unique about the Greek word *agapé* is, that it is a decision of both the mind and will, and is not merely a fleeting human emotion. Whereas divine love can be consistent and relied upon, human love, which is directly connected to human affinity, has no such spiritual foundation. To possess the love of God, and to be forbearing towards others because of love for them, is that which makes the Christian unique and distinct from the unsaved. *Agapé* is also that form of divine love that is produced, prompted, and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Just as love is a fruit of the Spirit,³³ so is forbearing one another in love, a byproduct of God's spiritual nature working Itself out through us.³⁴

Ephesians 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The Greek word for *endeavouring* is #4704 *spoudazó* (spoo-dad'-zo). It is defined by *Strong's Lexicon* as "To be diligent, to make every effort, to hasten, to be eager." The usage of the "verb '*spoudazó*' (spoo-dad'-zo) conveys a sense of earnestness and diligence. It implies making a concerted effort or striving towards

a goal with urgency and commitment. In the New Testament, it often refers to the diligence required in spiritual matters, such as maintaining unity, growing in faith, or fulfilling one's ministry." The culture and historical background of the "term '*spoudazó*' (spoo-dad'-zo) would have been understood as a call to action, urging individuals to pursue their duties with seriousness and dedication." *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word "properly, be swift (go fast, be speedy); (figuratively) to move speedily by showing full diligence (fully applying oneself); acting fervently (speedy commitment) to accomplish all that God assigns through faith..." What is observed by these definitions of *spoudazó*, (spoo-dad'-zo) is that the afore mentioned qualities—*lowliness, meekness, and forbearing one another in love*—are the first steps in the believer *endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. It is also through putting on these qualities of the new man³⁵ which allows believers to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called. To walk worthy of our call to Jesus Christ, and the redemption that He has produced for us,³⁶ is to earnestly strive and eagerly endeavor to keep the *unity of the Spirit*, which Christ has produced in the saved, in the bond of *peace*.

Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Jesus Christ has established peace

33 Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

34 Phil. 2:13 *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

35 Eph. 4:24–32 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. ²⁵Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. ²⁶Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: ²⁷Neither give place to the devil. ²⁸Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. ²⁹Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. ³⁰And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: ³²And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

36 Eph. 1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

not only between God and man³⁷ but also between man and man.³⁸ All who have been given the Spirit,³⁹ have been made to share in the spiritual peace that exists not only between the Father and the Son,⁴⁰ but also between those called to God through the Son.⁴¹ Peace is that which binds things together, even as friction and turmoil separate them. Peace is also associated with the reception and baptism of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus instructed His disciples that they would receive from Him. (John 20:19-22) *Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me,*

even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, John 20:21) *As my (better, the) Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*—Comp. Note on John 17:18,⁴² where the words occur in prayer to the Father. As spoken here to the disciples 'they are the identification of them with Himself in His mediatorial work. He is the great Apostle (Hebrews 3:1⁴³); they are ambassadors for Christ, to whom He commits the ministry of reconciliation (2Corinthians 5:18⁴⁴ et seq.). He stands in the same relation to the Father as that in which they stand to Him. He declares to them, and they in His name are to declare to the world, the fulness of the Father's love, and the peace between man and God, witnessed to in His life and death. He and they stand also in the same relation to the world. At this very moment they are assembled with shut doors, for fear of the Jews, who are triumphing over Him as dead. But to that world, which will

37 Eph. 2:16 *And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*

38 Eph. 2:14 *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

39 Matt. 3:11 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

Acts 1:4-5 *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. ⁵For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

Acts 2:1-4 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 11:15 *And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.*

Acts 19:5-6 *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*

40 Isa. 9:6 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

41 Rom. 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

Eph. 2:14-17 *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; ¹⁵Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; ¹⁶And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: ¹⁷And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*

42 John 17:18 *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

43 Heb. 3:1 *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*

44 II Cor. 5:18 *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;*

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

hate, persecute, and kill them, as it had hated, persecuted, and killed Him, they are sent as He was sent; they are to declare forgiveness, mercy, love, peace, as He had declared them, to every heart that does not harden itself against them; and they are to find in His presence, as He had ever found in the Father's presence, the support which will ever bring peace to their own hearts (John 14:27⁴⁵). (END QUOTE)

Peace is what Jesus preached to those who believe upon the cross;⁴⁶ and those saved by it, should preach and carry this same message of peace, which Christ offers to those willing to forsake their sin, and embrace belief in Himself, Wilhelmus à Brakel, a leader in the Dutch reformation movement of the 17th century, also once stated that “Nothing will give you peace as long as your Maker is displeased with you.”⁴⁷ Basically, to truly walk with God, and maintain spiritual relationship with Him, how we conduct ourselves with our neighbor, is equally as important, as how we cherish, love, and adore our God.

Ephesians 2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

The message that Christ preached, related to gaining eternal peace with God, has as its foundation in His own redemptive work. Revealing to us that at the center of all unity between God and man, and man and man, is the Lord of peace. (II Thess. 3:16) *Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.* This verse is directly related to Isaiah 9:6, which foretold of the coming of the Son of God. (Isa. 9:6) *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful,*

Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Ultimately, it is the Lord Jesus, portrayed in Isaiah's prophecy as the *Prince of Peace*, Who alone can impart that heavenly tranquility and serenity, which exists in Himself, and is the very essence of heaven. (John 14:27) *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* If anyone truly desires to possess peace in their soul, then they must embrace, follow, and believe upon, the very One Whom God purposed should introduce peace to the world.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, John 14:27) Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.—...He will leave them as a legacy the gift of “peace.” And this peace is more than a meaningless sound or even than a true wish. He repeats it with the emphatic “My,” and speaks of it as an actual possession which He imparts to them. “Peace on earth” was the angels' message when they announced His birth; “peace to you” was His own greeting when He returned victorious from the grave. (END QUOTE)

The origin of the *peace* which Ephesians speaks of, has its roots in the work of the Savior.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Isa. 53:5) The chastisement of our peace—That is, the chastisement by which our peace is effected or secured was laid upon him; or, he ‘took it upon himself;’ and bore it, in order that we might have peace. ... The work of religion in the soul is often represented as peace;

⁴⁵ John 14:27 *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

⁴⁶ Eph. 2:17 *And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*

⁴⁷ Brakel, Wilhelmus à. *The Christian's Reasonable Service. Volume 2.* Originally published 1700.

and the Redeemer is spoken of as the great agent by whom that is secured. 'For he is our peace' (Ephesians 2:14-15, Ephesians 2:17; compare Acts 10:36; Romans 5:1; Romans 10:15⁴⁸). The phrase 'upon him,' means that the burden by which the peace of people was effected was laid upon him, and that he bore it. (END QUOTE)

It is through Jesus, and the *chastisement* for sin which was laid upon Him, that secures our peace with God. Because sin was punished,⁴⁹ though not Christ's, but our own, and that by death, it is now possible for those estranged from God by sin, to find and experience peace with God. Because the Lord's people's sin was laid upon Jesus, and He successfully bore it, then the peace that exists between the Father and the Son, can now be joyously shared with those who believe upon Him. The ministry of the Son of God was a

weighty one—a heavenly ministry purposed to produce peace between heaven and earth, the defiled and the holy, and the impure and the pure. In order for this to be done, Jesus needed to bear the punishment for human sin. The chastisement and judgment that God purposed for the world, would rest, and be the burden, of the One sent to save It. It was a great spiritual responsibility that Jesus allowed Himself to be burdened with, a heavy weight dependent solely upon Himself, that would determine whether any born of the flesh could be redeemed from the punishment for sin—which is death—through being born of God.⁵⁰ Ultimately Jesus is every believer's peace, and those saved by Him, should endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, which every saved man shares in through spiritual baptism,⁵¹ in the bond of peace.

48 Eph. 2:14-15 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;¹⁵ Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

Eph. 2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Acts 10:36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

Rom. 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Rom. 10:15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

49 1 Pet. 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

1 Cor. 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

Rom. 5:6-8 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. ⁸But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Col. 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

50 Ezek. 18:20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

Rom. 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Jas. 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Heb. 10:1-4 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

²For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. ³But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. ⁴For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

51 1 Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

I Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Tit. 3:4-5 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, ⁵Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

I John 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

I John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

John 1:12-13 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.