

EPHESIANS

WEEK 5: EPHESIANS 4:17-32

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- The apostle Paul writes to the believers in Ephesus whom he calls faithful in Christ
- After Paul hears of their faith in Christ, his prayer is that they may receive a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of God.
- Paul's desire is for them to know God and what He has done for them – how He has blessed them with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places from eternity past.
- All these blessings are in Christ, made possible through His resurrection and are secured by Him seeing that He is now enthroned in heaven far above all rule and authority and power and dominion
- As believers, we are to grow in the knowledge of God and the blessing with which He has blessed us.
- We are to know the hope of His calling, the riches of His inheritance in the saints, and the greatness of His power toward us who believe.
- As believers, we are called to grow into Christ who is our head and thus know our role and proper function in the body.
- We are to know that salvation is not of ourselves, but it is the grace of God who chose us before the foundation of the world, called us to imitate Him in holiness, and to depend on His strength for victory in the spiritual warfare.

- **Class Schedule:**

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|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| ○ July 12: | Ephesians 1:1-14 | Redemption in Christ |
| ○ July 19: | Ephesians 1:15-2:10 | Position in Christ |
| ○ July 26: | Ephesians 2:11-3:21 | Oneness of Jew and Gentile |
| ○ August 2: | Ephesians 4:1-16 | Preservation of Unity |
| ○ August 9: | Ephesians 4:17-32 | Walk in Righteousness |
| ○ August 16: | Ephesians 5:1-21 | Walk in Love, Light, Wisdom |
| ○ August 23: | Ephesians 5:22-6:9 | Walk and Relationships |
| ○ August 30: | Ephesians 6:10-24 | Armor and Epilogue |

NO LONGER WALK LIKE THE GENTILES WALK (vv. 17-19)

“So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind” (v.17)

We are to no longer walk like the Gentiles (a term for unbelievers) walk. That is, we are not to live like they live any longer. If there was a time that we did live like them, now that we are believers, we must live like them no longer. The Gentiles' way of life is called futile or empty.

- **The Cause of the Gentiles' Conduct of Living**

1. They have no understanding for holy things (v.18a)

“being darkened in their understanding,”

2. They do not have the life that God gives – They are dead in their sins (v.18b)

- The Cause of Their alienation from the life of God - Their ignorance
- The Cause of Their Ignorance - Their hardened heart

“Excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.”

This is why the gentiles walk the way they do. Their heart being hardened prevents them from effectively understanding the call of God, which means that if we walk like them, then we too have hardened hearts, are darkened in understanding, and are dead, not having the life of God

- **The Manner of the Gentiles' Conduct of Life**

1. Have given themselves to licentiousness (v. 19b)

“... and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality...”

2. For the pursuit of all uncleanness (v. 19c)

“... for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.”

They are not only slaves to sin but also unrestrained in their lusts

THE GROUND FOR NOT WALKING LIKE THE GENTILES DO (vv. 20 -32)

“But you did not learn Christ this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus...,” (v.19)

- **The Manner of Christian Living (vv. 22-24)**

1. Actively Ceasing from (v. 22)

- Put off the old man

- The Identification of the old man – *“that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self (man)...*
- The end result of the old man – *“lay aside the old self (man), which is being corrupted (destroyed, ruined) in accordance with the lusts of deceit...,”*

2. Understanding your identity in Christ – His disciples (v. 23)

- Be renewed in the spirit of your mind

- What does it mean to be renewed?
To be refreshed, recalibrated or influenced
- What does it mean to be renewed in the spirit of your mind?
“To be renewed in the state of your mind, your disposition”¹
- How or with what do we renew the spirit of our mind?

With God’s word – *“... if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus...,”* (v. 21)

There is no godly living apart from understanding what godliness is. A man acts in accordance with his thinking. Therefore, let us study the Scripture so that we may practice the Scripture.

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3. Actively Pursuing (v. 24)

▪ Put on the new man

- The identification of the new man – “... which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth”
- The characteristics of the new man - “... which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth”

“Nothing, therefore, can be more contrary to Scripture than to undervalue divine truth, and to regard doctrines as matter pertaining merely to the speculative understanding. Righteousness and holiness, morality and religion are the products of the truth, without which they cannot exist.”²

In other words, divine truth is not a barren woman of facts but a mother whose righteousness and holiness are offspring.

You know truth aright not because you have an intellectual apprehension of it but because you possess righteousness and holiness which are a product of the truth.

• **The Practice of Christian Living (v. 25a)**

“Therefore, or since we’ve learned the truth of Christ whereby, by contrast, the ways of this world are shown to be but a lie, let us do certain things...

1. First, we are to do...

- Right understanding is vindicated by its actions or as Christ said it *“wisdom is vindicated by its deeds.”* (Matt. 11:19). Have you learned Christ as the truth is in Him? Then do it or else you have not learned or known Christ at all. You may have the brightest mind and know of the theological terms and know by heart many portions of the Scripture by chapter and verse and still for all that you may be an outcast for *“Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My father.”*

² Charles Hodge *“The Epistle to the Ephesians”* pg., 193.

- Do you, as a result, see the benefit of your brother's admonishment and encouragement to you. And do you see the foolishness of you repudiating and kicking against brotherly exhortation?

"Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another."

2. The things we are to do...

- a. Laying aside falsehood
- b. Speaking truth

No truth speaking can take place apart from first laying aside or ridding ourselves of falsehood. Laying aside is the same word used in Heb. 12:1 "ἀποθέμενοι" (lay aside, take off, rid oneself of). In Heb. 12:1 we are told to run with perseverance the race set before us by doing two things; 1) laying aside every encumbrance and the sin that so easily entangles, 2) fixing our eye on Jesus.

So also, here. For our Christian walk, we must do two things; 1) laying aside falsehood, 2) speaking truth each on with his neighbor or brother since the neighbor is identified as a member of the same body.

- What is the falsehood or the lie that Paul is talking about?
 - *"...as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind..., the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit"* (vv. 17b, 22b)
- What is the truth that Paul is talking about?
 - *"... the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."* (v. 24)

Therefore, falsehood is sinful living and truth is holy living.

• The Necessity of Christian Living (v.25b)

"Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another."

We are to speak truth with one another, that is teach and admonish one another (Col. 3:16) because,

1. It is done out of love “*we are members of one another*”
2. It is done in recognition that “*we are members of one another*”

What are the implications for these?

1. That if we don’t teach and admonish one another, we show no love for one another, a thing commanded by Christ that we should do (John 13:34-35).
2. That if we are not receptive to the teaching and loving admonition of one another, we show to be that we are not members of the body, which is why Christ says, “*let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.*” (Matt. 18:17)

- **The Illustration of Christian Living (vv. 26-32)**

- Pos. → be angry (positive in the sense that anger is permissive and not a sin in itself). The idea is to be slow to anger (Jam. 1:20)
 - Neg. → do not sin (anger does not justify sin)

- Preventing sinning when angry
 - Do not let the sun go down on your anger
 - Do not give (grant) the devil an opportunity (place) “*a favorable place for doing something*”³

- Neg. → do not steal
 - Pos. → work with your hands

- Neg. → let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth
 - Pos. → but only such a word as is good for edification

- “*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption*”

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“Not only is his holiness offended, but his love is wounded. If anything can add to the guilt of such conduct, it is its ingratitude; for it is by him, as the apostle adds, “we are sealed unto the day of redemption.” His indwelling certifies that we are the children of God, and secures our final salvation. To grieve him, therefore, is to wound him on whom our salvation depends. Though he will not finally withdraw from those in whom he dwells, yet, when grieved, he withholds the manifestations of his presence; and a disregard for those manifestations is proof that we have not the Spirit of Christ, and are none of his.”

- The things that the Holy Spirit is grieved by – Disunity in the body (v. 31)
 - Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, all malice
- The Things that the Holy Spirit is pleased with – Unity in the body (one another – vv. 25, 32) (v.32)
 - Kindness, tenderness of heart, forgiveness, imitation of God.