

LIVING THE CHRISTLIFE
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Studies in Ephesians
Ephesians 4:17-24

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.

—Ephesians 4:7-16 (ESV)

v1 – Now I say and testify....

Paul emphasis on the importance of what follows

“that you must no longer walk...”

More lit. – no longer are you to walk as also the Gentiles are walking

You are not to conform to what is going on all around you

It is not only OK, you are required to live differently—no matter how pervasive is the other behavior

Roman culture had no Christian influence and very little Jewish influence. Certainly, there are differences in our culture—but this, in some ways, requires us to be more discerning, not less.

“in the futility of their minds....”

They are misguided in their entire values and outlook

“minds” referencing a person’s thinking and, to some degree, personhood

cf. Romans 12:1-2

“darkened in their understanding...”

As opposed to “enlightened” in their understanding by Christ

“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all”

“If we walk in the light as He is in the light...”

They may have an ongoing conviction of sin and separation from God, but the world does not understand the truth of God and cannot understand truth while separated from Him

“alienated from the *life*...”

More than just needing to be taught differently, one who is separated from God must be born again, receiving a new life

Through, because of [*dia*] the ignorance that is in them—often indicating a willful ignorance, a refusal to hear or consider

Through, because of [*dia*] their hardness of heart

There is a component of moral responsibility—their “hardness of heart”

This is at the core of the world's blindness—a rejection of God and His word

v 19 – “They have become callous...”

callous – *apalgeó*, to cease to feel any pain

verb tense: having ceased to feel any pain—having ceased to care anymore or feel any regrets

“have given themselves up to all sensuality for the working of impurity...”

This is who they are now

They have given themselves up to an immoral, pleasure-centered lifestyle

“with all greediness”

meaning they do all of his aggressively (greedily)

also meaning the greediness is a part of the world's mindset, pursuit of self-acquisition
with little to no regard for others or for God

v 20 – “But that is not the way...”

You know better than this—and you cannot blame it on any deficiency on how you were taught

“not the way you learned *Christ*” – not “Christian teaching” or “right and wrong”—but Christ Himself. Our Christian lives are linked to Christ Himself—not just a set of ethics or theological beliefs

v 21—“assuming that you have heard...”

Not sarcasm—the Apostle is making allowances for some who may hear the letter read but who may not have been taught properly, who may not be believers

v 22 – “to put off your old self...”

Paul is referring to what should already have happened, or be happening

More lit. – You are to have put off, concerning the former way of life, the old man...

This verb (to put off) is in the Greek middle voice—it is something we have a strong role in doing

Here and elsewhere in the NT—we are to have nothing to do with worldly, godless living and values. We are to put any sinful living away from us as we would discard filthy, ruined clothes—and not put them back on!

“...and is corrupt...”

more lit. “which is being corrupted through desires of deceit”

the corruption is ongoing

The desires being pursued are the products of deceit. This all comes to light at some point.

v 23 – “and to be renewed...”

This is done for us by God, but we have a role in it

Our personhood—the spirit of your minds—is reborn, renewed

Still relates to v 22—you are to have done this

v 24 – “and to put on...”

(again referring to what should already have occurred)

more lit. “and to have put on the new man...”

more lit. – “having been created in accordance to God in righteousness and holiness of the truth”

Yes, God does this, but it must be our desire and aim as well

This is to be defining of the people of God—a Christlikeness, walking in

Righteousness – living the right way, seeking to shun all sin in mind and deed

Holiness – walking as one who belongs exclusively to God and whose entire love and allegiance is to Him

Of the truth – as opposed to the world’s misguided living that Paul highlighted earlier.

“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”—Jesus.