

EPHESIANS

Chapter 4

Unity in the Body of Christ

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call — 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.” (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? 10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Chapters 4 and 5 are a portion of Ephesians that is not simply about our conduct (or, the Law). It contains some very profound Gospel teaching (e.g., 4:4-12, 5:5-25-30). However, there is a greater focus on the consequences of Law and Gospel for our faith life. (TLSB)

4:1–16 So far Paul has taught that God brought Jew and Gentile into a new relationship to each other in the church and that he called the church to display his wisdom. Paul now shows how God made provision for those in the church to live and work together in unity and to grow together into maturity. (CSB)

4:1 *prisoner*. Paul was in prison because he had dared to speak of Christ and lived his life as a witness to Christ. This shows that he was willing to pay the price of being called by Christ. – This was a formula for vital communion with Christ, indicating that his captivity was the captivity of a part or member of the Lord. An exhortation from such a prisoner ought to fall with double weight. (PC)

His entire imprisonment was due to his connection with the Lord. In 3:1 the thought is that of special office, here the thought is that of faithfulness to the Lord. As one who is himself faithful he admonishes others. (Lenski)

Paul reminds us that he is God's ambassador, commissioned to preach the gospel. He has carried out this task to the extent of being arrested and imprisoned for his efforts. But even being a prisoner doesn't stop him from helping his beloved Ephesians. As their spiritual father and mentor, Paul wants to see a balance between their Christian calling and their daily conduct. (PBC)

Urge. BDAG identifies five distinct meanings of παρακαλέω in the NT: (1) “call to one’s side” (literal); (2) “urge, exhort”; (3) “request, implore, entreat”; (4) “comfort, encourage”; (5) “invite in, conciliate, be friendly to.” (CC)

to walk in a manner worthy – The word for live is - pereepateho which means to be totally dedicated with living in a certain manner. Today we might say “walk the talk.” The word for worthy is acheeoce which means that which is appropriate for a particular position or calling. They were not to be ashamed of their faith and thus try to hide it. (CSB)

Because the Ephesians have this new life in Christ, Paul can expect a proper response from them. (PBC)

calling. The Christian faith itself, as brought by the Word of God (1:18; Rom. 8:30). (TLSB)

Christians are called by God to have part in fulfilling God’s vast design for the universe. In their unity is prefigured the unity of all things that God is bringing about in Christ.

kaleho. To be bidden in this case by God. The word “received” says very plainly that this was something done by someone other than the Ephesians themselves. This was done through the Gospel and didn’t include any of the Jewish rituals or other contingencies.

4:2 Qualities of Christ Himself (Mt. 11:29; 21:5; 2 Cor. 10:1; Php. 2:5-8), which He works in the believer for the sake of the Church’s unity (Eph. 4:13-16; Col. 3:12-15). (TLSB)

Paul lists four qualities, divided into two pairs. (PBC)

humility – The humble are those who know the privilege of their calling. They set their own sins against the perfection of Christ. They know that they are creatures of God the Creator. They know that they are beggars before God, humbled by his generous grace. The humble are able to be servants. With an attitude of servanthood comes unity. (LL)

It may be brought about by our remembering what we were when God’s grace took hold of us. (PC)

tapinofrosoonay – It literally means “lowliness in mind.” It would be the opposite of being proud and arrogant. Remembering who or what we were in the past can help one to be humble.

Luke 14:10 “But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests”

Romans 12:3 “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”

Philippians 2:3-5, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.” Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus”

The realization of their own unworthiness before God would humble them, and in that spirit of humility they are to be gentle toward others. These two are internal qualities, characteristics that the Ephesians bring to the scene. (PBC)

gentleness – The original Greek (prautes) carries the idea of being angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time. It is used as well of kings who despite their strength, show great mercy to their subjects. Sometimes translated meekness, the word actually belongs to those of strength, who intentionally refuse to use their strength to wrong others. (LL)

The word describes one who so depends on God that he refuses to be deflected from the goal by slights, injuries, or insults. It is found in men of great strength and character.

This is the natural expression of a lowly state of mind, opposed to boisterous self-assertion and rude striving with others, it genders a subdued manner and a peace-loving spirit that studies to give the soft answer that turns away wrath. (PC)

It is well illustrated by Luke 6:29 “If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.

The next two qualities involve irritations and aggravations from others. The key to having patience and putting up with others is love. The Greek word used here is that one-way love that doesn’t look for anything in return. It simply reflects to others the undeserved one-way love we have received from a gracious God.(PBC)

patience – The original Greek (makrothumia) means literally to be long-tempered. Patient people are not short with others, especially with those who let us down, insult us, or even injure us. (LL)

This would be better translated “longsuffering.” The idea is the willingness to not give up hope for improvement in a troubled relationship. A long holding out of the mind before it gives room to action or passion. (Lenski)

1 Corinthians 13:7 “It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

Colossians 3:13 “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

1 Peter 4:8 “love covers over a multitude of sins.”

4:3 eager to maintain – This means a burning desire or blazing zeal for the cause of unity. (CSB)

This is not a fifth admonition but a modification of the previous. Peace should be the bond that unites the members of the Church. When Christians exercise towards one another humility, a good cheerful temper, longsuffering, patience, then will they remain at peace among one another. (Stoekhardt)

maintain the unity. Which God produced through the reconciling death of Christ (see 2:14–22). It is the heavy responsibility of Christians to keep that unity from being disturbed. (CSB)

We are truly one because God’s Spirit made the Church one in Christ (1:10; 4:4). True unity is neither created nor destroyed by our actions. Rather, Paul exhorts us to treasure this unity and act accordingly. (TLSB)

Nothing less than “the unity of the Spirit” is at stake. When Paul speaks of the “unity of the Spirit,” we need to be very clear that this is a unity the Holy Spirit has accomplished. It is the unity that exists in the holy Christian Church, into which the Holy Spirit has brought all believers in Christ. It is not something dependent on us or something we create by our right actions and conduct. It does not come about because we “make every effort to keep the unity.” Rather, Paul cautions us not to spoil the Holy Spirit’s good work by our own actions and lose the unity He establishes by disrupting the peace with petty quarrels and inconsiderate actions. (PBC)

Philippians 1:27 “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.”

bond of peace – Tying Christians to one another and to God (2:15). (TLSB)

Peace and bond are the same thing. If the saints do what they are told in verse 2, peace will result. And that is the only quality which will preserve God-given peace in the Church. Kretzmann says: “As soon as these virtues are disregarded, the result is dissension and disagreement, division and sectarianism. (Buls)

4:4-6 In these three verses there are seven “ones” which define the unity of the church. Seven is the number of completion or perfection. We might translate: “The Church is absolutely and perfectly one. Furthermore, the first three elements of oneness look to the present, the second three look back to the historical origin of the Church, and the last one looks to the ultimate origin of the Church (CSB)

Poetic. Possibly a quotation of an early Christian hymn or creed (cf. 1 Cor. 12:3-6). The Church’s unity is rooted in the Trinity: one Spirit (v. 4), one Lord (v. 5), one Father (v. 6). There are seven “ones” God’s number for completeness. (TLSB)

All three persons of the Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – were involved in effecting this unity. Paul shows this is a table beginning at verse 4. He constructs three sets of three items each – one set for each person of the Trinity. Interestingly enough, he reverses the order from what we’re used to seeing. He places the persons into this sequence: Spirit, Son, Father. (PBC)

4:4 In the first set Paul highlights the Spirit’s contributions to the church’s unity by assembling three items, all introduced by the numerical adjective “one.” He says, “There is one body and one spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called.” We have noted that the Holy Spirit reminds the Ephesians that they were “called.” They were called into one body, the holy Christian church. In that body all people are of the same heart and mind – of “one spirit,” if you will – because they all have one and the same hope, namely, eternity with God in heaven. (PBC)

one body – Paul sees one church – the body of Christ. As he writes 1 Corinthians 12, every part of the body is essential for it to work effectively. Clearly Paul could not envision a church fragmented into denominations. Yet even with many denominations the church of believers in Christ is one body; that is, we all have the same Head, Jesus Christ, and we have all been called out to be the church, we function for the same reason, and we all really do need one another. (LL)

one spirit – The same indivisible Spirit unites us all. (TLSB)

The oneness of the Church, rooted in Christ Himself, into whom we are baptized (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:13). (TLSB)

God’s Spirit is, as it were, the soul of this body, the Christian Church. They are all moved and ruled by the self-same Spirit, the Holy Spirit. And in such a Spirit they all strive after the same goal. (Stoekhardt)

one hope. Has different aspects (e.g., 1:5, 10; 2:7), but it is still one hope, tied to the glorious future of Christ, in which all believers share. (CSB)

My hope is everlasting life, and objective hope. Lenski comments here: “One hope is the one item that contains a personal reference to the Ephesians. In a marked way it reverts to verse 1: ‘the calling with which you were called.’” (Buls)

4:5 Regarding the second member of the Trinity, Paul sets up this triad: “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” In Luther’s explanation of the Second Article of the Apostle’s Creed we confess that Jesus purchased and won us, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood. And he did this so that we might be His own. He owns us. He is our Lord, and the only Lord we want or need. Furthermore, all believers by definition believe in Him. He is the object of their faith. “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). And the way to come to faith in Christ is through the means of grace, through Word and Sacraments. In stressing the unity that exists among members of the church Paul calls special attention to baptism, very likely because it is the universal sacrament, intended for all age groups. (PBC)

Franzmann says of these three that they look to the historical origin of the church. (Buls)

one Lord – All in the church serve one Lord. Kurios, the Greek word translated “Lord,” was used of the master of slaves and of the Caesar of Rome. That makes all in the church servants. It makes Christ master and king. We are united under one great leader, Christ. (LL)

A Confession of Jesus as Yahweh, true God (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3). (TLSB)

one faith – The substance of saving faith is the same for every Christian – faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. (LL)

Not the act of believing, but what is believed: true doctrine, as confessed through the Apostle’s Creed at Baptism (cf. Col. 2:6-7). (TLSB)

one baptism.† Not the baptism of the Spirit (see Ac 1:4–5), which was inward and therefore invisible, but the sacrament of baptism (see note on Ro 6:3–4). Since Paul apparently has in mind

that which identifies all believers as belonging together, he would naturally refer to that sacrament in which every new convert participated publicly. (CSB)

Although Baptism as new birth cannot be repeated (nor may “Spirit Baptism” be separated from “water Baptism,” that is not the emphasis here. Rather, Paul teaches that there is only one Baptism, into which Christ Himself and all Christians are baptized and thereby joined. “For the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree about the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies instituted by men, should be the same everywhere” (AC VII 2-3). (TLSB)

4:6 In his third triad Paul varies the form, giving three prepositions to highlight our gracious God’s activity. There is only one God, our heavenly Father. With His almighty power our heavenly Father looks after all and watches over them. With His matchless grace He works through His believers to accomplish His saving purpose. In fact, so close is the relationship between God and His believers that Paul can even say God dwells in His believers. As bold and daring as that sounds, Paul really is saying nothing other than what Jesus Himself promised His followers at the Last Supper: If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (John 14:23). (PBC)

Paul’s point in this whole section is that a marvelous unity binds the Ephesians to one another (in their local congregation, or “visible church”) and binds them also to every other believer in the worldwide holy Christian church (the “invisible church”). Therefore, in their daily sanctified lives the Ephesians shouldn’t do anything to spoil this great blessing. Rather, they should “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (PBC)

Despite this unity that binds together all believers in Christ, believers always retain their own individuality. They are not reduced to a number in God’s book. He knows each believer by name. He treats each one with the utmost love and care. (PBC)

one God and Father– The church has one ultimate authority, one provider, and one whose love for us unites us as a family. The use of the title Father presents the unity of the church as that of a family with a good, strong, and gracious Father. (LL)

God claims Fatherhood over all because He created all (3:14-15; Rom. 10:12; 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6). But only through Christ can we acknowledge Him as Father (Gal. 4:6). (TLSB)

all – The word “all” is used four times in this verse. All are masculine. The first is genitive in relation. The last three are governed by prepositions. We shall meet the word “all” again in verse 13. These several references to “all” are individualization of the one body. All make up one body. Only the Christian religion calls its God “Father.” (Buls)

4:7 to each – In this verse we have “one” whereas in the preceding verses the text spoke of “all.” Paul is stressing “to each one of us.” (Buls)

was given – We did not work for it. Here Karis does not mean salvation, forgiveness of sins, everlasting life. It simply means “gift” something with which to serve the church. In this phrase lies the diversity of gifts given to Christians, “in keeping with measure of the gift of Christ.” Beck: “But each of us has been given the gift measured out by Christ who gave it.” There is no such thing as a Christian who has not received some gift with which to serve the church. (Buls)

All Christians are one and of one mind in the Spirit and in faith. In connection with is unity, however, they have received various gifts, which each one should exercise to the welfare of his brother. (Stoeckhardt)

grace. The stress in the Greek is on “each one of us.” Again we are reminded that the gifts themselves are gifts of grace. (CSB)

These are gifts which each should exercise to the welfare of his brothers/sisters. (Stoeckhardt)

according to the measure of Christ’s – Not a little to one and more to another, but the fullness of Christ’s giving to all Christians. Unity, not diversity is the point. (TLSB)

Paul wants to call attention to the Source of those gifts. The Giver is none other than the risen, triumphant, ascended Lord Christ. Paul substantiates that from Scripture in verse 8. (PBC)

4:8 Ps 68:18 speaks of God’s triumphant ascension to his throne in the temple at Jerusalem (symbol of his heavenly throne). Paul applies this to Christ’s triumphal ascension into heaven. Where the psalm states further that God “received gifts from men,” Paul apparently takes his cue from certain rabbinic interpretations current in his day that read the Hebrew preposition for “from” in the sense of “to” (a meaning it often has) and the verb for “received” in the sense of “take and give” (a meaning it sometimes has—but with a different preposition; see Ge 15:9; 18:5; 27:13; Ex 25:2; 1Ki 17:10–11). (CSB)

The temple dedication enthroned God in the Jerusalem sanctuary (1 Kings 8:1-11; cf. 2 Sam. 6:16-19). He received gifts (offerings) as a victorious king who had led His people through the exodus. Christ, having freed those captive to sin, ascended to heaven to give gifts to people (Luke 24:49-51; Acts 1:8-9; 2:33). (TLSB)

ascended on high – That according to Paul’s opinion is the ascension of Christ into heaven is meant by this ascension on high is generally acknowledged. They give the apostle the right to such an interpretation because of the typical character of the Psalm. But the Hebrew text itself permits no other interpretation. The Messiah often appears in prophecy as Lord Jehovah, who is presented as a Champion, who fights and gains the victory for His people. And now in adoration the Psalmist calls to the Victor “Thou has ascended on high.” Upon victory follows triumph. “On high” in the OT never designates Mt. Zion but always heaven. (Stoeckhardt)

captives. Probably Paul applies this to the spiritual enemies Christ defeated at the cross. (CSB)

Satan and hellish hosts, and he sees in Christ’s ascension a triumph over the forces and powers of darkness. (Stoeckhardt)

gave gifts to men – Marvel of marvels, he deigns to give us mortal a part in his grand plan to have the church spread out into all the world. (PBC)

The ascended Lord, the exalted Messiah, has taken gifts among men, that is out of the human race, men who are now His own, who are with whole heart devoted and subject to Him. This interpretation best suits the final words of the verse from the Psalm: that also the rebellious live with the Lord Christ. Also the rebellious, also men who before others opposed the Lord, come hither and live under Christ in His kingdom and serve Him in righteousness and innocence. To

such rebellious men, whom the Lord draws unto Himself, belong such Gentiles as the Ethiopians and the Egyptians, whose conversion is pictured at the end of the Psalm. (Stoeckhardt)

4:9 Interpreting Ps. 68:18, Paul sees Christ as its ultimate meaning. The OT is interpreted in view of Christ's saving work. Christ's descent is His incarnation (John 3:13). (TLSB)

ascended ... descended.† Although Paul quoted from the psalm to introduce the idea of the "gifts to men," he takes the opportunity to remind his readers of Christ's coming to earth (his incarnation) and his subsequent resurrection and ascension. Some interpret this passage as referring to Christ's descent into hell, but this is probably incorrect. (CSB)

Paul's emphasis in this section is on Christ's exalted return to heaven. Hence it seems somewhat more likely that the apostle's reference is to Christ's state of humiliation. (PBC)

4:10 *might fill all things* – As the exalted, other-worldly one, who sits at God's right hand. Christ now fills all things by his powerful, effective omnipresence. (Stoeckhardt)

4:11 *who gave.* The quotation from Ps 68 has its ultimate meaning when applied to Christ as the ascended Lord, who himself has given gifts. (CSB)

The Office of the Ministry and the men who hold it are Christ's gifts to the Church. The Gospels connect it institution with the period between Christ's resurrection and ascension. There is one office, but a diversity of callings, within it (cf. Rom. 12:6-8), and some men held more than one role (cf. 1Tim. 2:7; 4:13; 5:17). The first two callings listed here (and perhaps the third) belong only to the first generation of the Church, though their message is preserved in Holy Scripture. (TLSB)

It would be an engaging process to try to find names of people who might fit the categories Paul lists, but his intent seems rather to list offices or position created for the church. (PBC)

Franzmann says at this point: "A comparison with 1 Cor. 12:26-28 shows that the list is not intended to be exhaustive...Pastors and teachers attend to the day-by-day nurture and edification of the churches established by the labors of apostle and evangelist." (Buls)

These are gifts which each should exercise to the welfare of his brothers/sisters. (Stoeckhardt)

apostles. Mentioned here because of their role in establishing the church (see 2:20). For qualifications of the initial group of apostles see Ac 1:21-22. In a broader sense, Paul was also an apostle (see 1:1). (CSB)

The original group who founded the Church.

apostolos – Means to be a "sent one." Someone who is delegated to be an ambassador (special messenger) of the Gospel. Acts 1:21-22 defines an apostle as someone who: (1) was with Jesus the whole time and (2) witnessed his resurrection. In a broader sense Paul was also an apostle (Ephesians 1:1).

prophets. People to whom God made known a message for his people that was appropriate to their particular need or situation. (CSB)

Probably not of the OT, but those in the apostolic age to whom special revelation was given (Acts 11:27-28; 1 Cor. 14:3-6, 22-32). (TLSB)

Men of the NT who spoke the Word authoritatively to their contemporaries.

profaytace – To be a foreteller or an inspired teacher. This is a fulfillment of Joel 2:28. 1 Corinthians 14:1-5 describes the prophet as someone who speaks to others for their “strengthening, encouragement and comfort” and therefore “edifies the church.”

Prophets and evangelists were special gifts of the primitive Church. The prophets, and these are the NT prophets, for special purposes received special revelation, which they then expounded to the Christian assemblies in inspired speech. The evangelists, to whom, for example, Philip belonged, (Acts 21:3) were missionaries of the Gospel; they carried the apostolic Word to those regions where apostles themselves had not gone. The office of the present-day missionaries corresponds somewhat to their calling. (Stoeckhardt)

evangelists. See Ac 21:8; 1Co 1:17. While the other gifted people helped the church grow through edification, the evangelists helped the church grow by augmentation. Since the objective mentioned in v. 12 is “to prepare God’s people for works of service,” we may assume that evangelists, among their various ministries, helped other Christians in their testimony. (CSB)

Literally, “Gospelers.” Either missionaries or those who compiled the four gospels (Luke 1:1-4). (TLSB)

Probably missionaries who reached out to the non-Christian with the Gospel.

yooanghelistace – A preacher of the Gospel. They took the Gospel message which they had received from the Apostles and carried it to those regions where the Apostles had not gone. Philip was an Evangelist.

Shepherds and teachers.† Because of the Greek grammatical construction (one article with two nouns; also, the word “some” introduces both words together), it is clear that these two nouns describe one office. Those who have pastoral care for God’s people (the image is that of shepherding) will naturally provide “food” from the Scriptures (teaching). They will be especially gifted as teachers (cf. 1Ti 3:2). – Pastor comes from *poymane* which means to shepherd or care for people. Teacher comes from *didaskalos* which means a master teacher (instructor) like one possessing a doctor degree. The Greek text indicates that these words describe a single occupation of ministry of the Word. (CSB)

With pastors and teachers Paul described the regular ministry of the Word, which at all times in the history of the Church is and has remained the same, public ministry. The word, teachers, points mainly to the ministry of teaching, pastors or shepherds to pastoral care, applying the Word to the individual members of the congregation. (Stoeckhardt)

Those caring for Christ’s flock (John 10:11-16; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4). (TLSB)

Teachers – Either another word for shepherd (1 Tim.3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24). Or a distinct calling as theological teacher (Acts 13:1; 2 Tim. 1:11; James 3:1). Augustine: “He added teachers (to the

list) that pastors might understand that teaching – doctrina – belong t their office”(Hus, The Church, p. 158) (TLSB)

4:12 *to equip the saints for the work of ministry.* Those mentioned in v. 11 were not to do all the work for the people, but were to train the people to do the work themselves. (CSB)

Like outfitting a soldier for battle (6:10–17). Some editions and translations include a comma after this phrase to distinguish it from the following (cf KJV). *the work of [the] ministry.* The commissioned task of proclaiming the Word (3:7–8; Ac 6:4; Rm 11:13), as carried out by the apostles and so on (4:11). (TLSB)

Beck translates: “in order to get His holy people ready to serve as workers and build up the body of Christ.” (Buls)

No member is excluded from the edifying of the church. (Buls)

The preaching of the divine Word is the only means through which the Church of Christ is built. (Stoekhardt)

katartismos – To complete thoroughly (perfectly). Also means to restore, adjust or repair like repairing a broken bone. In this case it means a through training program to equip people. – Works comes from ergon which means an act of labor. Service comes from deakonee which means giving attendance or aid which provides relief. The service could especially be in the area of teaching.

For building up the body of Christ. See v. 16. Spiritual gifts are for the body, the church, and are not to be exercised individualistically. “Built up” reflects the imagery of 2:19–22. Both concepts—body and building—occurring together emphasize the key idea of growth. – Good body building requires that we eat right, exercise and get proper rest. (CSB)

The purpose of this work is for the perfecting, for consummation of the saints. (Stoekhardt)

oikodomay – The building up of structure. In this case it is the Body of Christ (Church).

4:13 *until.* Expresses not merely duration but also purpose. (CSB)

Paul distinguishes the following stages in the Christian’s course on earth. After their conversion many Christians still resemble immature children. They are still rather unintelligent and inexperienced in spiritual matters. Then with God’s help they attain to a certain manly maturity and constancy, so that they can resist temptations which press upon them from all sides. Notwithstanding, perfect manhood is the final end and goal of development. Therefore, the exalted Christ has given to His Church apostles, prophets, etc., in general teachers for the purpose of perfecting the saints, so that the ultimate goal will be reached, the end. (Stoekhardt)

unity. Carries forward the ideal of vv. 1–6. (CSB)

The oneness is the one that unites us all. It is the oneness belonging to the faith and to the knowledge of God. (Lenski)

Paul appealed to the Office of the Ministry because the ministers' faithful teaching promotes the Church's unity in the true doctrine (Titus 1:9; 2:1). (TLSB)

of the faith. Here "faith" refers to the Christians' common conviction about Christ and the doctrines concerning him, as the following words make clear (cf. also "the apostles' teaching" in Ac 2:42). (CSB)

knowledge of the Son of God. Unity is not just a matter of a loving attitude or religious feeling, but of truth and a common understanding about God's Son. (CSB)

Not mere intellectual knowledge but true heart knowledge. (Lenski)

measure of the stature...fullness of Christ. † Not only the maturity of doctrinal conviction just mentioned, nor a personal maturity that includes the ability to relate well to other people (cf. vv. 2–3), but also the maturity of the perfectly balanced character of Christ. (CSB)

Sound teaching leads to maturity (Col. 1:28). The only way to know God is through Christ (Mt. 11:27; John 1:18). "This healing is only begun in this life. It will not be perfect until the life to come" (FC SD I 14). (TLSB)

As faith and knowledge about Christ grow, believers "become mature." That process, however, is never complete here on earth. It has rightly been said that the Christian life is a constant "becoming." Paul himself hadn't yet attained full spiritual maturity – as he frankly admits to the Philippians (3:12-15). For a candid statement of his frustration with his frequent lapses and lack of maturity, read Romans 7, particularly verses 14 to 25. Spiritual maturity is not fully attainable here, but it is what every Christian strives for personally and seeks to help others reach. (PBC)

Philippians 3:12: "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

1 John 3:2: "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

4:14 children. Contrast the maturity of v. 13. (CSB)

Reborn through Baptism, Christians should not remain like infants, for false doctrine always threatens them (1 Cor. 3:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Peter 2:2). (TLSB)

Beck renders the verse: "We shouldn't be babies any longer, tossed and driven by every windy thing that is taught, by the trickery of men and their clever scheming in error." (Buls)

The whole verse is talking about deliberately deceptive and false teachers who make easy victims of Christians who cannot stand on their own feet so far as doctrine is concerned. (Buls)

These are images of immaturity and instability. The child has a flighty, unsettled temperament.

They are helpless against assaults; they must be protected, carried in the arms of others. (Lenski)

naypees To be simple minded and immature like a baby. They are helpless against assaults.
(QV)

Hebrews 5:12 “In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!”

tossed. The nautical imagery pictures the instability of those who are not strong Christians.
(CSB)

Christians live in an evil spiritual atmosphere (2:2). They are exposed to the influence of the most diverse doctrine and opinions, which all run directly counter to the apostles’ doctrine. Like a ship that sails the high sea without a rudder, the immature are easily carried and tossed to and fro, so that they are inclined now to this, then to that doctrine. (Stoeckhardt)

People who don’t grow spiritually through diligent use of Word and sacrament remain infants, despite their chronological age. With no doctrinal base, they’re helpless because they have nothing firm to hang on to. That’s why Paul can liken them to people in a rowboat out on the high seas during a fierce gale. They’re swept around “by every wind of teaching.” (PBC)

klodonidzomahee – To surge first one way and then another or to constantly fluctuate. These are people who run after every new teaching and do not have a solid biblical base.

Wind of doctrine. Then, as now, there were many distorted teachings and heresies that would easily throw the immature off course. (CSB)

cunning ... craftiness ... deceitful schemes. Sometimes those who try to draw people away from the Christian faith are not innocently misguided but deliberately deceitful and evil (cf. 1Ti 4:1–2). (CSB)

No specific false teaching is mentioned, but Paul is probably referring to pagan Greek philosophies and Judaizing. (TLSB)

The word pictures playing at dice. The idea is of the fickleness of the dice. The Christian who is easily swayed by every new doctrine is falling back into the fickleness of mind which shows he has no firm principles to guide him. The translation for “craftiness and deceitful scheming” would be “ingenuity in inventing error.”

The men who openly propose and advocate false doctrine are unscrupulous wanton and crafty. They make wanton and treacherous sport of those who give them audience. They don’t care a bit about their neighbor’s weal and woe. They trifle with the conscience and spiritual welfare of the Christian. They seek only their one advantage, their own honor. They desire merely to acquire adherents and delude and deceive the simply by pious talk and glowing promises. Thus the insecure are easily captivated by them. (Stoeckhardt)

False opinion itself is dangerous and insidious. In error there is plan, method, calculation, cunning. False doctrine conceals itself behind apparently pointed and stringent conclusions from

the Word of Scriptures but which are all fallacies, and expertly knows how to distort words and concepts. This belongs to the wiles of the devil (6:11), who is the author of all errors and inspires false teachers. The logic and dialectics of the old serpent who seduced Eve run through the systems of the heretics. (Stoekhardt)

Spiritually immature people are like unsophisticated buyers being “worked” by a slick salesperson. Because they don’t know the product, they’re taken in. Without knowing it, immature Christians may not be getting pure doctrine or correct teaching. They may be accepting spiritual snake oil from false teachers. (PBC)

4:15 *speaking the truth in love.*† True doctrine and a loving manner of life are implied. (CSB)

Concern for true doctrine and love for one another are not alternatives, but belong together (1 Peter 1:22). (TLSB)

Far from accepting false doctrine, spiritually mature Christians will rather go on the offensive against it. They are not to lord it over their weaker brothers. Nor are they viciously to turn on false teachers, but rather speak as lovingly and as winsomely as possible in the hope of winning over the proponent of an incorrect view. (PBC)

Jesus spoke the Truth in love, whether it was Law or Gospel. Our objective for ourselves and for others is the salvation of the soul and body. (Buls)

grow up ... head. A slightly different restatement of v. 13, based now on the imagery of Christ as the Head of the body, which is the church. Paul thus speaks primarily of corporate maturity. It is the “body of Christ” that is to be “built up” (v. 12). In v. 13 “we all” are to become “mature” (lit. “a mature man”). (CSB)

“If they understand the substance of it (the Creed), they themselves may afterward strive to gain more, refer to these parts whatever they learn in the Scriptures, and may ever grow and increase in richer understanding” (LC II 70). (TLSB)

Growth in knowledge, in truth not only is intellectual progress but includes, brings with it in every respect growth in Christian character, faith, life and an ever more intimate unity of ourselves with Christ our Lord and Head. (Stoekhardt)

4:16 Further details of the imagery of the body growing under the direction of the Head. The parts of the body help each other in the growing process, picturing the mutual ministries of God’s people spoken of in vv. 11–13. (CSB)

joined and held –The stunning image is of a head that energizes its body, drawing its parts together by fitting the joints and providing tendons, the growth emanating from the head in defiance of any scientific pedantry. It is significant that Paul returns to the role of Christ at the end of this pericope. The ministers (4:11) are simply instruments. It is not they who produce the growth, but the Christ, who gave the ministers (4:7–11) and continues to work through them (1 Cor 3:6–7). (CC)

Paul makes it clear that every Christian has a role in Christ’s church. We need to keep that in mind. We’re often inclined to think that we’re too small or too unimportant to make much of a difference. Paul helps us understand how wrong that kind of thinking is. “Every supporting

ligament” is important to the body. The whole body grows and builds itself up “as each part does its work.” Every Christian is an important part of the church, because growth and improvement in the church come “from him,” that is, from Christ and not from us. Think of what misery and discomfort the whole body feels when one member is sick or fails to function properly. (PBC)

Or, ligament. What binds the members together: the Word, the ministry, the common confession. (TLSB)

We quote from Stoeckhardt’s comments: “The Apostle, both in Colossians and here tells us that the human body when it is in action and moves receives assistance and is closely joined by the intensive straining of the muscles and sinews, so that each part contributes its share to the effort of the whole, because all the members unite in action and cooperate...The same persons of the individual Christians are pictured as members and also as the muscles, ligaments. The proper use of the gifts of the Lord by the individual Christian in the service of others redounds to the good of the entire body, by which the entire body of the Church is strengthened, firmly joined, and made unitedly effective. (Buls)

love. Maturity and unity are impossible without it (cf. vv. 2, 15). (CSB)

4:1–16 Paul highlights the gifts of Christ that make us His Body; as one Body, we are protected from the dangers of our times. Modern individualism and consumerism make it easy to treat the Church as “all about me.” Thanks be to God, the Church is all about Jesus, who provides for our salvation and edification. • Lord, bind us together by the truth proclaimed by Your faithful ministers. Amen. (TLSB)

The New Life

17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ! — 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. 28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

4:17–5:20 Paul has just discussed unity and maturity as twin goals for the church, which God has brought into existence through the death of Christ. He now goes on to show that purity is also essential among those who belong to him. (CSB)

4:17-24 Paul begins the second half of his epistle by exhorting the Ephesians, “live a life worthy of the calling you have received” (4:1). This recalls 2:10, where Paul reminds them that Christians are “created in Christ Jesus to do good works” which God has “prepared in advance for us to do.” This is an arresting thought: even your preparation of this sermon (certainly a good work!) has been “prepared in advance” by God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Ephesus’ location at the juncture of important trade routes increased its exposure to paganism and its temptations. Our text spells out the Christian life, both negatively in terms of what to avoid and fight, and positively in terms of what to strive for and promote. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

4:17 *now this I say and testify in the Lord* – It is important to realize that the holiness Paul is advocating is not done in order to gain favor with God or improve our standing before Him. Our redemption and salvation have been completely taken care of by Christ’s work. (PBC)

walk - peripatein . . . peripatei, “walk.” The final three chapters of Ephesians, including this pericope, are a strong teaching on the Christian life, particularly as it is lived with other Christians in the Church. Paul frequently describes it as a “walk” (also 2:2, 10; 4:1; 5:2, 8, 15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Through their call and conversion, however, they are morally separated from the rest of the Gentiles. Thus their walk should also be different from the walk of their fellow-countrymen. (Stoeckhardt)

futility of their minds. Life without God is intellectually frustrating, useless and meaningless (see, e.g., Ecc 1:2; Ro 1:21). (CSB)

Probably a reference to idolatry. (TLSB)

Rienecker says: “The word contains the idea of aimlessness, the leading to no object or end, vanity.” Kretzmann says: “The inner life of natural man, his thinking, willing, desiring, is vain, useless, purposeless, altogether without reality and worth before God. No unbeliever can have a conception of real moral values, for his mind is centered in nothingness.” (Buls)

Christians cannot spend their time on things that do not matter. They must not waste their minds on thoughts that go nowhere or that spin with every new idea or philosophy. (LL)

4:18-19 Paul lists characteristics of the Old Adam. Unbelievers are described as having given themselves over to their sinful practices. This corresponds to Rom 1:24–28 where God is said to have given them over to their desires. As with Pharaoh (Ex 7–11), when people harden their hearts against God, he may further that hardening. These verses can serve as a vivid portrayal of our own times. Consider the sexual excesses, ethical sins, and greed which are rampant in our society. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Unbelievers (Gentiles) stubbornly resist God's testimony in nature and Word (Rom. 1:19-20; 2:5). (TLSB)

4:18 *darkened in their understanding.* Continues the idea of a futile thought life. (CSB)

There is a progression here. Darkened suggests a blurring of moral distinctions. Repeated doing of what we know is wrong results in ceasing to think of those things as wrong at all.

The problem with the Gentiles was that they had no proper set of values. Their thinking was all messed up. With such a wrong set of values and with such wrong thinking, it was inevitable that they would become guilty of wrong actions. (PBC)

Matthew 6:23 "But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"

John 1:5 "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it."

John 3:19 "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."

alienated from the life of God – Ephesians 2:12 "remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world." (CSB)

Psalm 58:3 "Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies."

Matthew 15:8 "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."

because of the ignorance - agnoyah – Man is by nature totally blind, apathetic and insensible to all that is noble, and divine. – Man is by nature totally blind, apathetic and insensible to all that is noble, sublime and divine. (Stoekhardt)

Romans 10:3 "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

hardness of heart. Moral unresponsiveness. (CSB)

Kretzmann says: "The terms used by Paul presuppose a former, more enlightened condition of man...Not a spark of fear, love, and trust in God is found in natural man. This condition is due to the inherited depravity of mankind. Stoekhardt: "Unregenerate man is by nature entirely blind, stupid, dull, and unreceptive for all that is noble, high, and godly." This does not deny their physical beauty and stamina, their intelligence and their cleverness. But natural man is spiritually blind, dead and an enemy of God. (Buls)

The word translated “hardened” here carries the picture of a rock harder than marble. With such a hardened heart, God cannot get through to us. Hardened hearts make for untouchable consciences, immune to the appeals of God. It’s hard to give life to a stone. The result is a daily life that will not be touched by God’s convicting law or his appeals of love. It is reminiscent of Pharaoh in Exodus 7-11. (LL)

porosis – Other words that apply are callousness, spiritual blindness or stupidity. They hate the very idea of religion. (QV)

4:19 *become callous...given themselves up to sensuality* – οἴτινες ἀπηλγηκότες—This verse continues the description of the Gentiles in their pagan walk (4:17) and is semantically parallel to 4:18. Dead flesh feels nothing. There is no “moral sensitivity” to restrain such people’s headlong plunge into depravity. (CC)

Their hard hearts do not feel the accusations of conscience. “By the fall of our first parents mankind was so corrupted that in divine things having to do with our conversion and the salvation of our souls we are by nature blind” (DC SD II 5). (TLSB)

This states how the corrupt mind of the Gentiles reveals and manifests itself in their walk. (Stoekhardt)

Being past feeling, they have lost all feeling of shame, having lost their sense of right and wrong, having lost all sensitivity, having become callous. (Buls)

This is in the active form of the verb. It is not that their sensitivity was taken from them; they abandoned it. (PBC)

have given themselves up sensuality. Just as Pharaoh’s heart was hardened reciprocally by himself and by God (see Ex 7–11), so here the Gentiles have given themselves over to a sinful kind of life, while Ro 1:24, 26, 28 says that God gave them over to that life. (CSB)

ἐαυτοὺς παρέδωκαν τῇ ἀσελγείᾳ—The active verb παρέδωκαν again places full responsibility for their sorry plight on the Gentiles themselves, who “handed themselves over.” (CC)

Kretzmann: “They have become abandoned to a state of heart without conscience. They have willingly yielded themselves, by their own guilty choice, to wantonness, to shameless, outrageous sensuality, to reckless, unbridled behavior...They make it their business to indulge in every form of uncleanness, greed or covetousness, but vices are self-seeking.” (Buls)

Every kind of impurity. In their moral apathy having lost all sense of right, chastity and modesty, the Gentile have surrendered themselves to an excessive practice of every kind of impurity along with avarice (extreme desire to amass wealth) and greed. Unchastity and avarice often appear in the apostolic letters as the two main vices and heathendom. (Stoekhardt)

The Gentile did what they wanted to, but, instead of satisfying them, it simply heightened their desire for more. Paul’s point is that Gentiles in their pagan lifestyle were hopeless enmeshed in immoral ways. (PBC)

Paul writes that in his culture people lost their sensitivity to what is proper and right. They are no longer shocked by their gross desires and behaviors. The sensuality of which Paul writes is an open expression of one’s worst desires with no sense of shame or disgrace. Greed and lust simply

consume a person to where there are no boundaries and no accountability. Paul's words have the ring of truth about them in a culture of drive-by shootings, open illicit sex, and increasing random violence. What limits there were on indecency and violence are disappearing. Our lust and greed seem insatiable. (LL)

4:20 *You*. Emphatic. – “You” is emphatic. That was not the way they found their new life in Christ; those practices only lead to death. Cf. Joseph’s words in resisting Potiphar’s wife, illustrating how the believer’s new self can and should resist the temptations of the old self (Gen 39:9). Kretzmann (*Popular Commentary of the Bible*) comments, “The Ephesian Christians did not study the glorious news of their salvation through Christ in such a way as to suppose that they could continue in the sins which characterized the Gentiles.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

learned Christ – Christ is the true revelation of the will of God in both his person and his life.

Kretzmann: “There is a clear-cut, irreconcilable difference between the unregenerate and the regenerate person. (Buls)

4:21 *way you learned* – They were catechized not only about Christ but also by Him (Luke 10:16). (TLSB)

“Surely you heard”—a hint of apostolic impatience? “Heard” and “were taught” imply much more than just a little casual instruction, which, also in matters theological, can be a dangerous thing. Beware of a spiritual vacuum, lest more and worse spirits move in! They probably refer to the instruction given prior to baptism, when Christians put on Christ (Gal 3:27), and to subsequent teaching about Jesus as Lord (Rom 10:9). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Paganism did nothing to bring the Ephesians to their present fortunate state. That came only when the learned of Christ, when they “were taught...in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.” Christ’s truth was totally at odds with the values of their “former way of life. (PBC)

truth that is in Jesus. The wording and the use of the name Jesus (rather than Christ) suggest that Paul is referring to the embodiment of truth in Jesus’ earthly life. (CSB)

The name “Jesus” appears by itself (without “Christ” or “Lord”) only here in Ephesians. The shift from “Christ” in 4:20 to “Jesus” in this verse may not be polemical, but certainly entails the confession that the man Jesus is the Messiah/Christ. (CC)

Kretzmann says: “He that has entered into the sphere of Jesus as His disciple is thereby under obligation to conduct himself in his entire life as Jesus walked.” (Buls)

John 1:14 “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 14:6 “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really knew me, you would know ^a my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

4:22-24 What they were taught is now amplified. The old pre-Christian lifestyle is to be put off. Again, there is nothing casual or easy here. In Rom 6:6, St. Paul talks about crucifying the flesh! The Old Adam, once in charge, continues to tempt, and now all the harder. Its lusts are characterized by *apatē*, “deceit”; they seduce with false attractiveness. See Prov 9:17–18 and 23:31–32. The task is formidable; crucifying the flesh is no picnic, nor a part-time operation. Luther says, “it will do no good to think and to say: The doctrine has been presented. . . . We must not let people go on, as if it were not necessary to admonish and urge them through the Word of God to lead a good life . . . hold that if we were to stop preaching and admonishing for a year, we would become worse than any heathen” (Ewald Plass, *What Luther Says* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1959] p. 659). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Note that *ananeousthai* is present passive, “ever being renewed.” “The agent in the passive is God . . . While the renewal may be predicated of us, since after the putting away of the old man we have new spiritual powers and cooperate with God in using them, here the passive attributes this blessed work to God” (Lenski). The goal is to “put on the new self,” a new way of life in which the Christian refuses to let sin rule. True righteousness comes only via the Gospel. Holiness is a sanctified fruit “Dressed in his righteousness alone, Redeemed to stand before the throne! On Christ the Solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand” (*LW* 368). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

“People should be able to see a difference between Christians and non-Christians because of the way Christians live. Paul tells the Ephesians to leave behind the old life of sins now that they are followers of Christ. The Christian life is a process. Although we have a new nature, we don’t automatically have all good thoughts and attitudes . . . if we keep listening to God we will be changing all the time. As you look over the past year, do you see a process of change for the better in your thoughts, attitudes, and actions?” (*Life Application Bible*, Tyndale House, 1988). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

4:22 *old self*. Probably means the kind of person the Christian used to be. The old life-style resulted from deceitful desires. (CSB)

Kretzmann remarks: “The lusts and desires of the old man are deceitful; they seem to promise happiness, joy, life, while in reality they ruin a person that follows their guidance, both in body and spirit, until his is lost forever.” (Buls)

Rienecker says: “Every trait of the Old Man’s behavior is putrid, crumbling, or inflated like rotting waste or cadavers, stinking, ripe for being disposed of and forgotten.” (Buls)

Lenski says: “Putting off this old man is violent, painful; Rom. 6:6 calls it a crucifixion.” V^f. Also Gal. 5:24. (Buls)

The expression “the old man” is significant. Man is thought of as a moral entity. By man is meant man’s whole moral habitus, his moral constitution. The various impulses and acts of the mind and will give man a definite moral character, form an entity, a *habitus* inherited from Adam, the corrupt disposition. The old man is the sum total of all conceivable human vices, which in their association, in their concurrence, present a complete picture of man – man considered as moral subject. This old man, this moral quality, is the characteristic of every man that is born into the world. Man, as he is by nature, is not only in this or that matter corrupt, but

totally corrupt. All of man's thoughts, words, desires and deeds are against God and are centered upon the vain things of this world. (Stoeckhardt)

Recall Paul's telling the Ephesian that Gentiles not only give themselves over to sensuality but also enjoy their depravity, continually lusting for more. The reason for that lies in the fact that old Adam, that is, natural unregenerate man, "is being corrupted by...deceitful desires. (PBC)

Paul here refers to the way his readers were before their conversion – their former lifestyles apart from Christ. Christians must deal every day with their old selves. For example, the sight and taste of alcohol continue to haunt a recovering alcoholic committed to sobriety. (LL)

In Baptism, the old, sinful nature was drowned (Rom. 6:3-11; Col. 2:12; 3:9-10). Through daily repentance, the Christian battles against its resurfacing. Augustine: "Lest anyone might think that the substance or essence of a person is to be laid aside, he himself explains what it is to lay aside the old man, and put on the new, when he says in the following words: 'Putting away lying, speak the truth.' Behold that is to put off the old man and to put on the new" (FC SD II 81). (TLSB)

Genesis 8:21 "The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though^j every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."

Romans 7:18 "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. for I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out."

Romans 8:7 "the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so."

4:23 *be renewed* – Here we have an interesting verb. It is present tense because it is a constant, daily renewing. It is passive because God is the agent, though the Christian is told to do it. That is a deep mystery. In Galatians 5:16 the Christian is told to walk in the Spirit. But in verse 18 he is told that he is lead by the Spirit. Both are true. But God, and only God, gives the spiritual power. None comes from me. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: Man is renewed so that he begins to live a new life, and he is renovated so that his former being is transformed. In this passage both of these conceptions are presented side by side. (Buls)

Reborn, re-created (2 Cor. 5:17), which happened in Baptism (Titus 3:5) and continues daily (2 Cor. 4:16). (TLSB)

in the spirit of your minds – "Attitude" comes from the Greek *spirit*. Constantly be renewed in respect to the spirit of your mind. Compare in the vanity of their minds, in verse 17. The mind is the source of the thoughts which determine the actions. Renew the thoughts and the actions will also be renewed. Putting off the old man, verse 22, being renewed in the spirit of the mind, verse 23, and putting on the new man, verse 24, happen at one and the same time. They are simply different aspects of one and the same thing. (Buls)

But notice that "putting off the old man" is mentioned first. Christianity is a never-ending battle against the flesh. Romans 6:4; 7:6; Galatians 6:15. The Romans said "Resist the beginnings." Never let sin get a hold on you. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new is done at the same time; the two events are simultaneous. In and by his conversion a person begins an entirely new life . . . This regeneration must be continuous and steady, lest the old sinful nature once more gain the ascendancy. It is a necessary part of Christian sanctification for a Christian always to be anew. . . The new man is the sum total of all the Christian virtues, the entire number of God's moral demands in realization. (Buls)

KJV has "in spirit of your mind." It would have been sufficient if Paul had simply written: "Be renewed in the spirit" or "be renewed in your mind." However, by using both expressions he forcefully emphasizes that he is not dealing with a mere outward, superficial change but with a renewal in man's innermost recesses. Man's spirit in connection with its mind appears as the place where man fosters and conceives the thoughts that determine his conduct, or as the organ of moral thinking and will, or as the vital principle that rules man's mind. (Stoekhardt)

The inmost renewal should be continual, lasting, so that the old essence does not again win room. This constant renewal is a continuation of the original renewal, which the Christian experienced when he became a Christian, a continuation of the new life that was begun and established in baptism, in conversion. This daily renewal does not necessarily cease to be God's work and operation. It is an essential part of Christian sanctification that a Christian again and again begins from anew, constantly rejuvenates himself, every day from anew diverts heart, mind and thoughts from the vain things of this world wherein they so easily become entangled, withdraws himself from the world and directs himself to God , to the God of his life. (Stoekhardt)

This takes place above all in daily prayer. When a Christian , as it were,, speaks face to face with God, when he opens up unto God the innermost recesses of his soul and ever from anew resigns himself with heart, soul and body to God, he then obtains new courage and heart; then inwardly renewed, rejuvenated he again goes forth into life and in his contact with his fellowmen, in his worldly calling , business and life. (Stoekhardt)

Psalm 51:10 "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

Isaiah 40:31 "but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Romans 12:2 "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

4:24 *new self, created to be like God.*† Since the new self is created, it cannot refer to the indwelling Christ, but rather to the kind of person he produces in the new believer. Nor is it some kind of new essential nature the believer has, because that would have been brought into existence at his new birth. In contrast, this is a new way of life that one not only "puts on" at conversion (note the past tense in the parallel in Col 3:9–10) but is also urged to "put on" continually as a Christian. (CSB)

Stoeckhardt: The new man, by regeneration, is created in conformity to the image of God. . . . The new man is righteous, exactly as man should be, without defect, holy, pure, clean, without taint, or spot, like unto God, the righteousness and holy One. (Buls)

The renovated one means the one who was created with God as model. Regeneration means to be God-like. The fact that this *person* is created, which means to come into existence, eliminates all synergism.(Buls)

In the Early Church, candidates for Baptism stripped and were baptized naked, after which they were clothed in white. This pictured the removal of the sinful nature and the re-clothing with Christ in Baptism (Gal. 3:27; Rev. 7:13-14). John Chrysostom: “In the heart, contrition; in the mouth confession; in the work, entire humility.” (Ap XIIB 73). (TLSB)

Note that this new man has been “created.” He is not someone the Christian has brought into being. He has been brought into being by God’s almighty, creative power. (PBC)

This new creation is a return to the image of God in which man and woman were created (Genesis 1:27), but which they lost when they fell into sin. Unfortunately, this restoration will not be complete here on earth, because we Christians all too often succumb to temptation, but it is a start. (PBC)

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

likeness of God – The idea of re-creation continues with an allusion to Genesis. God’ likeness, or image, is defined here as “righteousness” and “holiness” (Gen. 1:26-27; Luke 1:74-75; Col. 3:10). (TLSB)

true righteousness and holiness – Every day we Christians must strive to be who we are in Christ, to live in such a way that all of his imputed goodness shows itself. Paul makes it clear (as in Rom 6:11-13) that a life of righteousness (doing right by God and by others) and holiness (being distinctly set apart for the purposes of God) is a daily Spirit-driven choice continually made by Christians. (LL)

The Gospel is the righteousness of God. It must be preached constantly to give people this regeneration power. (Buls)

Lenski: Righteousness and holiness are the chief perfection of Adam in his original state, in the image of God. . . The creation of the new man places the new man in control of our life and our conduct; our imputed righteousness and holiness produce acquired righteousness and holiness. (Buls)

Righteousness denotes all that which is right and good. Holiness denotes aversion to sin. (Buls)

4:25 falsehood – There are outright untruths and subtle half-truths. There are the lies of silence and denial. Paul roots his concern for honesty in the church. Distrust can ruin a fellowship of Christians. (LL)

Paul appeals to the past fact of Baptism as the foundation for their present action. (TLSB)

Shading the truth a bit and adjusting the facts are common weaknesses among people. They should not, however, be the Christian's way of doing things. Dishonesty is especially damaging when it occurs among believers because we are members of the same body. To deceive a fellow Christian is really to harm ourselves, because just as in the human body all the members work together for the common good, so it is also in the church. Being dishonest with another Christian is like shooting ourselves in the foot. (PBC)

Speak the truth – In a world of subliminal advertising, half-truths, and political expediency, Paul's challenge for truthfulness in all relationships stands as poignant as ever. (LL)

Truth is here truthfulness in the usual sense of the word. (Stoekhardt)

neighbor. Probably means fellow Christians in this context. (CSB)

Paul quotes LXX of Zech. 8:16, where "neighbor" means fellow Israelite. Here he means fellow Christian. (TLSB)

4:26 *be angry*. Christians do not lose their emotions at conversion, but their emotions should be purified. Some anger is sinful, some is not. (CSB)

Or, "if you are angry, do not sin." Paul combines Ps. 4:4 and Deut. 24:15. (TLSB)

Anger is not forbidden in the Scriptures. Christians are characterized often by a righteous anger at sin, sickness and injustice. What is forbidden, however, is to let anger carry us into sin or to allow anger to go unresolved, leading to bitterness and resentment. (LL)

Many things stir Christians to righteous anger. They cannot stand idly by while God's name is taken in vain or his Holy Word is taught falsely. They rightly become angry when children are neglected or abused. They feel indignation when owners are defrauded of their property. The danger, however, is that righteous anger can turn into hatred and vengeful reprisal. (PBC)

Do not let the sun go down. No anger is to outlast the day. (CSB)

4:27 *the devil*. Personal sin is usually due to our evil desires (see Jas 1:14) rather than to direct tempting by the devil. However, Satan can use our sins—especially those, like anger, that are against others—to bring about greater evil, such as divisions among Christians. (CSB)

Satan uses anger to lead people to other sins (v. 31; 1 Peter 5:8). (TLSB)

no opportunity – Sometimes we make it easy for the devil. We put ourselves into situations where sin is more likely. Give the devil an inch, and he will take a mile. (LL)

Christians should well consider that they, by giving way to anger, make room for the devil, who in this manner, by arousing one brother against another, seeks to cause hatred and discord and all manner of mischief in the Church. (Stoekhardt)

4:28 *no longer steal ... work ... have something to share*. It is not enough to cease from sin; one must do good. The former thief must now help those in need. (CSB)

In the ancient world theft was a constant evil. For some it was their only source of income. Professional thieves made a living off the ports of the city, where ships brought in treasures, and in public baths and marketplaces. Christianity is never just a call to give up something but rather a call to replace evil with good. (LL)

Bringing home a few “supplies” from work in a lunch bucket is not a new problem. (PBC)

The point here is to replace the bad conduct not only by honest labor but with a view to helping others as a result.

An example of a sinful life that must be abandoned (1 Peter 4:15) and replaced by generosity. (TLSB)

Among the Ephesians, thieving was probably the result of idle habits and of dislike to hard work. (PC)

They should conquer the aversion for work, which in most instances leads to stealing. They are to work with all energy, take honest pains, and so with his hands gain the good, gain a honest profit, his honest due. Through strenuous and persevering work he will also have something left to share with the needy, about whom he as a Christian must be concerned. (Stoekhardt)

4:29 *no corrupting talk* – The Greek here means “rotten.” We would say “foul talk.” This implies much more than filthy language. The idea is any kind of talk which lowers the moral tone of the community. (CSB)

Controlling the tongue is not an easy task. James acknowledges that when he writes, “No man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:8). Natural man can’t tame the tongue, but the Holy Spirit can. And he does so in the new man, who is active in the Christian. Paul is appealing to that new man. (PBC)

A good tree cannot produce rotten fruit (Mt. 7:17-18; cf. Mt. 15:18). (TLSB)

only such as is good for building up. An exhortation parallel to the previous one. The Christian not only stops saying unwholesome things; he also begins to say things that will help build others up. (CSB)

If there is any talking at all, that is good and useful for edification – let that proceed out of your mouth. Wherever it is necessary, we should instruct, admonish, comfort, encourage, strengthen our brethren, so that they become edified and furthered in faith and in all that is good. (Stoekhardt)

Paul believed that the only thing worth saying about someone was that which built them up. Gossip, lies, and slander clearly did not qualify. In popular psychology books, especially those on conflict resolution and negotiation, Paul’s counsel comes through strongly. (LL)

give grace to those who hear – God is gracious through our speaking His Word, particularly when we forgive (v. 32). (TLSB)

We should never forget the purpose and goal of our speaking, namely, that it may minister grace unto the hearers, that is may be beneficial to those who hear. (Stoekahdt)

4:30-5:2 Recall that following the doctrinal Gospel exposition of the first three chapters, the second half of Ephesians is practical, containing an abundance of guidelines for the sanctified life, with an extensive list of Christian do's and don'ts. Our text stresses the motive from which resisting the wrong and fostering the right must come if it is to please God—God's own *agapē* love for us, exemplified in Christ's offering of himself for us. It is this love that we reflect as we strive to "be imitators of God" and "live a life of love, just as Christ loved us" (5:1–2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

We know that we are the children of God. It follows, then, that we are responsible to him—to emulate him, follow him—to soar within his orbit for our lives. It is only as we participate in what God has done for us through Jesus Christ that we are enabled and expected to imitate him as well. As God, through Christ, demonstrated his love for us, so our lives, controlled by his love, are to demonstrate such love toward people about us. It is this that ought to determine our daily conduct . . . The fact is, we are under new management, new orders. Our primary task is now to reflect, administer, communicate God's infinite love to a distorted and disjointed world . . . It is this that constitutes the ethics of a Christian" (Leslie Brandt, *Meditations on a Loving God* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1983] 231–32). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

4:30 *grieve*. By sin, such as "unwholesome talk" (v. 29) and the sins mentioned in v. 31. The verb also demonstrates that the Holy Spirit is a person, not just an influence, for only a person can be grieved. (CSB)

God feels the grief of loss when we turn away from Him or deny Him in word and deed. "When the baptized act against their conscience, allowing sin to rule in them, they grieve the Holy Spirit in them and lose Him" (FC SD II 69). (TLSB)

Lenski: 'And' connects the new statement with the preceding admonition. Paul is not speaking of grieving the Holy Spirit in general, but of doing this with worthless speech. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: Paul adds force to his warning . . . That is exactly what Christians do - grieve - if they permit their tongue to utter shameful and foul speech. (Buls)

We are living in time similar to those of the Apostle Paul. The movies, television and bookstands are filled with filthy language. Many people no longer blush when using the most disgusting language. This text ought to be driven home hard. America has become callous to foul speech. Christians dare not join in. This kind of language pains the Holy Spirit. (Buls)

Kretzmann: With great solemnity he gives the full name of the third person of the Godhead, for the sin which he is discussing is a very serious matter.(Buls)

Stoekhardt: The Apostle chose here to use the euphonious 'The Holy Spirit of the Living God.' (Buls)

He is the Spirit of Truth, John 15:26, Who testifies of Jesus. He is the great cause of my repentance and faith and my perseverance in the faith. How incongruous to have a mouth which stinks like manure rather than smells like roses! All of us are guilty, more or less, of grieving the Holy Spirit. (Buls)

The Holy Spirit is grieved not only when people choose to deny Jesus Christ but also when Christians choose to disregard or disobey the Spirit's counsel in the Word. Most of us can recall a time from our childhood or teenage years when we did something very wrong. With the memory of the offense comes the recollection of our parents' faces as we looked at them with out guilt. They were grieved, terribly disappointed in us. One does not forget that look. Paul describes the Holy Spirit as grieved by our sin. (LL)

This happens when His work is obstructed, when sin is trifled with, when Deity is treated carelessly, when place is given to the devil, when the spirit of the world is cherished. (PC)

The Holy Spirit is grieved when we sin. Barnes (*Notes on the New Testament*, p. 92) comments, "Do not act towards the Holy Spirit in a manner which would produce pain in the bosom of a friend who loves you." Note that the concern here is not with the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit (lifelong rejection of the Spirit's work) but with willful disregard of the Spirit's guidance in sanctified living. However, persistent and flagrant grieving of the Spirit eventually may lead to a loss of faith, which is created by the Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Psalm 78:40 "How often they rebelled against him in the desert and grieved him in the wasteland!"

Isaiah 63:10 "Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit."

Acts 5:3 "Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?"

1 Thessalonians 5:19 "Do not put out the Spirit's fire"

sealed. "By whom." The verb is aorist passive. The Holy Spirit is the agent. On the thought of sealing look at Ephesians 1:13. When I was baptized, when I was converted, the Holy Spirit claimed me as God's child and marked me for everlasting life. (CSB)

"For the day." When I was baptized the Holy Spirit had the end of my life and beginning of eternal life in mind. I am safe in Him. (Buls)

"The day." It is the day of deliverance which deliverance was caused by the ransoming of Christ. It is, of course, the Last Day, Judgment Day, a welcome day, not a dreadful day. This thought should make me leap for joy. The blood on the door posts in Egypt made the people safe from destruction. The sealing by the Holy Spirit makes me safe for eternity. I need nothing more. With Joseph I must say: "How then could I do this great evil, and sin against God?" That's what I say but how easy to break my promise by speaking filthy words which no one criticizes. Lord have mercy! (Buls)

Stoekhardt: The Holy Spirit is a seal which has been impressed upon us, to reassure us that we belong to God, and preserves us for our destination, unto the day of redemption, when we shall be delivered from all evil, from all corruption, also from our old man. (Buls)

Esphragisthēte, “you were sealed.” Baptism was called *sphragis* from the earliest New Testament times (cf 1:13). Under the old covenant, circumcision had been the “seal” (Rom 4:11). Notice in both contexts the connotation of becoming God’s children. Baptism sealed us “for the day of redemption,” almost certainly referring to the day of Christ’s return. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 3)

Worn on rings or in the form of small cylinders, seals were used to imprint “signatures” of ownership. Eph 1:14 says that the Holy Spirit “is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance in the redemption of those who are God’s possession”—a pregnant sentence worthy of a sermon all by itself. It is in Baptism that Christians are sealed with the Spirit and thereby marked as belonging to God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

day of redemption. The Bible speaks of salvation as (1) past—when a person first believes (see, e.g., Tit 3:5), (2) present—as eternal life now, that is, a living relationship with Christ by faith (see v. 9; 1Co 1:18), and (3) future—when Christ returns and salvation, or sanctification, is completed through glorification (here; see also Ro 8:23, 30; 13:11). (CSB)

4:31-32 This summary statement of the Law culminates in the Christ-like act of forgiveness. “The origin and establishment of private Confession lies in the fact that Christ Himself placed His Absolution into the hands of His Christian people with the command that they should absolve one another of their sins’ (BEC 14). (TLSB)

4:31 *let all* – This verse states the negative while verse 32 states the positive. ALL modifies all five following nouns. "Malice" has its own form of "all." It means "Every kind and every vestige of." (Buls)

bitterness ... malice. Such things grieve the Holy Spirit. This continues the instruction concerning one’s speech (v. 29). (CSB)

"Bitterness" is bitter feelings. "Rage" means losing one's cool, bursting forth. "Anger" is the slow burn that can so easily become a grudge. Thus far we have the inner sins. (Buls)

Now follow two which express themselves in voice and words. "Brawling" is angry shouting. "Slander" is the vile, destructive, scolding language which goes with brawling. (Buls)

"Get rid of" is a periphrastic translation. Better is "Be put away from you," which renders the Greek passive with a passive in English. This reminds us that unless God is gracious we won't do this. (Buls)

Of course, it is painful to put these things away. It feels so good to vent one's spleen on a person of whom we are convinced that he deserves utterly what we are giving him. But we must crucify our flesh. Think of the slander and scorn heaped on Christ. But He did not answer in kind, see Hebrews 12:3. (Buls)

"Malice" in the Greek is a generic term for any and all kinds of inferior thought and actions. AAT: "And every way of hurting one another." That is quite correct in this context.(Buls)

Paul lists some of the sins which cause a Christian to grieve the Comforter. Twice in the verse he uses “all,” preventing Christians from claiming that their specific type of offence is not included in the list. First on the list is “bitterness” which, especially if harbored long-term, is self-punishing, inviting depression, with potential to affect physical well-being, and the cause of many damaging words and actions. Reinecker (*A Linguistic Key to the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980] p. 188) says it denotes “that fretted and irritable state of mind that keeps a man in perpetual animosity.” Note that not all anger is sin (cf. v 26, “In your anger do not sin”) but even righteous wrath can be misdirected or expressed improperly. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Christ lists evil desires and emotions in Mark 7:21–23 and cautions that “all these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’” “They that are Christ’s,” says St. Paul, “have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires” (Gal 5:24), a reminder that the not-so-unusual sins listed in this verse are serious and dare not be taken for granted because they are “just ordinary.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

4:32 *kind...tenderhearted.* The opposite of the negative qualities of v. 31. (CSB)

Instead of being bitter and angry with our neighbor, or using loud and insulting speech, Paul urges God’s people to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving. That’s not easy! After all, we’re talking here about a fellow Christian who has committed real sins against us. She has lied about us and spoiled our reputation; he has defrauded us in a business deal. Her abuse of alcohol has deprived our family of the support it needs. Don’t we have some rights? Doesn’t he or she deserve some of the anger and bitterness we feel? (PBC)

Verse 31 states the negative. This verse states the positive. That is indicated by the Greek word “but,” which the NIV ignores. (Buls)

Here our standard is none other than God, the Saving God. (Buls)

“Be” has the force of “be constantly.” The goal is stated - kind and compassionate. The word is associated in Greek with the idea of “to use.” We must be handleable. We should always be of such a spirit that people can deal with us. (Buls)

“Having healthy bowels” is the literal meaning of “compassionate.” That is a metaphor. Stoeckhardt says the word means “Merciful if you see any misery.” There is so much misery in the world. We should meet it with pity and understanding. (Buls)

Having laid out for his readers their responsibility to rid themselves of evil, the apostle now pictures the positive aspect of our Christian walk on our God-blessed road to glory. If transgressions grieve the Spirit, it is equally and wondrously true that when we exercise our faith in daily living, we thereby gladden God’s heart! The sinner’s repentance brings joy to the angels before God’s throne in heaven. God himself is glad when we, his grateful and forgiven servants, show our appreciation for his love by expressing that same love in our relationships with one another. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The Christian imitates Christ’s thoughts, words, and deeds of kindness, all flowing from a heart made tender because of the Savior’s tenderness toward us. Thus there develops a beautiful forgiven-forgiving syndrome. The phrase “to one another” makes sure the believer starts where he is—within the family circle, and then, as the circle grows, the family of close friends, and

especially the congregational family. Far too many churches have given the enemies of Christ ammunition by demonstrating a spirit devoid of kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

This text offers the opportunity to speak a word about members' relationships—but it must be spoken in kindness, from a tender heart, and with forgiveness (ours from God and ours toward others) emphasized. Use caution! Avoid wielding this beautiful passage as a legalistic club. Your writer used this verse routinely to admonish his children, but I'm afraid that too often they were enlisted as law, rather than to take the child to the Savior's throne of grace for the proper motive. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The word for kindness in the original Greek denotes a softness that makes one approachable by others and able to minister to their needs. The same word is used in the Greek for a wine that has had all its harshness removed so that it goes down smoothly. Kind people have their rough edges smoothed out and are easy to be with. (LL)

forgiving. This basic Christian attitude, which is a result of being forgiven in Christ, along with being kind and compassionate, brings to others what we have received from God. (CSB)

"To be gracious, to forgive." Stoeckhardt translates: "Do not insist on retaliation." (Buls)

Lenski: Here Paul shows what Christian forgiveness is: it insists on nothing when we are wronged, freely lets the wrong pass, and thus for its part ends it at once.(Buls)

Note that we have two reciprocal pronouns meaning "each other" in this verse. These are used here as synonyms.(Buls)

"For Christ's sake" is the high standard which we are to keep before us. That explains itself and we need add nothing here. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: The unique, incomparable love of Christ in that He sacrificed Himself for us is the motive and power of our love.(Buls)

Kretzmann: Just as God in Christ showed us such immeasurable love, so we should show love toward our neighbor. (Buls)

Regarding forgiveness, Lenski says, "Let us put this plainly, since even pastors misunderstand it. The moment a man wrongs me, in that moment I must forgive him—then my soul is free. If I hold the wrong against him, I sin against God and against him, and jeopardize my forgiveness with God. With the wrong he has done he must face God; but that is his affair and God's, not mine, save that in the case of a brother I should help him according to Matt 18:15, etc. But whether this succeeds or not, and before this even begins, I must forgive him. . . . That God forgave your sins and mine 'in connection with Christ' is the compelling motive for our forgiving every man who ever or in any way sins against us." In the words of a greater authority, "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us"! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

As God has forgiven us, Christians are to forgive others. Echoes of the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer sound through these words. When God forgives, as he forgave us in Christ, our sin is put away from us "as far as the east is from the west" (Ps 103:12). We are to approach the sins

of others with this same total and no-more-to-be-done kind of forgiveness. In others words, we bury the hatchet, not leaving the handle up for future use. (LL)

4:17–32 Paul describes the new life that results from the Gospel. Yet, the Law also continues to apply because of our sinful nature. As Luther explains the Ten Commandments in the Catechism, the Law both forbids sinful behavior (“shall not”) and urges good works (“shall”). As we inevitably fail to live up to such demands, forgiveness preserves and restores the harmony of the Church. • Father, forgive us our sins, that we may forgive those who sin against us. Amen. (TLSB)