

LXXIII. SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND YOUR SPIRITUAL PAST: 1 Corinthians 12:2

INTRODUCTION/CON(TEXT). The passage of Scripture that I would like to draw your attention to today is 1 Corinthians 12:2, which was just read to you. In this text Paul deals with another issue in the Church at Corinth. He is in the middle of answering questions the Corinthians had sent him in a previous letter. The question they asked had to do with Spiritual Gifts and their proper use in the Church. Look at it in your own Bible:

1 Corinthians 12:1 "Now concerning spiritual gifts (*spiritual things, i.e. spiritual gifts, which he treats in this section*), brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed (*ignorant*)."

This issue—*Spiritual Gifts*—was not only something the Corinthian Church needed help with in the first century; it is also something the American Church needs help with in the 21st Century.

As we labor to understand Spiritual Gifts properly, the first thing we need to consider, foundationally, is our Spiritual Past—who we were and how we acted and how we were led before Christ saved us. Look at verse 2 in your Bibles.

1 Corinthians 12:2 "You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led."

The second thing we need to consider, in order to keep ourselves from being ignorant concerning Spiritual Gifts, is Spiritual Fruit—that a good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit. Look at verse 3 in your Bible's.

1 Corinthians 12:3 "Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit."

Today we are just going to look at verse 2, and, Lord willing, next Lord's Day we will look at verse 3.

DOCTRINE. Christians need to remember who they were before Christ saved them.

BOYS AND GIRLS...

OUTLINE. Three main truths to make note of in this verse.

I. CHRISTIANS NEED TO REMEMBER THAT THEY WERE ONCE PAGANS (1 Corinthians 12:2a).

1 Corinthians 12:2a

"You know that when you were pagans (lit. *Gentiles*, i.e. *Heathens* or *Pagans*)..."

- **This is first and foremost about identity not activity.**

This about being a sinner as opposed to a saint; an unbeliever as opposed to a believer; a rebel as opposed to a servant or slave; a child of the devil as opposed to a child of God; the wicked as opposed to the righteous.

- **Ephesians 2:12** "Remember that you (*Gentiles*) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."
 - **HENRY:** "Note, It is of great use to the Christian, and a proper consideration to stir him up both to duty and thankfulness, to think what once he was: *You were pagans.*" — **Matthew Henry, Complete Bible Commentary, 1 Corinthians 12:2**

THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL PAST, Christian. THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL PRESENT, unbeliever.

But now, Christians have been brought near by the blood of Christ!

- **Ephesians 2:12-13** "12 Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

Christians are called saints, believers, beloved, Christ's sheep, the righteous, servants and slaves, even children of God.

Remember you were once pagans but now Christ has made you saints!

II. CHRISTIANS NEED TO REMEMBER THAT THEY WERE ONCE LED ASTRAY (1 Corinthians 12:2b).

1 Corinthians 12:2b

"...you were led astray..."

- **Isaiah 53:6** "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way."

TURN WITH ME TO

Ephesians 2:1-3 "1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like

the rest of mankind."

I) Christians were once led astray because they were *SPIRITUALLY DEAD* (Ephesians 2:1a).

Ephesians 2:1a "And you were dead..."

– **Imagine you came upon a horrific car wreck and someone died. Q. What do they need?**

– Though we were physically alive, we were spiritually dead. Think of what else Paul could have said: *Weak, Wounded, Incomplete, Sick, Bad. He said DEAD.*

THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL PAST, Christian. THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL PRESENT, unbeliever.

Jesus did not come simply to start a moral reformation; Jesus came to provide a mortal resurrection! Christ came not to make mean men nice but to make dead men alive.

II) Christians were once led astray into *TRESPASSES AND SINS* (Ephesians 2:1).

Ephesians 2:1 "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins..."

– **There are sins of omission and commission.** A sin Omission is a "lack of conformity to...the Law of God". A sin of Omission is a "Transgression of the Law of God." Omission is not doing something you are required by God to do. Commission is doing something are forbidden by God to do. Sin includes Thoughts, Words, Deeds, Motives, and even Desires.

– **God has Laws, boundary markers, rules because He loves us.** And, furthermore, they are based on His divine essence and actions—we reflect God's glory when we obey His commands. He has created us to live a certain way. When we rebel, trespass, there are consequences and they are severe!

THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL PAST, Christian. THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL PRESENT, unbeliever.

III) Christians were once led astray into *WORLDLY LIVING* (Ephesians 2:2a).

Ephesians 2:2a "in which you once walked, following the course of this world..."

– The Bible speaks of the "World" in seven different ways.

Here = Living/Walking in rebellion to God.

– **Imagine a rushing river. Everyone floating down the stream, going**

wherever the flow takes them. Our eyes were closed to *actual Sin, true Injustice, and real Evil.*

- *Morality is not determined by majority, it is determined by Jesus.*

Now Christians are being transformed by the renewal of our minds, so that we may no longer be conformed to this world, but, rather, may discern what the will of God is, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Whereas in our sin we were led astray by worldly living, now we are led in paths of righteousness for Christ's name's sake.

IV) Christians were once led astray by *SATAN AND DEMONS*

(Ephesians 2:2b).

Ephesians 2:2b "following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience..."

- **RQ. If you are not saved by Jesus and thus not following Jesus, who do you think you are following?**
 - Satan and demons are at work in the world and they hate you. Also, there is such thing as demonic Oppression and Possession. Demonic oppression or possession cannot happen to a true Christian, but the unregenerate are open to all kinds of demonic attacks and influences.

THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL PAST, Christian. THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL PRESENT, unbeliever.

Now Christians are sealed by the Holy Spirit for the day of redemption, filled by the Holy Spirit for faithful service to Christ, led by the Holy Spirit for fruitful righteousness, and comforted by the Holy Spirit for encouraging living and dying.

V) Christians were once led astray because they had a *SINFUL NATURE* (Ephesians 2:3a).

Ephesians 2:3a "Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind..."

- **Psalms 51:5** "I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."
 - **1 Corinthians 15:22** "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."
 - Before we are saved by Christ, we do think the thoughts of God nor do the works of God nor honor and glorify God.
- **RQ. Have you noticed how baffled the world is when unspeakable**

evil happens? *Sinful Passions Desires*. **RQ**. Have you noticed that you do not have to teach a kid to be bad? *We need a new nature! In Christ.*

THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL PAST, Christian. THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL PRESENT, unbeliever.

Now Christians have received a new nature, set free from slavery to sin, and made alive in the Spirit!

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

Christians, you have been given a new mind, will, and affections. A new mind to think the thoughts of God; a new will to choose the things of God; and new affections to love the things of God.

Do not neglect them and harden your heart nor sear your conscience.

VI) Christians were once led astray into the path of *THE WRATH OF GOD* (Ephesians 2:3b).

Ephesians 2:3b "and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind."

- **EXPLAIN WRATH:** The Bible speaks of the wrath of God toward sinners with 20+ words and more than 600 times.
- **EXPLAIN THE CROSS:** In the Garden of Gethsemane Christ said, "Father, let this cup pass from me."
- **ILLUSTRATE THE CROSS:** Imagine you got a letter from a collection agency that said, "All your debt has been paid, past, present, and future."

BOYS AND GIRLS...

Isaiah 53:6

"All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all."

CALL TO REPENTANCE AND FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!

Remember you were once Led astray but now you have been saved and now are led by the Spirit according to the Scriptures.

III. CHRISTIANS NEED TO REMEMBER THAT THEY WERE ONCE *IDOLATORS* (1 Corinthians 12:2c).

1 Corinthians 12:2c

"...to mute idols, however you were led."

- **1 Thessalonians 1:9** "You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,"
 - **CALVIN:** "Let us learn from this passage how great is the blindness of the human mind: when it is without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as it stands in amazement at dumb idols, and cannot rise higher in searching after God; nay more, it is led by Satan as if it were a brute." — **John Calvin, Complete Bible Commentary, 1 Corinthians 12:2**

TEXT WORK

I Corinthians 12:1-3

“1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers,
 Conj. prep. pneumatikos adj. adelphos
 (bretheren)
 Christians

I do not want you to be uninformed.
 one verb thelo sy agnoeo
 (adu. abs. neg.) (per. poss. pro.)
 (to be unaware)
 (to be ignorant)

2 You know that when you were pagans
 eido hoti hote eimi ethnos
 Conj. Conj. (unbelievers)
 (Gentiles)

you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led.
 apago ho the pros def. aphanos eidolon hos an ago
 adj. conj. conj. adj. conj.

3 Therefore I want you to understand
 dio gnorizo
 Conj.

hoti oudeis laleo en pneuma Theos lego iesous anathema
 that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!”
 Conj. adj. (prep. or by)

kai oudeis dynamai lego iesous Kyrios ei me en hagios pneuma
 and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.”
 Conj. adj. (has the ability or power) Conj./adv. (prep. or by)

HELPS

1 Corinthians 12:5-11

Extraordinary Spiritual Gifts / John Owen

The Works of John Owen. 453-474. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965.

[BX9315.O94 W67 1965](#)

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1 Corinthians 12:11

Ministerial Endowments the Work of the Spirit / John Owen

The Works of John Owen. 441-451. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965.

[BX9315.O94 W67 1965](#)

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Spiritual Gifts Essential to a Visible Church-State / John Owen

The Gospel Standard 123, no.1464 (Dec 1957): 353-361.

[♥ Log in to Save to List](#) | [View Result](#)

- **12:1-11** Wickliff, John, "Of Spiritual Gifts," *Writings of the Reverend and Learned John Wickliff*, vol. 1 in the set, *The British Reformers*, pp. 215-218.
- **12:6** Nettleton, Asahel, notes for a sermon, *Sermons*, pp. 466-467.
- **12:13** Boston, Thomas, "Of Union with Christ," *Commentary on the*

Shorter Catechism, i.544-556.

- Boston, Thomas, "How the Sacraments Become Effectual Means of Salvation," *Commentary on the Shorter Catechism*, ii.460-465.
 - **12:27-28** Baxter, Richard, "Christ, & Not the Pope, Universal Head of the Church," *The Morning Exercises*, v.672-689.
 - **12:28** Spurgeon, C.H., "Helps," #777, *MTP* 13.589-600.
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STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Comprehension & Key Truths

1. According to the sermon and 1 Cor. 12:2, why does Paul remind the Corinthians of their pagan past **before** explaining spiritual gifts? How does this set a foundation for humility when considering any gift?
2. The sermon stresses that "pagan" (or "Gentile" in Greek) refers primarily to **identity**, not just activity. Explain the biblical difference between identity as a "sinner/pagan" (pre-conversion) and "saint/believer" (post-conversion). How does this relate to Ephesians 2:1-3 and 2 Corinthians 5:17?
3. What three main truths from 1 Cor. 12:2 does the sermon highlight about the believer's spiritual past? (Pagans by identity; led astray; to mute idols.) How do these counter modern tendencies to downplay the depth of sin or view salvation as merely moral improvement?

Total Depravity, Regeneration, & the New Birth

4. The sermon describes unbelievers (and pre-conversion believers) as spiritually **dead** (Eph. 2:1), led by Satan/the world/the flesh, and by nature children of wrath. How does this align with the 1689 Confession's teaching on the fall, original sin, and inability (e.g., ch. 6, 9)? Why is regeneration (the new birth) necessary before anyone can truly confess "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor. 12:3)?
5. Discuss how the sermon uses Ephesians 2:1-10 to contrast the old life (dead in sins, following the world/Satan/flesh) with the new (made alive by grace, God's workmanship for good works). How should remembering this "deep mine of sin" increase gratitude for sovereign grace?
6. The sermon warns unbelievers to cry out for God to cause them to be born again. From a Reformed Baptist view, why can't someone simply

"turn over a new leaf" or decide to follow Christ in their own strength?
(Cf. John 3; 1689 ch. 10 on effectual calling.)

Idolatry, Worldly Living, & Sanctification

7. Why does the sermon call every unbeliever an **idolater** (led to "mute idols," however led)? How does this connect to Romans 1:25 and the idea that humans are inherently worshipers—what or who do we worship apart from Christ?
8. The sermon describes being "led astray" as following the course of this world, Satan/demons, passions of the flesh, and ultimately the path of God's wrath. How has God delivered believers from this? What practical ways can Christians now "keep in step with the Spirit" instead (Gal. 5:25)?
9. How should remembering our former idolatry and worldly living humble us regarding spiritual gifts? Why might bringing "pagan" ways into the church (e.g., confusion, pride, or untested claims) grieve the Spirit?

Testing Gifts, Fruit, & Christ's Lordship

10. The sermon previews 1 Cor. 12:3 (no one says "Jesus is accursed" in the Spirit; no one says "Jesus is Lord" except by the Spirit). Why must spiritual fruit (especially confession of Christ's lordship) test any claimed gift? How does this protect the church from false claims?
11. In a 1689 Reformed Baptist context, spiritual gifts exist for the common good and edification (1 Cor. 12:7), but under Scripture's sufficiency (1689 ch. 1). How should this foundational reminder in v. 2 shape our approach to gifts today—emphasizing humility, order, love (ch. 13), and testing by fruit rather than spectacle?

Application & Personal Reflection

12. For believers: How can regularly remembering "who you **were**" (pagan, led astray, idolater) combat pride in any gift or ministry role? Share a way this truth has increased thankfulness for Christ's blood and the new identity as saint.
13. The sermon urges encouraging one another when we see righteousness/good works. Why is this important in a Reformed Baptist church? How can we better notice and affirm God's work in each other (Heb. 10:24–25)?
14. For group discussion: If someone claims a dramatic spiritual experience or gift but shows bad fruit or denies Christ's lordship in practice, how should the church respond biblically? (Tie to testing spirits, fruit, and 1689's emphasis on Scripture as the rule.)

15. Close with reflection: Read Ephesians 2:4–10 together. How does God's rich mercy transform pagans into His workmanship? How should this fuel worship, humility in gifts, and zeal for the lost?
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SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Brothers and sisters in Christ, friends, and visitors, the passage of scripture I want to draw your attention to today is the one that was just read to you. 1 Corinthians 12:2. 1 Corinthians 12:2. In this text, Paul is again dealing with another one of the issues that was brought up to him in a previous letter that the Corinthians had written to him. You could see that at the beginning of verse one when he says, "Now, concerning spiritual gifts," this is him answering a question that the Corinthian church had asked him. And if you are familiar with 1 Corinthians, you probably remember that chapters 12-14, this long chunk of the letter that is dealing with spiritual gifts and the proper use of them, the proper way to think about them, the proper way that they are even functioning in a worship gathering even like this. And to begin this whole section, Paul in verses 1, 2, and three is giving us some foundational things that we really need to be clear on before he even starts talking specifically about spiritual gifts. Look in verse 4 in chapter 12 and see that is when he actually he starts talking about the gifts. Now, there are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit. There are varieties of service but the same Lord. Varieties of activities but it is the same God who empowers them all and everyone to each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good. Then he starts listing some uh through the spirit utterance of wisdom knowledge etc. Before he gets there at verse four is when he starts going through the actual spiritual gifts. he is got a few things that he wants you and I to have very clear foundationally. And it is almost like you cannot even start talking or learning about spiritual gifts until you get these few foundational things very clear in your mind. Verse one, look in chapter 12. Verse one, he is starting with this is the whole point of why I am writing this. I do not want you to be uninformed. I do not want you to be ignorant concerning spiritual gifts. So there is kind of the basis of it all. 12 chapters 12 through 14. I am writing this so you are not ignorant about spiritual gifts. And then in verse two, he reminds them of their spiritual past, who you used to be, what you used to be like before the Lord Jesus Christ saved you. So, he is writing to Christians, I do not want you to be ignorant about spiritual gifts. Okay? All right. we are on the same page there. Then he does not start talking about spiritual gifts. He reminds them of what they used to be like and who they used to be before God saved them. As if to say, if you are going to properly understand

and use spiritual gifts, you need to first of all remember your spiritual past and who you used to be, what you used to act like, what you used to think like, what you used to be led by before we are even going to discuss spiritual gifts. So that is why we are looking only at verse two today. Last week in our introduction really to this these three chapters on spiritual gifts, I just stopped at verse one. So I wanted you to realize how important it is that you and I make sure we are not ignorant concerning spiritual gifts. And now we are just going to spend Lord willing this sermon on verse two. And Lord willing next Lord's day we will look at verse three. But I want you to see the flow before I point out to you the truths we should learn in verse two. Verse one, look at it. I do not want you to be uninformed or ignorant. Okay? And then before he even starts talking about them, it is you need to remember your spiritual past in verse two. You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. So he is reminding them of what they used to be like spiritually before they were Christians. Now look at verse three. Verse three, he is showing them spiritual fruit that they need to be thinking about when they are even considering spiritual gifts. The foundational truth there is spiritual fruit. If you are seeing bad fruit come from someone who is claiming it is the Holy Spirit, it is just not true. If you see good fruit coming from someone who claims it is the Holy Spirit, it is true. But what was happening with the church at Corinth obviously was there were people in even their worship gatherings and you can read like consult all the commentaries try to find one that does not agree with this. They all say it is pretty obvious what was happening. There were some people at the church of Corinth in their ecstatic state and they were obviously very confused about spiritual gifts and that is why Paul writes to correct all this. But there was someone there saying I have the utterance of the spirit or I am speaking in a prophetic way and they are saying Jesus is a cursed. That is a way to say damn Jesus or Jesus is burning in hell. there is someone saying that in their church gathering like in the congregation and and the person people might go what did what did Joe just say it is like no no no he is speaking in the spirit and Joe would be like I am this is a spiritual gift and they are like oh okay and Paul is saying look look at verse three I want you to understand that no one speaking in the spirit of God ever says Jesus is a curse cursed. There were obviously some people in that congregation saying things like that and most of the commentators point out that was a common thing that the Jews would say in the first century who rejected Christ and even many of them in the first century would fake a conversion to Christianity to infiltrate the early Christian church and try to influence them away from the truth. You can see that with the Judaizers as well who that is the whole reason Paul had to write the book to the Galatians because people were trying to smuggle in a false gospel. They were the first century Jews who in fact were rejecting Christ by trying to say Jesus plus the ceremonial law and circumcision. that is how you know you are saved. Well, they were rejecting the gospel altogether. And it seems like some of these people in this context were doing the same thing. But they were saying, "I am speaking in the spirit of God." And they are saying, "Jesus is in hell." Like, what? No one. And so Paul, it is almost

like, it is like, do I really have to write this? Do you remember when we were in 1 Corinthians 5, or if you were not here, but you have read it before, when Paul has to actually say, "Hey, that guy in your church that is sleeping with his mom or his mother-in-law or his stepmom, whatever it is, uh, he needs to be rebuked and put out of the church." The guy that is sleeping with, it is kind of like that Paul in Paul is mind, he is surely like, "Am I really having to say this? This, this is wrong." It seems like that is what he is surely thinking in verse three, too. Like, am I really having to say that the person who says they are speaking according to the spirit of God, but they are saying Jesus is in hell? Like, do I really have to say this? That they are lying. they are not actually speaking according to the spirit of God. And then he goes on at the next part of verse three and says, "And no one can say Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit. meaning no one can truly from the heart confess the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, as King, as ruler. he is my Lord. he is like, that is a result of God the Holy Spirit. And we will get into verse three, Lord willing, next week. But I just want you to see what he is talking about in verse three is that you need to be ready and able to examine spiritual fruit before you can even talk about spiritual gifts. You got to be ready to examine spiritual fruit, proper spiritual fruit. What comes out of a person is evident of what is going on, no matter what they say. Because obviously they were saying this is a result of God the Holy Spirit. Jesus is in hell or Jesus is anathema. And he is like, "No, no, no, no. You know, a tree by its fruit, that is bad fruit. that is not the Holy Spirit." And the good fruit looks like Jesus is Lord. Jesus is my king. Verse two, remember your spiritual past, who you used to be. And partly I believe his argument is there were people who were saying it was a result of the spirit is work and their spiritual gifts that they were using in ways like saying Jesus is a cursed or doing other silly things, but they were acting like they used to act before they were Christians. it is like you used to be like this. You used to be pagans. You used to be led astray by mute idols. You used to be all this stuff. So, you cannot keep acting like that and say you are a Christian now and say it is a work of God, the Holy Spirit. cannot bring your pagan past and act the same way when you are a Christian and say, "Well, it is the result of the spirit." Like, that just does not work. You need to remember who you were before we can even talk about spiritual gifts. that is what he wants us to consider. So look again at verse two. You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. The doctrine that you and I should glean from that verse is this. Christians need to remember who they were before Christ saved them. Christians need to remember who they were before Christ saved them. Now, this is one of the benefits of what we call expository preaching or just like sequential expository preaching. When you just work through a book of the Bible, you just face every verse and preach every verse and let God in that time that you are going through the Bible, it is like it is just the subject of the sermon is going to be whatever is next. And so what happens is you get to verses that if I am just thinking, praying, sitting in my office during the week thinking, what do I want to preach this Sunday? Most of the weeks I am probably not going to choose verse two of 1 Corinthians 12, right? Does that sound fun? Let

me remind you of all this bad stuff. it is like, no, it's a lot more fun to focus on the glorious promises of the gospel, the victory of Christ in the world. But here we are. And the Lord and his providence wants you and I to consider who we used to be before the Lord Jesus Christ saved us. And if you will come with me almost like down into a deep mind of remembering what you used to be like, then we come back out, you are going to be all the more, I think, thankful for the sun that is shining in full force and the grace of God that has been given to you in Christ Jesus. So remember with me in preparation to properly consider spiritual gifts and properly humble ourselves, remember with me who we used to be before the Lord Jesus saved us. Now, before I point out these three main truths to you, you need to know Christians, if you are converted, if you are trusting in and submitting to Christ, this is who you used to be. And you are no longer this.

Unbelievers, you who are not yet trusting in and submitting to Christ, this is who you are. This is who you are right now. And this is why you need to turn from your sin to the Lord Jesus Christ so that you can be saved and you can be made new in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is who you still are. And this is who if you are a Christian, who you used to be. Now look, look at these. I am going to point out to you three main truths. And the first one is found at the beginning of verse two. He says, "You know that when you were pagans," stop there. Your translation might say heathens or it might say Gentiles. The Greek word is literally Gentiles. And it does not mean uh Gentiles according to the flesh, meaning like Jew, Gentile distinction. it is used like the word is frequently used in the scripture to just mean an unbeliever, a pagan, those outside of the covenants of God. Does that make sense? that is why it is even translated pagans. that is the whole point. it is like he is not saying, "You used to be Gentiles according to the flesh, but now you are not Gentiles according to the flesh." Well, that is not true. They still are. they still are physically ethnically Gentiles. he is using it in a spiritual term and it is how it is used also in Ephesians 2:12. Remember that you Gentiles were at that time before you were saved. The whole point is you were separated from Christ. You were alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. that is under the old covenant. The Gentiles were out. The Israelites were in. They were in the covenant under the old covenant. So the typical way or an easy shorthand way that the apostles or the prophets would say a sinner, a rebel, an unbeliever, someone who is unconverted, someone who is outside of the covenant, gentile. that is what he is saying here. You were Gentiles. And we know he cannot be talking about simply physical lineage because they still are physically Gentiles just like most of us. In the sense that Paul is talking about here in verse two, I can say to you Christians, you were Gentiles. But physically, I would say you still are Gentiles. you are not you are not ethnically Jewish. you are not a descendant of Abraham according to the flesh. So he is talking spiritually. And so that is why the translators translate it pagans or heathens because that is really the point. You were sinners. That was your identity. Now the whole point of this is identity, not activity. You need to get

that clear. When the scripture calls someone a sinner, it is about identity, who they are. it is not about their activity. What they do, what they think, what they feel, what they desire. Sinner is an identity word and it has to do with who you are in essence by your nature because of the sin nature that you have inherited from Adam. So Christians are not sinners in the sense of their identity. But the problem is modern Christians especially use the word sinners and they are only thinking *activity*. they are not thinking identity. And it is Christians actually thinking I think the opposite of what the scripture reveals. Like you are no longer find me somewhere that labels someone who is a regenerate trusting in Christ who is labeled with the identity of a sinner. Not I am not saying that we are not sinful or commit sins, things like that. No, no. But it is identity language. So is this pagan word. it is identity. This is who you used to be. it is not simply what you used to act like. Look in verse two again. Look at the next words. When you were pagans, that is identity. You were led astray. that is activity. what you do, what you think, what you feel. So there is a separation there and a distinction to be made. And the very first thing that he is reminding them of when he is reminding these Christians of their spiritual past is that they were pagans. that is who you were in your core. Yes, still image bearers of God, but in your sin, you are heathens, Gentiles, meaning outside of the covenant of God. This is about being a sinner as opposed to a saint. You were an unbeliever as opposed to a believer. Christians, you were a rebel as your identity as opposed to a servant or a slave of God by your identity. You were a child of the devil as opposed to a child of God. You were labeled the wicked as opposed to the righteous. This is who you used to be and this is what you need to remember foundationally before we even consider spiritual gifts. What I used to be outside of the Lord Jesus Christ. I think many people just wrongly think this whole gospel thing or salvation thing is simply like I need to be saved from the things that I have done from the sins that I have committed against God. I need to be forgiven of those particular sins. that is exactly true. that is just not the whole story. You do need to be forgiven from of the transgressions you have actually committed against God and against other people. But it is much deeper than that. You need to be saved from a radically sinful nature that is opposed to God and that is labeled wicked, rebel, sinner, child of the devil, unbeliever, gentile, heathen, pagan. Like it is deeper than just your activity. You need to have a new identity given to you in Christ Jesus. You need to be radically changed at a fundamental level, not just have like some slate wiped clean. You need and you must be born again and become a new creation. This is how bad off you were before the Lord Jesus Christ saved you.

And it is difficult, I think, for many of us who were to remember that, who were saved at a young age. Many of you were saved. You actually were converted at a pretty young age. And you even thinking back like pagan seems a little harsh. it is like well that is who you were by identity. Your activity because maybe you were saved at a young age. Your activity, you were not strong enough and smart enough yet to put that identity into real juicy sinful activity. Praise God for that. But this

was still your identity. This is who you were. This is who all of us are outside of Christ. Because of the fall of Adam into sin, we have all been even born in sin. This is your spiritual past, Christian. This is who you were. But now, Christians who were once outside of the covenants of promise, no hope, and without God in the world, as Ephesians 2:12 says, you had no hope and you were without God in the world. Now listen to verse 13 from Ephesians 2, but now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. So the answer to your being a spiritual pagan, gentile, heathen, sinner, unbeliever, rebel, child of the devil, wicked. The answer is the blood of Christ. Christ crucified in our place to where he not only took upon himself the activity of our sinfulness or our sinful decisions or actions. He took that identity of sinner upon himself and was slaughtered as if he was a sinner. He was treated like a sinner. He was treated like a rebel. He was treated like a child of the devil on the cross so that you and I would not only be forgiven of our specific individual transgressions, but we would be transformed and become no longer a sinner, but a saint. No longer a rebel, but a slave of Christ. No longer a child of the devil, but a child of God through adoption. No longer the wicked, but the righteous. you have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Christians, you are labeled, your identity is saint.

And Christians do not really talk like this that much. I think it is a shame. We use the word Christian or believer. You know, that is the common uh words that we use in Western evangelicalism. And it is like if we are calling someone something, we say they are a Christian. it is like that is the least frequently used word to identify that person in the Bible. that is the least frequently used word. it is not a bad word to use. it is fine. The second the second most or the second word, the other word that is used is believer. that is frequent. Believer. Believer. believer meaning one who rests in Christ alone for salvation. But I think the most frequent word in all the scripture is saint or the righteous. Like when you read through the Psalms and it is contrasting the wicked with the righteous, it is often most frequently it is *identity* language. it is not talking about activity as much as it is this person is counted righteous for Christ's sake. So that is why we call one another saints or I call you saints or address you as saints or beloved is another word that is used frequently. *Christians* is the least used but *saint* is used. It means our holy one. Christians you are called your identity now in Christ is no longer pagan. your identity as saint, believer, beloved, Christ's sheep, the righteous, servants and slaves of Christ, even child of God or sons of God. Remember who you once were, but now realize that Christ has made you saints. Unbelievers, this is what you need. You need to have a radical change far more than just your activity that will follow. But you need a new nature.

You need a new nature. You need God to do something that you cannot do. You do not need to turn over a new leaf. You do not need a New Year's resolution. that is if you are an unbeliever. If you are outside of Christ, if you are still labeled a sinner

because you have not turned from your sin, you are not trusting in and submitting to Jesus, you need God to cause you to be born again.

So, you need to cry out to him. Cry out to him to save you, to open your eyes to change you from a sinner to a saint. Cry out to God in prayer to do that, to save you. And then trust in Christ alone for salvation and you can know he has saved me. Christians remember that you were once pagans. But now secondly look at the next part of verse two. He does move to the activity. He starts with the identity remember who you were. Then he moves to the activity. Remember what you did is basically what he is saying. And the truth is Christians need to remember that they were once led astray. that is how he puts it. You were led astray. Meaning the law of God and for the glory of God, there is a path right here, right down the middle. God's law is clear. it is written on your heart. it is summarized in the Ten Commandments. it is written in the scriptures. You know right from wrong, even in your conscience. That is the path to enjoy and glorify God how you were created and you have been going way off the path and just led astray.

In Psalm 23, David says, "You lead me in paths of righteousness for your name's sake." You lead me in paths of righteousness for your glory, God. And being led astray is I am not walking down the path of righteousness according to the commands of God for the glory of God out of love for God, but I am walking astray off path.

You were led astray. So you did have more problems than just your identity. You actually had activity problems as well. But you need to acknowledge both of them. And my fear is that many Christians only acknowledge the activity part because that is the part we are really aware of and forget. it is like no, my whole nature, who I was in my core was a rebel, was a sinner. And that is why my activity followed because I was a pagan. Therefore, I was led astray. Led astray. Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way." that is what it means. And Christians need to remember this. I used to be led astray. Now, I want you to turn with me to the right to go to the book of Ephesians, chapter 2. So, we have got 2 Corinthians, then Galatians, then Ephesians, just a few pages to the right, and go to chapter 2, which I think is probably one of the best succinct passages in the scripture, remembering who you and I used to be before God saved us. And I want you to look with me at verses 1 through 3 of chapter 2 so we can remember what it used to look like when you were led astray.

What did it used to look like when you were led astray.

My hope in all of this and spending so much time trying to understand and apply verse two in 1 Corinthians 12 is that it would just be a stark reminder for you the depths of your sin nature and your sinful actions that you have been saved from and that you and I would be able to just sit back and say, "Thank you, Lord, for

delivering me from the depths of both my sinfulness and my sinful actions. Thank you, Lord. We need to remember the darkness that we have been delivered of, delivered from. So, I think we can all the more appreciate the light we get to live in Christ Jesus. So, that is why I am trying to take you as deep as I can into that dark mine of sin to remember how deep down there you and I were and how much wickedness we have been saved from. You were led astray. What does that look like? Well, look at Ephesians 2 1-3. You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. that is Satan and his confederates, Satan and demons. Verse three, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. What does it look like to be led astray? That that is how you used to be. And that is what Paul wants you and I to remember before we even start talking about spiritual gifts.

He wants us to remember who we used to be. I think to properly humble us. I think to remind us that any spiritual gift you have got is just the mercy of God. This is who you were. You did not get any gifts because you were good enough or anything like that. It should not elevate your pride. It should not make you arrogant. None of that. Look who you used to be. it is like, hey, remember how much of a dummy you were? Like why would you ever be prideful when considering spiritual gifts? Or remember how you what you used to be and how you used to act. How dare you act those same ways that you did when you were an unbeliever and call it the work of God, the Holy Spirit. How dare you do that? So he is doing all of that in 1 Corinthians 12:2. Remember who you used to be. You were pagans. You were led astray. What does that look like? Well, Christians were once led astray because they were spiritually dead. You used to be led astray from God's commands and God's promises. Excuse me.

Because you were spiritually dead. Look at the first part of verse one.

and you were dead. You were dead. Imagine you came upon a horrific car wreck and someone is inside the vehicle and they are dead. What do they need?

They need a stretcher. They need an ambulance. They need a defibrillator. Do they need medicine? Do they need a self-help coach? They need resurrection. They need to be brought back from the dead. And that is what Paul is saying. You were like before you were a Christian. You were spiritually, though physically alive, you were spiritually dead. You could not do anything to make yourself alive. Can a dead person do anything to bring themselves back? If someone codes and is laying on the table like you can maybe bring them back. they are not doing it. you are spiritually dead. You can do nothing. And that is because of our spiritual deadness. Dead to the things of God. did not love God. did not want to glorify God. did not want to enjoy God. did not want to obey God. Spiritually dead and unresponsive to the

good that you should respond to. that is why you were led astray because you were spiritually dead. Think about how bad your state was before God saved you for Christ's sake. Even if you got saved when you are like five, you were still dead, spiritually dead before God saved you. Think of the things Paul could have said, "And you were weak." He did not say that. You were wounded in your trespasses and sins. No, I did not say that. You were incomplete in your trespasses and sins. No, he did not say that you were sick in your trespasses and sins. No bad in your trespasses and sins. No, he did not say any of those things. He said you were dead. And the only reason you are a Christian today is because God the Holy Spirit came to you sovereignly without your permission and caused life to come in you. that is called regeneration, the new birth. It happens as you hear or read the gospel. God the Holy Spirit like the wind that blows. You do not know where it comes from. You do not know where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the spirit. Christ says in John 3, he causes you and I to be born again. This is why you and I have life in Christ Jesus. Unbelievers, this is what you need to happen to you. You need God, the Holy Spirit to cause you to be born again so that your eyes will be open to the beauty of Christ. He is beautiful. You just love sin so much you will refuse to see him as beautiful. You need to be born again so that you see God's commands as delightful. They are delightful. they are not burdensome to Christians. I want to obey God. You Christians, you want to obey God. But unbelievers see God's commands as burdensome and as a yoke they want to cast off. that is because God forbids the sins that you love and commands the righteousness that you hate. And so you need something to happen to you so that you would see Christ as beautiful as he truly is. And you would see God's commands as delightful as they truly are. But you need a nature change. You need to be born again. You need life to be given to you. So cry out to God and ask him to cause you to be born again. This is your spiritual past, Christian. You were dead. that is why you were led astray. Spiritually dead. But secondly, look, he says, you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked. And the trespasses and sins in which you once walked. And so Christians were once led astray. According to 1 Corinthians 12:2, it is like you were pagans. You were led astray. Why? Well, you were led astray into trespasses and sins. That was your whole life. Christians, you probably think about your own sins a lot because you are most aware of when you think something sinful, say something sinful, feel something sinful, do something sinful, or you do not do something you know is righteous, which is sinful. You do not desire something you know you should, which is sinful. All of that, you are aware of that more than anyone else. if you are if you had not hardened your heart, if you have not seared your own conscience by your continual unrepentant sin. But you Christians, you know your own sin.

And the crazy thing is that before you were a Christian, you probably did not know your own sin at all. Probably did not think about it. You probably did not really recognize it as much as you do now. You probably recognize so many sins in your life now that before you were a believer, you did not really think about it that much

cuz your heart was hard and your conscience was seared and you did not care. And so it is hard to remember that you used to be led astray into trespasses and sins in which you once walked because I think if you are like me, your gut reaction might be like it still kind of feels like that sometimes. It is like you have no idea the difference in who you used to be and who you are. You are just awake now. You used to be asleep. Now you are awake and realize your sins and are convicted of your sins by God the Holy Spirit and granted repentance from your sins. All of that. But you used to be dead in the trespasses and sins in which you walked. It used to absolutely dominate your entire life. Before you were a Christian, look at me. Before you were a Christian, you never did anything but sin. You had never done anything but sin. That which does not proceed from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is sin. That is why the proverb says, "The plowing of the wicked is sin."

the plowing of the wicked. Like when an unbeliever is sowing his field, he is doing just an objectively good thing. But because his heart is in rebellion to the Lord, and he is not even doing that vocational duty, which by itself is a good thing, he is not doing that vocational duty for the glory of God, out of love for God. That very plowing is sin. That which does not proceed from faith is sin. Even the good things that you did that we would all agree those were objectively good things. You help someone in need, whatever. If it is not done from a heart that trusts in Christ for salvation, loves God, and has the desire to glorify God, then that itself, that good and righteous thing, is still sin for you because you are supposed to not only morally conform to God's commands, but out of love for God and for the glory of God, want to obey his commands. You never did anything but sin before God saved you for Christ's sake. This is how you were led astray in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked. Now, there are sins of omission and sins of commission. A sin of omission is what our catechism calls a lack of conformity to the word of God. That is an omission. You are omitting something you should do. God's word commands you to do this and you do not do it. That is a sin of omission. And then a sin of commission is a transgression of the law of God as our catechism puts it. What is sin? Sin is any lack of conformity to or transgression of the law of God. So omission is lack of conformity to the law of God. And omission is a transgression or a breaking, a violating of the law of God. Omission, boys and girls, sin, you and I can sin against God by not doing something he has told us to do, commanded us to do. And we can also sin against God by doing something that God has said do not do it. You guys understand that? Are you disobeying your parents? If your dad says, "Do not say that word," and you say it anyways, are you disobeying your parents? Yeah, that one is easy to understand, right? They said, "do not do it." And I did it anyways. But what if your parents require you to do something like when you see the trash can full, do not just pile more stuff onto the trash can so it starts overflowing onto the kitchen floor, but when you see the trash can full, take the trash out. They have commanded you to do something. Now, what if you go and put something on top of the trash can when your parent had told you to take it out when you see it like that? Is that disobeying your

parents? Yeah. They said, "Do this and you did not." Or they said, "do not do this and you did it anyway." that is what sin is. Lack of conformity to or transgression of the law of God. And that boys and girls before you were a Christian, you never did anything but sin against God. Everything you thought, everything you desired, all of that was ultimately in rebellion to God. Because if you do not trust in Christ and love God and do it for the glory of God, it is not righteous. The law of God is more than just us doing little bitty right and wrong things. It goes much deeper. Adults, this is your spiritual past. And though it may feel, it could feel to you like I just still feel like I hardly do anything but sin. Now, I think you and I most easily realize and are aware of our sins. And if you are humble like I think most of you are, you do not really realize your own righteousness, your own righteous actions, because you still realize how far you fall short of the glory of God, and all you can remember is how you have wounded Christ, for lack of a better term, and cannot remember how you have pleased Christ.

Is that true for you? it is harder to remember the good things and very easy to remember the bad things. I think that is true for most of us. And let me give you this exhortation. If you are like me and that is true for you, I can very easily remember my sins, but well, it will never like ping or click when I do something right. Since that is the case, I think with most of us, why not encourage other believers? When you see something good, when you see something right, you should look at them and say, "I saw that. Good job. That pleases the Lord." Why not do that? Encourage one another in those ways by even pointing out like, "Hey, God, I see God at work in you. I saw that and that was good. I am proud of you. You can say I am proud of you. it is not arrogance or pride. Paul says that he uses there is sinful pride and then there is godly pride and what we typically mean by like, "Hey, good job. I am proud of you for doing that. You should do that for others." We all used to just walk. We were led astray into trespasses and sins. But now, if you are a Christian, you have been set free from that and you have been filled by the Holy Spirit. you are led by the Holy Spirit. you are guided by the scriptures. God is at work in you, sanctifying you. And you do good works that God prepared beforehand that you should walk in them. And so, let's identify those in other people and try to encourage one another as we follow Christ. This is who you used to be, but you are not that any longer. And let's help remind one another of that. Look thirdly, look at the next part or the first part of verse two. Christians, what we can learn is Christians were once led astray into worldly living, following the course of this world. Following the course of this world. Now, the scriptures use the word world in seven different ways.

seven different ways. And here in this following the course of this world, what it means is living or walking in rebellion to God. The world as it is opposed to the saints, walking in rebellion to God. So the whole point is to imagine like a rushing river and everyone floating down the stream going wherever the flow takes them eyes closed to actual sin true injustice and real evil just following the course of this

world. You can see, I mean, just in the last five years, just take the case study of like since COVID hit, imagine what your life would be like if you followed the course of this world.

you would probably still be wearing a mask. You who knows what you would think or what you would do if you just like this is the way the world goes and you are just like, "Oh, okay. morally. Think about where you would be if you followed after the course of this world. you would be all about DEI. you would be all about woke-ism. you would be all about systemic racism. you would be all about things that the world, it just comes upon you the course of this world. And you can tell the people that are. And sometimes I can forget that there are actually people that just flat out follow the course of this world. I can get so insulated because most of my life is like I am praying, I am reading, I am writing, I am with my family this season of the year. I am hunting and then I am with you. Like that is my whole job is trying to be with you. And then I get exposed to people I used to be friends with in high school. home like, whoa, following the course of this world. Imagine what you would be like if you were still following the course of this world. But now, you are no longer like that. Christians are being transformed by the renewal of their minds so that you and I may no longer be conformed to this world, but rather may discern what the will of God is, what is good and acceptable and perfect in our sin, we were led astray by worldly living. Now we are led in paths of righteousness for Christ's name's sake. remember who you were. You were led astray into worldly living. But look next at verse two in Ephesians 2, helping us understand what Paul means in 1 Corinthians 12:2 by you were led astray. You used to be led astray by Satan and demons. that is what he means by following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. Prince of the power of the air is Satan and his demons, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. Before you were a believer, you were led astray under the influence of Satan and demons. If you are not saved by Jesus and thus not following Jesus, who do you think you are following? No one. that is never the case. you are following somebody. somebody is leading you around. Led astray. Even in 1 Corinthians 12, it is like led by the nose. Led by the hunk of the nose. you are being pulled. you are led astray. Satan and demons are at work in the world and they hate you. And there is such thing as demonic oppression and demonic possession. But demonic oppression and possession cannot happen to a true Christian. you have been sealed by God the Holy Spirit. you have been filled by the Holy Spirit. If you are truly a believer, you have no you need to have no fear of demonic oppression or possession. Not going to happen. Influence still happens. Whispering still happens. Prowling around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour still happens. Schemes still happen. But it used to be much worse than that. You used to not just have to worry about the prowling around of Satan seeking someone to devour like you do now Christians. You used to have to or you did not even realize probably you had to worry about he he is just leading you around by the hook of the nose.

This is your spiritual past Christian. You were not children of God. You were children of the devil. and you were following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. But now Christians, you are sealed for the day of redemption by the Holy Spirit, filled by the Holy Spirit for faithful service to Christ, led by the Holy Spirit for fruitful righteousness, and comforted by the Holy Spirit for encouraging living and dying. You were once following the prince of the power of the air, but now you by God's grace are keeping in step with the spirit. Hallelujah. Remember who you used to be. Look at the first part of verse three.

Why does Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:2 say we were led astray? Well, Christians were once led astray because they had a sinful nature. A sinful nature. Thank you so much.

Christians were once led astray because they had a sinful nature. Look at the first part of verse three again. Among all among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind. We used to live according to the passions of our flesh carrying out our desires. And this is the desires we have that came from a sinful nature. The passions we had of our flesh because our nature was wrong because we inherited a sin nature from Adam.

that is who you used to be. that is why David says in Psalm 51:5, "I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me." He was not talking about the act of consummation was like adultery or something. In sin did my mother conceive me. that is not what he means. He means because I inherited guilt and Adam's transgression. I was conceived in sin. I was a sinner from the moment of conception.

that is why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 in Adam all die. All who are born from Adam by ordinary generation, all his posterity are born spiritually dead with a sinful nature. that is how bad the fall of man was. In Adam, all die. Before we are saved by Christ, we do not think the thoughts of God, nor do the works of God, nor honor and glorify God. Have you noticed how baffled the world is when some unspeakable evil happens?

When something terrible happens? How baffled? Like I cannot believe this happened. Like really, you do not understand what a human is then outside of Christ. I can totally understand how that happens. I cannot understand how 911 happened really because Romans 3 says unbelievers feet are swift to shed blood. I cannot believe that our government would lie to us about so many things and try to pull the wool over our eyes. Like really? People will do anything for more power or more money because the sinful nature that we have living in the passions of flesh carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind. Of course, have you ever

noticed also that you do not have to teach a kid to be bad? do not have to teach a kid to be bad. You have to teach a kid to be good. Why? because of the sinful nature that we have from the fall from Adam. This is your spiritual past. You had a sinful nature. You lived in the passions of your flesh. You carried out the desires of the flesh and the mind. But now Christians have received a new nature, set free from slavery to sin and made alive in the spirit. You need to memorize this verse. 2 Corinthians 5:17. 2 Corinthians 5:17. Many of you probably already have it, even if you cannot remember the reference. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. Christians, you have been given a new mind, will, and affections. that is the heart. Biblically speaking, when God mentions the heart being changed or something like that, the heart is the whole inner man, meaning his mind, his will, and his affections. Christians, you have been given a new mind, a new will, a new affections, a new mind to think the thoughts of God and understand the things of God. a new will to choose the things of God and reject the things that disobey him and new affections to love the things of God and hate the things that God hates.

You are a new creation if you are in Christ. you are no longer You no longer have a sin nature. you are no longer just living in the passions of your flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind. you have been made new.

Now I say to you as an exhortation, do not neglect the new mind, will, and affections that God has given you. Do not neglect that great gift of a new heart. Or you may very easily find yourself hardening your heart against God, against his ways, against his people, and go down this path of darkness. You will harden your heart and sear your conscience so that you will make peace with sin and think you are living in righteousness. do not neglect the new heart that God has given you. Think the thoughts of God. Choose the things of God. Love the things of God. You were once led astray because you had a sinful nature, but no longer. And lastly, look at the last part of verse three in Ephesians 2. You were once led astray into the path of the wrath of God. that is where it goes. When you get off the path of righteousness, as we all have, all we like sheep have gone astray, you are just in the path of the wrath of God.

Look at verse three. And we are by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

This is what is due to you and I for your rebellion against God. for my rebellion against God. The smallest sin against our infinitely holy God deserves an eternity of wrath.

You are by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. The Bible speaks of the wrath of God toward sinners with 20 plus words. And it speaks of God's wrath

burning against sinners over 600 times in the scriptures. it is not a small issue. This is the wages of sin. Not simply physical death, but spiritual and eternal conscious torment death.

Christians were once led astray into the path of the wrath of God. And this is the chief reason the Lord Jesus Christ entered the world. to take on your nature, human nature, though without sin, and to be your perfect substitute and living the life you never lived and then taking the wrath that you have earned and have begged for your entire life. that is what Jesus did on the cross. that is what was in the cup. If there is any way, Father, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. what is in the cup? The cup is filled with the wrath of God for sinners. And the Lord Jesus Christ willingly went to the cross and drained that cup of wrath to the dregs. Turned it over, slammed it down on the table, and said, "It is finished. Now you and I get to pick up that cup and fill it with the joy of salvation." You were once in the path of the wrath of God. that is where being led astray leads. But the Lord Jesus Christ came to the earth to die in our place for our sins so that all who believe would be forgiven, would be reconciled, would have a new nature, and would no longer be led astray. we would be led in paths of righteousness for Christ's name's sake. This is what Isaiah 53:6 says. "Oh, we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him Christ the iniquity of us all. Hallelujah.

If you are not yet trusting in and submitting to Jesus, this is it simply. He lived the life that you should have lived and have not. He died the death you deserve to die and cannot. and he arose from the dead and he offers himself to you and says, "All who believe in me will never be put to shame. Come and rest and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ." And believers, you who already are trusting in and resting in him, you were once led astray, but now you have been saved and now you are led by the spirit according to the scriptures. Praise God. Now, as we close, just look at this last part. And time has gotten away from me. But look at this last part of verse two. Go back to 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 12.

So you were pagans. Remember that you were led astray. And then to what were you led astray? To mute idols. That means unable to speak. The whole point of that is it is just idols. Before you were a believer, you were an idolator. that is his point. Christians need to remember that they were once idolaters. You did not worship God. You did not love God. You did not live for God's glory. No matter how moral or a good upstanding citizen you were. You did not live for God's glory. You lived for someone else's. You lived for your own glory. You were an idolator. You worshiped and served a created thing rather than the creator in some way. I believe this text is very clear that every unbeliever is explicitly an idolator. And it is not just some of them. Notice what he how he says it. You were led astray after mute idols. However you were led, look at it. You were led astray after mute, stupid, dumb, unthinking, un-acting. They cannot do anything. They cannot say

anything. cannot think anything. it is an idol. it is a created thing. cannot do anything for you. You were led astray after mute idols. Unless one of the Corinthians be like, "Well, I was not." He says, "However you were led, whatever you were like before you were a believer, you were an idolator." How can he say that? it is because God created you to be a worshipper. it is not if you worship, it is what you worship. You are a worshipping being. You will trust in something or someone. You will give yourself to something or someone. It must be the Lord Jesus Christ. So, you need to remember that you were once idolators. You need to remember that you were once led astray. And you need to remember that you were once pagans. And Paul wants you to know that before he even starts talking to you about spiritual gifts. So be humbled Christians and remember where you have come from. Remember how deep the mind goes. And turn back to the right with me in Ephesians 2. Let's just finish by reading verses 4 through 10.

This is what is true for you now believer. Ephesians chapter 2:es 4-10. But God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Now, let's worship the Lord because of those glorious truths. Pray with me. Our Father, we ask that you help us remember who we used to be pagans, what we used to do being led astray and who we used to worship, idols, so that we would all the more appreciate your salvation in Christ Jesus. and we would be prepared to be humbled when it comes to our spiritual gifts and how to use them. Please humble us and help us to never bring any kind of our old life pagan led astray idols type life or actions into your church into the function of our spiritual gifts. Help us to never blend the world with Christ. Help us to never do that so that we can glorify you and enjoy you. We offer up all these things to you that we do now. Our songs, the Lord's supper, our offerings that we give, our fellowship, the food that we get to enjoy. We do all this to glorify you, to praise you, to worship you. Please receive it all for Christ's sake. Please save sinners and sanctify your saints in Jesus name. Amen.