



Walk Worthy

John Coblentz

These comments on Ephesians 4:1, 2 are selected from God's Glory in the Church, a phrase-by-phrase devotional commentary on Ephesians.

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord"

Knowing we belong to Jesus is central to our identity and gives meaning and purpose even in the most difficult circumstances. Just as Paul could see himself as a prisoner of the Lord, so one could be a slave of the Lord or a widow of the Lord or an orphan of the Lord.

Even in more pleasant circumstances, we need to find our identity and thus our direction and purpose from our Lord. We can be a businessman of the Lord, a housewife of the Lord, a farmer of the Lord, or a schoolteacher of the Lord.

"Beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called"

Our insight into God and His astonishing ways calls for specific responses. To continue to live in selfishness and sin is to spurn Heaven's kindness. God's amazing grace shouts for His people to "walk worthy."

It is helpful to see Paul's instructions for life in the church, in the home, and in the workplace as an answer to God's grace. We have been so generously privileged that the blessings alone compel us toward a new kind of life. But the effect of grace, likewise, is transforming.

To walk worthy does not mean we are worthy. We cannot earn the blessings. We do not deserve them. It means to live in a way that corresponds to the undeserved privileges and provisions that are ours through Jesus. We can respond in heartfelt gratitude.

We can gladly submit to His Lordship. We can love our fellow believers as we have been loved.

We have been called toward a new way of living, toward a life that honors Jesus as Lord, toward a life of worship, toward a life conformed to His values and intentions.

"With all lowliness"

The Greek word here translated "lowliness" or "humility" is made up of two word parts meaning "humbleness of mind." Our natural bent is to see ourselves as the center of our world, to seek our own interests and satisfy our own desires.

When we meet Jesus and are drawn into the Assembly around Him, we realize that life is not primarily about us or about fulfilling our interests but rather about Jesus and God's great plan. Lowliness—humility of mind—is a more fitting posture to the big picture, the way things really are.

"And gentleness"

Sometimes translated "meekness," this word is difficult to translate in a way that captures the full sense.



The Greek word denotes gentleness under provocation with the implied sense of strength. A person with this quality has the strength not to react when provoked, but to be gentle and wise in response. This gentleness is not because we are too weak to react, but because we are strong enough to rein in our natural reaction and respond wisely for the good of others.

How contrary, again, to our natural bent. We too cheerfully react to provocation, giving back what we receive and in greater measure. Someone is rude to us; we are ruder in return. People make critical comments about us; we talk negatively about them. The group ignores our input in a decision; we withdraw our support or presence. To respond with strong gentleness calls for love, for an orientation around Jesus rather than ourselves.

“With longsuffering, bearing with one another in love”

Paul gives us the parameters and the goal of being gentle and long-suffering. Love instructs our interactions with others and provides the reason for those interactions. We control our responses, and we forbear with one another because we are committed to the best for every brother and sister in Jesus. We know that we all

have weak areas and at times will offend one another. We know that growth is difficult.

We know that loving interaction—being gentle and considerate and patient—is the best context for change. So we are not indifferent to provocation. We do not take a careless or disengaged stance when there are offenses. We do not merely tolerate fellow believers. Rather, we are deeply committed. We are gentle for love’s sake. We forbear with each other because we are committed to building up rather than tearing down. We are patient but willing to engage.

Being long-suffering and bearing with one another means being willing to overlook minor grievances. It means giving one another the benefit of the doubt and allowing time for change. In response to weaknesses, misunderstandings, or shortcomings, long-suffering sometimes calls us to say nothing.

We might overlook surface behaviors because we are focused on deeper concerns. When we do address concerns in fellow believers, we are considerate of their feelings and understanding of their circumstances, even while we speak truthfully. In all our interactions, our heartfelt commitment to one another guides us.

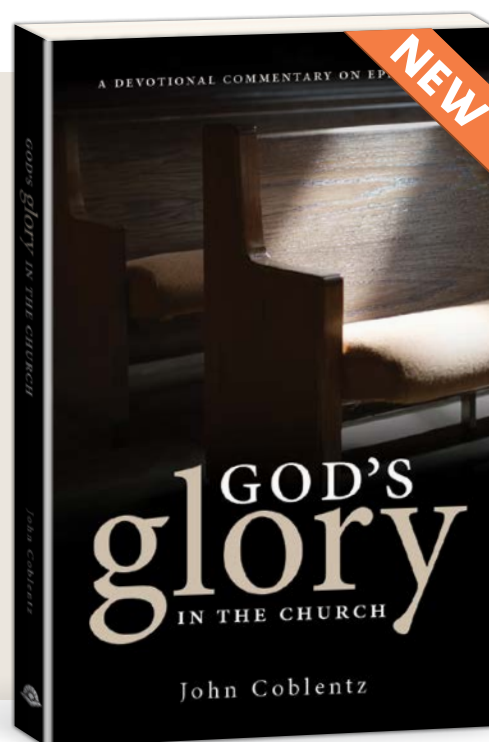
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God’s Glory in the Church John Coblentz

Ephesians contains the most extensive and sublime teaching on the church in the New Testament. Paul opens the portals between the seen and unseen, revealing the glorious work God is doing for the church. He explains our spiritual union with Jesus and shows God’s will for how believers should live and interact with others.

This phrase-by-phrase commentary on Ephesians is based on the New King James Version and is more devotional than exegetical.

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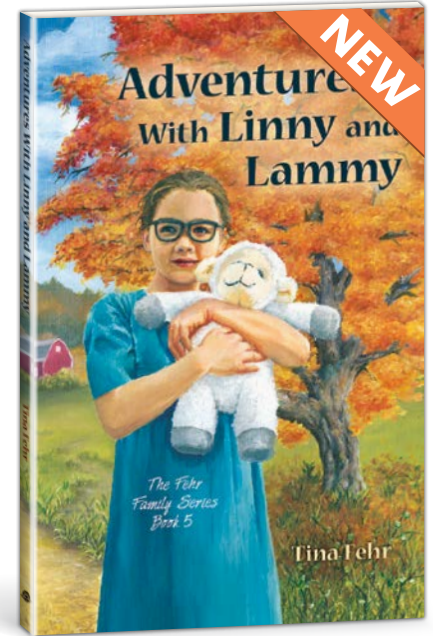


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Tina Fehr

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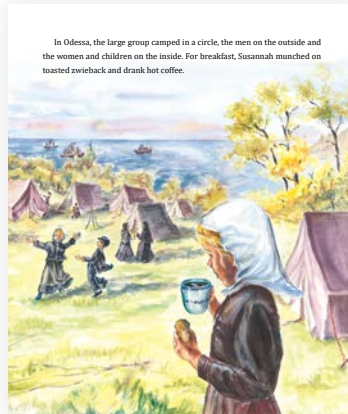
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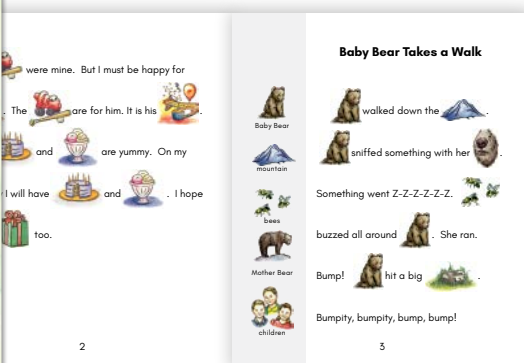
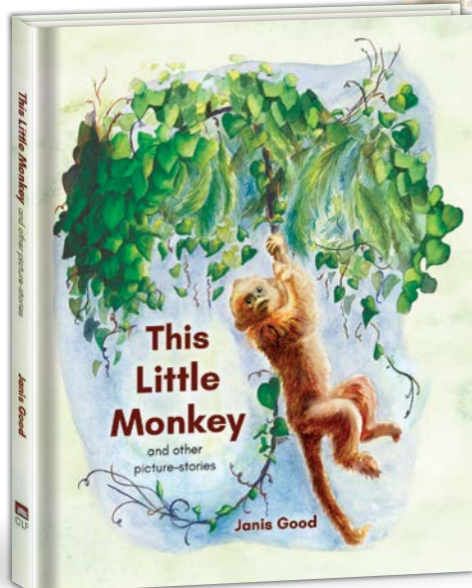
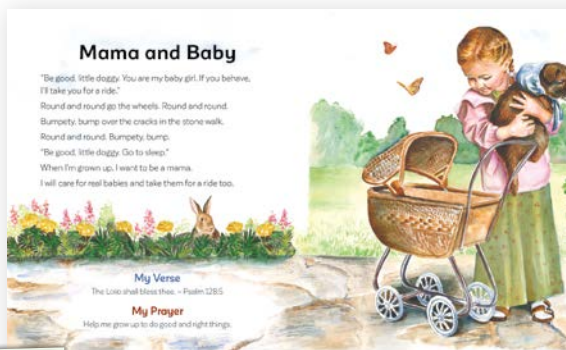
Children's Books by Janis Good

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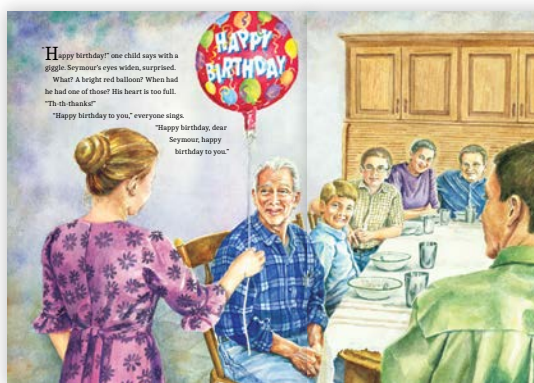
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Sample word problem

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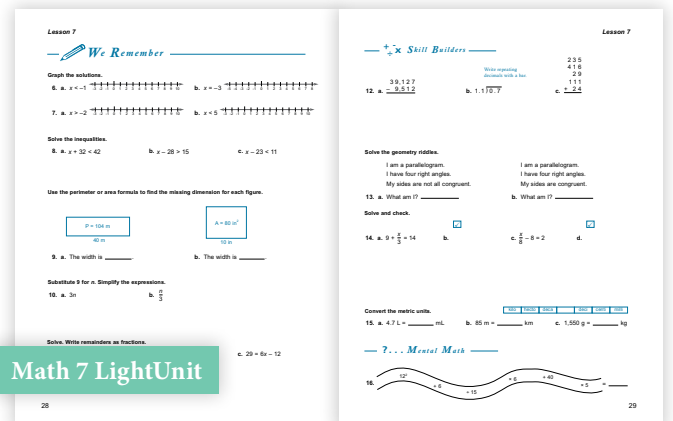
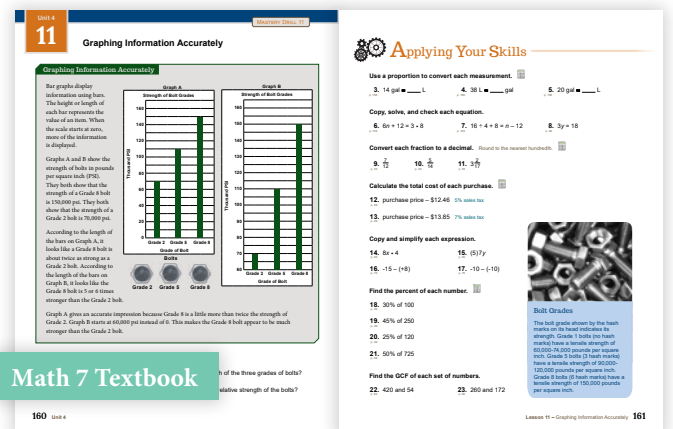
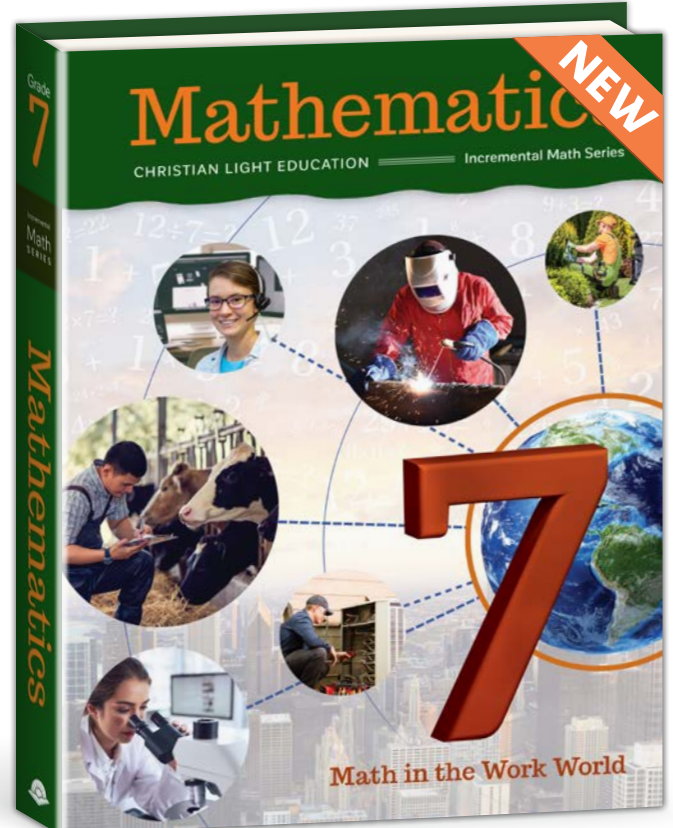
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What's so
glorious about
the church? See
page 2.

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Merle Burkholder

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