

Ephesians 4:17-24 | Sunday March 23, 2025

17 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, **18** being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; **19** and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. **20** But you did not learn Christ in this way, **21** if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, **22** that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, **23** and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

1. **17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord -**

1. **Ephesians 4:17a (NLT)** With the Lord's authority I say this...

1. Paul is providing some additional level of emphasis on what he's about to say.

2. **17...that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk,**

1. How did Paul encourage the Ephesian believers to walk?

1. **Ephesians 4:1-2,13-16 (NASB95)** 1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love...13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

2. How do the Gentiles walk?

• 1. **17 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,**

1. **Futile** means:

1. Perverseness, depravity
2. Pointless or Useless

1. **Jeremiah 10:23 (NASB95)** 23 I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.

2. **Proverbs 28:26 (NASB95)** 26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely will be delivered.

3. The Unbeliever can only walk in their own understanding.

2. **In other words, Paul is saying I'm going to give you a strong word from the Lord:** "Do not live out this Christian life leaning on your mind and your thoughts."

1. **Proverbs 3:5 (NASB)** Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.

1. I am to live this life consistently getting counsel from Him about:

my decisions

my thoughts

- ○ ○ ○ 1. Not doing this means that I'm leaning on myself which is exactly how the World walks.
- 2. Walking in that way is sinful (depraved, perverse and useless no different than the Gentiles)!
- 3. Old cliché: *"Well He gave me a mind and He gave understanding, just use it!"*
- 4. That old cliché can in actuality really be the exact opposite of Proverbs 3:5.
- 5. The point is that it's about a heart condition of submission and trust.

1. **18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.**

1. The Gentiles (which means the World) – have been ***"darkened in their understanding"***

1. **Darkened** – skotoo (sko-to'-o) - metaph. to darken or blind the mind
 1. (It is in the **Perfect tense** which denotes an action that has been completed but continues to have lasting effects, i.e. Adam and Eve's sin).
2. **Understanding** - dianoia (de-ä'-noi-ä) - way of thinking and feeling
3. In other words, the World has no ability to understand the things of God because they haven't turned to Him and received His Spirit. But as Believers we do have this understanding:
 1. **1 John 5:20 (NASB)** And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so *that* we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

2. **18...excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them**

1. **Excluded** – apallotrioō (ä-päl-lo-tre-o'-o) to be shut out from one's fellowship and intimacy
 1. (Also in the Perfect Tense, meaning that this is a past action with current and enduring effect).
2. **Ignorance** - agnoia (ä'g-noi-ä) lack of knowledge, ignorance, esp. of divine things *such as is inexcusable*
 1. This is not a routine type of ignorance that Paul is referring to for the lost world this is a willful ignorance. Ignorance in and of itself isn't sin. Willful

ignorance is. This is the ignorance that Paul describes in Romans:

1. **Romans 1:18-21 (NASB)** 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident **within them**; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

“Within them” - This is one of the most condemning statements for lost man. That God has placed the ability to know Himself “within them.”

This aligns with Paul’s statement: **“because of the ignorance that is in them.”** It is a deep seated, willful ignorance that man has of God.

- 1. **18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;**

1. **because of the hardness of their heart;** - Porosis comes from poros, which originally meant:

1. It was used of the callus that forms where a bone has been broken and re-set, a callus which is harder than the bone itself.
2. It described something which had become so hardened, so petrified that it had no power to feel at all.

2. Paul says that it is *because* of this hardness in their heart that they have a darkness, excluded from the life of God and have an ignorance in them.

1. As a result of this the lost man has a callousness **(perfect tense again)** in him that only grows and grows and the result is a lifestyle that, when walked out, is completely given over to self and the flesh.
2. Look around you today...does this not perfectly explain what we see in our world??

1. **20 But you did not learn Christ in this way,**

1. **But** - conjunction of contrast. Important word, because Paul is connecting these old self, pagan man ideas, into what he’s about to say.

2. **You did not learn Christ in this way** - They were not saved by leaning on their own understanding and they will not be sanctified by falling back into this type of thinking.

3. **17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer...**

1. **“Walk no longer”** - We can still walk like unbelievers.
2. *“being darkened in understanding”* (Eph 4:18)
3. *“excluded from the life of God”* (Eph 4:18)
4. *“hardness of heart”* (Eph 4:19)

5. We still have the ability to walk outside of fellowship with Him.
4. Which is why Paul says:
2. **21 if (since) indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,**
22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,
 1. **22...You lay aside the old self** - "old self" is also referred to in scripture as the old man. In other words, Paul is making a direct tie to the the Old Man or who the Ephesians used to be that he was referencing in verses 17-19.
 2. **He tells them to lay the old self "aside."** Paul uses this phrase several times in scripture:
 1. **Romans 13:12 (NASB)** The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore, let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.
 2. **Colossians 3:8 (NASB)** But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.
 3. This laying aside of our old man is not a one-time thing. We will continually do this.
 4. It was also written in the **middle voice**, meaning that there is participation on the part of the one being told to lay these things aside. Meaning that the Believer has a responsibility to lay these things aside.
 5. **Being corrupted - Passive voice**, meaning that this action is happening to a recipient. In other words, there is a corruption that is continually happening to you and I whether we want to stop it or not. This is describing that old man or sin nature that is within us.
 1. **Jeremiah 17:9 (NASB95)** 9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"
 6. How do we "lay aside" this part of ourselves?
3. **23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.**
 1. **Renewed** - ananeoo (from aná = again + neóo = renew) - to make new, or renovate
 1. **Passive voice** - indicates that the subject (the believer's mind) is acted upon by outside force
 2. **Present tense** - indicates that the spirit of their mind is continually being renewed.
 1. **2 Corinthians 4:16 (NASB95)** Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
 2. **Colossians 3:10 (NASB95)** and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—
 3. **"Renewed in the spirit of your mind"** - The renewal takes place not simply in the mind, but in the spirit of it.
 1. Paul isn't simply talking about my mind changing but that which governs my mind is changing.

2. Interestingly enough, the NLT gets the interpretation of the word “spirit” incorrect in this passage. The NLT translates spirit as Holy Spirit.
 3. While the interpretation is incorrect the application of how this works for the believers is actually accurate.
 1. **Ephesians 4:23 (NLT)** Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.
 2. **24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.**
 1. Putting on the new self requires a consistent turning from the old man to the new man, turning from that way that I naturally want to walk to a better way.
 1. **Repentance** – metanoeo (me-tä-no-e'-o)
 1. to change one's mind, i.e. to repent
 2. 'change of mind' involves a turning with contrition from sin to God
 2. Second, it's going to require I fix my mind on something else.
 1. **Hebrews 12:2 (NASB95)** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
 2. **Revelation 3:20 (NLT)** “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.
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