

Core Values in the Body of Christ

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“The Spiritual Responsibilities of Life in the Body of Christ” (4:1-6:20)

P//1: Welcome to FBC Covington

P//2: This passage marks a transition from the doctrinal considerations of being *in* Christ of chapters 1-3, to the practical application of living out that reality demonstrating it is true in our own lives. The Apostle Paul turns his focus to the practical aspects of living like a believer as a part of the body of Christ in a hostile world. For the Ephesians, and for those living in America today, there are challenges to live a consistent godly life from within the church and outside in the community. A simple cursory view of what people post on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter will reveal the chasm in their lives between understanding, and practice according to the biblical standards for a true believer.

To address this, Paul lays a foundation of core values that are the bedrock for Christian understanding that becomes the basis for our decision making. Without a heartfelt understanding, of these core values, these foundational truths, people will conduct themselves like hellions or hypocrites while at the same time claiming to be sincere followers of Jesus Christ. The sad thing is, the world around them often can tell the difference before these same people who claim to be the children of God can.

Text: Ephesians 4:1-6

Aim: That you would know and understand certain foundational truths as a part of the body of Christ.

Why you need to know this: Without this knowledge and commitment, you will not have a solid basis for living up to your spiritual responsibilities.

Core Values in the Body of Christ

I. Live Worthy of Your *Position* – vs. 1-3

In the overall way in which you conduct your life, is it worth the price that was paid for your salvation and your placement into the body of Christ? A worthy walk, a proper way to live is clearly defined. Paul appeals to the Ephesians to abide by what he writes. He writes to them as a man being held prisoner for his consistent commitment to the faith they too share. If they are to live worthy of their position, he challenges them with...

A. Consider your *calling* – v. 1

1. Remember *when* you were called.

To consider a calling you must first be able to discuss your conversion experience. Your “calling,” is when you got saved. Some people have the date and time when this happened, others like myself remember it was during VBS in between 1st and 2nd grade.

There is also the first act of obedience which is believer’s baptism by immersion.
Acts 2:41.

Sprinkling is not baptism, and no baby can be baptized. Pouring is not baptism because it does not picture a death, burial and resurrection – which is the visual idea for a public baptism. The word itself means to fully plunge beneath, and in this case, that would be water.

Can you at this moment recall this information when you first believed and confessed this belief? It does not happen outside a conscious decision on your part. Do you remember when this occurred? Your eternal destiny is on the line.

Do you remember when you were baptized, *after* you believed, as a public declaration of your salvation, just as the Bible has commanded that you must do so? To claim to be a Christian and refuse to be baptized for any reason, is to live in defiance of what the Bible clearly commands. Sadly, many people are unaware of this fact and just need to be encouraged to do so.

*Living worthy of your position, *IN Christ*, requires that you remember when you were called. It is a celebration of the goodness and mercy of God.

2. Remember *who* called you.

God calls out to us through creation, our conscience, and most importantly through the gospel message shared or proclaimed.

Romans 1:18-20, 2:14-16, 10:9-15.

-General Revelation – Creation and conscience

-Special Revelation – The Gospel message shared

The Master of heaven and earth knows your name and has offered you forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with Him, and eternal life for your future. You must acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and ask Him to save you by declaring your faith - your belief that the gospel message is true. When you respond in submission to His call, He transforms you and adds you to a body of believers, a church body to belong to. As proof before God and mankind, you submit to public baptism - because Jesus Christ commanded it.

3. Live in *honor* of it.

If you have answered yes to these 2 things, then the Apostle Paul is urging you just like he did the Ephesians, to live in such a way that people recognize the difference between you and the pagans.

Generally speaking, is there a difference in the way you think, the way you talk, the way you act, and your priorities from those who do not believe and are not part of any church? For example:

-Are you a conspiracy theorist?

-Are you worried about the economy?

-Are you a religious news junky?

-Are your moods affected by the latest prognostication of the current cult of personality?

-Is Jesus Christ the Lord inside the church building but of no effect once you walk into the parking lot?

If our lives are hidden with Christ in God, shouldn't we live like it as proof to a hopeless world that regardless of what is going on? God has a plan that He will execute through His people, through the church and put the world above and below on notice!

Colossians 3:1-10.

-Live worthy of your position in Christ. Remember when and Who called you.

B. Consider your conduct – vs. 2-3

This is getting past the general overall view of the way we live and our outlook on life and gets into the granular, and provides the details of Christian conduct.

1. Live with humility.

-Lowliness or in a humble position.

The Greeks hated anything associated with or that hinted at servility. Americans are not fond of this trait of Christian conduct either. Paul says, "all humility," this is complete and not a small dose. It conveys that this is how we are to approach one another.

Some behavioral blends readily accept this and don't struggle with remembering this. Others have to make a conscious decision that this is something important in our interactions especially in a church gathering.

(High "D" ↔ High "S" – DISC profile)

2. Live with gentleness.

-Meekness or mildness.

Gentleness/Meekness is the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance. Gentleness or meekness is power under control.

It is the quality of awareness that you might be able to win every physical confrontation, or intellectual confrontation you may encounter. Yet you intentionally defer for the sake of others. It is having the discernment to know when to use the physical or intellectual in the presence of others in a situationally appropriate manner.

Living with humility and gentleness for men, is not to accept the cultural accusation of "toxic masculinity," and becoming passivistic. It is to redefine what strength looks like when brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. This is not avoiding conflict, confrontation or interventions. It is the manner in which they should be conducted as a Christian.

3. Live with patience.

-Long-suffering, steadfast.

This third trait reflects the ability to bear up or persevere under difficult circumstances. It reminds us of our God who is “rich in love and slow to anger.” (10,000 Reasons)

In the context of a gathered church, it is a virtue that must be on display especially if we want to move forward in harmony in anything we attempt to do for Christ’s kingdom.

4. Live with forbearance in love.

-Prolonged patience with love.

This is the extension of what this patience looks like and takes it to another level of active application. It is discovering someone else’s fault and then not rubbing it in their face. It demonstrates that your long-suffering for one another finds its basis in love. It is to actively practice with others what God does for us each day.

5. Live with unity of the Spirit with the peace that binds us.

-Harmony, union.

-To make secure by tying.

Paul wraps up this section of considering your calling and considering your conduct with a statement that brings them all together. To be diligent, is to urgently attend to this. It is to make a genuine effort; it is to keep on maintaining it. It is to be eager and zealous in attending to this.

The Spirit brings unity, therefore one’s life must be surrendered to the Spirit of God in order for this to be possible. Ephesians 2:22 – states God’s desire for us to come together in this manner. Either the Spirit is dwelling in us unabated, or we are quenching His efforts to complete this work in us as individuals. Which, consequently, affects the overall unity in the church body.

The church is to be “the beachhead,” for what peace looks like and how it operates in a world of violence and social discord. We are either bound by the peace of God that surpasses all understanding or we are bound by something else - The spirit of the world and its social expectations.

***This list of values or character traits are not theoretical but are intended to be practiced on a regular basis in our lives. It is the particular things that reflect the general reality of what it means to live like a Christian.**

Living worthy of your position in Christ, assumes that you are indeed His child. If we can say we are, then we can ponder when we were called and Who called us, as well as considering our conduct to live in a manner worthy of the One who called us. These are part of our core values. The

church dwells together in unity before a world that doesn't have a clue what that actually looks like, nor do they have the wherewithal to do so. That is why God has the church as His agent to the world to display the hope that is in us and verify its authenticity as legitimate.

Core Values in the Body of Christ

II. Acknowledge Our Confession – vs. 4-6

Seven exclusive requirements of the church are the primary focus here. It also at the same time reflects the Trinity as well. The following is similar to a creed but is more important to understand its contents. The idea of unity is emphasized by the use of the word, “one.” Each occurrence represents the non-negotiables of our Christian faith.

A. The Universal Church – v. 4

1. One Body

Paul has been addressing the local church and each expression of it, according to the community in which they lived in and around Ephesus. This expression of “one body,” points back to Ephesians 2:16. It is an all-inclusive expression that includes every Christian church regardless of location, regardless of time in history. The Universal Church refers to the time when all of the followers of Jesus Christ will be joined together in heaven as the Bride of Christ. It is an unrealized current reality.

It is also a reminder that all believers everywhere are not only an integral part of their local gathering of believers, but they are also part of believers anywhere in the world.

2. One Spirit

The only Spirit that is related to the body of Christ is the Holy Spirit of God, the Third Person of the Trinity. All believers share in possession of the Holy Spirit. The Ephesians were used to seeking help from multiple spirits, all of which were evil and could never deliver what was truly needful in life. Now they had received the Holy Spirit of God as the down payment for their future and had no need of any other “spirits” assistance. Ephesians 1:13-14.

3. One Hope

Only believers have hope, a hope that nothing can take away. Ephesians 1:18.

As members of His body, we have an eternal hope that we share in common with one another. This is why we can gather in local bodies everywhere and remain focused on the same future. The church is one body – the body of Christ of which He is the Head - who shares in the same Spirit and has the identical hope.

The unbeliever does not have access to such, and there is no benefit or blessing from this for them. This is the first confession we must acknowledge that we share with one another; the Universal Church to which we are a part.

*This Universal Church is in prospect, but the day will come when all its members will be added in heaven. We are of one body, with one Spirit and one hope.

B. The Supremacy of Jesus Christ – v. 5

4. One Lord

This is none other than Jesus Christ. Romans 10:9 is the common confession that we hold. There is only One Lord in the universe.

Philippians 2:9-11; Col 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-4.

5. One Faith

This is not one of many, this is the entire body of belief that Christians hold dear. Jude 3.

The centrality of this faith is focused on Jesus Christ, for without Him there would be no church and no faith.

6. One Baptism

This refers to the command to baptize.

Matthew 28:18-20.

It is believer's baptism, and only a confessing believer who understands this can be legitimately baptized.

Acts 2:38-41.

It is why a person can only become part of the Universal Church, and the local church if they are baptized.

Note: The thief on the cross, "foxhole conversions" and other extended circumstances would be the exception for obvious reasons. The point is, if they could have, they would have, and we have no doubts in this matter in light of God's grace.

However, a person who refuses baptism after their profession of faith defies the command to join in the death of self and identify with Christ. This is the second confession we must acknowledge that we share with one another.

The Supremacy of Jesus Christ in everything.

Revelation 20:11-15.

C. The Transcendence and Immanence of God the Father – v. 6

This is the 7th value of all the exclusive requirements to confess as members of the church. Notice the “4 all’s” that emphasize the descriptions of our God. It reflects the oneness of the Triune God

7. One God and Father of all,

-Who is above all,

-and Through all,

-and In all.

These terms reflect what we mean when we say that God is Transcendent. He is unequaled – there is no comparison. The God of the Christian faith, has no equal and nothing can even approach Him to challenge that – it would be absurd at face value. Isaiah 40:18-31.

He is immanent – there is nothing that escapes His presence and nothing that has the possibility to do so. Furthermore – there is no way to hide from His presence. This is the third confession we must acknowledge that we share with one another.

The unmatched and inescapable presence of God.

“Core Values in the Body of Christ”

*Live worthy of your calling, remember when you were called and Who it was who called and saved you. Make sure your life reflects or honors that calling by living with humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance in love, and the unity brought by the Spirit of God bound by peace.

Acknowledge these fundamental truths concerning our faith and confess them as your truth. One body, Spirit, and hope, one Lord, faith and baptism, One transcendent, immanent Father, Sovereign over the universe.

No one can believe or live these things for you. You must acknowledge and accept them on your own.

So what? Is the life you live and the way you treat others worthy of the price that Christ paid for your sins on the cross of Calvary?

Now what? Confess your failures and determine today that you will live worthy as described in this text. Embrace this 7-fold confession and let it be the foundation upon which you conduct yourself in the world around you.

Sources consulted for this message.

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