

The Old Life – Ephesians 4:17-24

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. 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.

In this passage, Paul strongly warns us against going back to the sin that defined us before our salvation. He does so by describing in detail what sin is still doing to those outside of Jesus.

- 1) Talk about the nature and effects of sin as Paul describes them here... what are some key things we need to understand about it?**
- 2) We often relate to sin as if it is different or less serious than Paul describes here. What are some of the ways we get it wrong? How does this endanger us?**

We can live like slaves even after we have been freed. To guard us against this, Paul calls us to focus on our identity given to us in Christ. Understanding who we are in Christ and all that he has done for us is where he focuses us to protect us from the deceptive slavery of sin. Putting on the new man is not gaining something new, it is acting in alignment with who you have been made in Jesus.

- 3) Why does Paul point us to who we are, instead of what we do?**
- 4) As Christians, we live identity forward – from an identity given to us in Jesus, rather than trying to earn an identity through what we do. What is the difference when it comes to our day-to-day life?**

Let's consider a few more implications of understanding.

- 5) Given the big view of both sin and grace here, how should respond to sin in ourselves? In each other? In the world around us?**

Prayer:

- What can we praise God for?
- What sin do you need to confess?
- What cares or burdens can we help carry?