



*Every Spiritual
Blessing*

EPHESIANS - WEEK 12
Your New Self

Opening prayer

Prayer for the millennial generation:

That Your kingdom would come in power upon this generation so that many will come to know Christ and do His will. “Your kingdom come.” (Matt. 6:10)

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Erick Cobb and Covenant Grace Church. Make Erick and the elders of Covenant Grace worthy of Your calling and fulfill by Your power power their every desire for goodness and every work of faith, that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in them and they in You.

Closing prayer

INTRODUCTION

Big Idea: You can only walk like Christ when you think like Christ.

A Christlike life begins with a Christlike mind.

“The battle for Christian holiness begins with the battle for the Christian mind.” (Steven J. Lawson)

Ephesians 4:17-32

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.

1 Point #1 - The terrain of our spiritual battle is the mind.

The success or failure of how you're living or not living the Christian life hinges on your mind. That is the terrain of the spiritual battle. This is why we

employ arguments and reasons that are according to Scripture, because we're trusting God to bring light our minds.

What is futility? It's powerlessness. The human mind is useless (or powerless) to bring about spiritual life. It is ultimately ineffective.

Paul's telling Christians not to walk like the rest of humanity who look to human ingenuity to solve the deep problems of human nature. They look to education apart from God as the answer to the issues of the day. They look to themselves.

They look to... fill in the blank with the ism or the ology, but what it boils down to is humanity looking to itself to fix itself.

- Fuller explanation about all truth being God's truth.

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.

2 | Point #2 - The natural state of the human mind is set against God.

- Worse than you realize, but more loved than you could ever imagine.
- We don't like being told we're not alright even when we know we're not alright.
- In Cold Blood

In other words, humans do not naturally love

God. It's just the opposite, we are naturally opposed to God.

Romans 8:7-9

⁷ For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

In our natural state of mind, in our unconverted state of mind, we cannot submit to God's Word.

⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please

God. ⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

This is what makes a person a Christian — the Holy Spirit residing in them. That's the distinction here. The Christian now has the Holy Spirit inside of them and this is why we think differently about the world we live in. We think differently than people who are not Christians. What Paul says about us before we're Christians is not flattering.

Ephesians 4:18

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.

Two things to understand about the human condition. One, in our unconverted state, as people who do not know Christ, there is an ignorance about God that we are born with. We do not know God naturally. Again, that's why

following your heart or looking inward for answers is a bad idea.

Two, we go deeper into that ignorance due to the hardness of our hearts. We are in opposition to God and His ways. That is our natural state. And in hardening our hearts we go deeper into that state of opposition.

There is the great misunderstanding people have about God's electing grace here. Often, people see salvation as God standing at the gate of heaven beckoning humanity to enter by the cross

of Jesus Christ and God lets in whoever comes to the gate. So, they misunderstand the biblical doctrine of election thinking it teaches that God stands at the gate saying, "I'll take you, but not you. And I'll take you, but not you." As if God is ever random.

That's not the biblical view of election. The first problem with that analogy is that God may be standing at the gate beckoning humanity to come to Him through Christ, but nobody comes to the gate. No not one. The biblical picture of

humanity is much bleaker — no one wants to come to God.

Romans 3:10-12

¹⁰ as it is written:

“None is righteous, no, not one;

¹¹ no one understands;

no one seeks for God.

¹² All have turned aside; together they have

become worthless;

no one does good,

not even one.”

The biblical view of election is because in our natural state we will not seek God, God leaves the gate and seeks and saves particular people out of a justly condemned humanity to show the glory of His grace.

¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

3 Point #3 - If you have a hard heart, it can become even harder.

It can become even more callous. Why would anyone want a hard heart? Because they want to do what they want to do. Quite often this has to do with sexual sin. Sensuality.

Where do we find society's greatest objections to Christianity? In the biblical sexual ethic. It was that way in the 1st century and it's that way

today. And it's been that way in points in between.

In hardening their hearts to the truth, people protect themselves from conflicting thoughts about their sexual ethic. This allows them to practice every kind of impurity. The tragedy is that you can find experts in therapy who will not only support every kind of impurity, but encourage you to choose that path. Be careful who counsels you.

The other reason people might harden their hearts is because they have been hurt. You see, we need to distinguish what kind of person we're talking to when we're talking to an unbeliever. Are they like a child in their ignorance of the gospel? Are they a mocker? Are they hurt? You can't know how to deal with a person until you determine something about them.

- 17-year old young woman

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,

So, the first step of application is the gospel. The way Paul just described people hardening their hearts and becoming more callous so they can practice sin more freely is the exact opposite of the gospel.

In the gospel, when you believe that you're a sinner in need of a Savior and you trust Christ as your Savior you are then born again, given a new heart. Now, the process is in softening your

heart, making it more pliable so that you can practice mercy and compassion in ever increasing measures. In other words, Paul say...

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,

4 Point #4 - Put on your new self.

What self did you put on this morning after you got up?

Even if you've become a Christian, you have this old way of thinking, this old way of viewing the world and what's best for you, what's best for your neighbor, how you should handle things, etc.

This old way of thinking is your old self, the self before you became a Christian, but it is still very much alive in your thinking. It's a corrupt way of thinking. It's deceitful. That's why Paul talks

about the renewing of your minds. The Bible reveals reality as defined by God.

Have you ever had a conversation with someone about God and had them go, “The Bible doesn’t say that!” They’re often shocked at the God of the Bible, because they have a different view of reality. They have a false view of reality. They’re actually shocked God has a viewpoint. And they are further shocked that their viewpoint is in conflict with God’s. That’s when they pull out the line, “That’s just your interpretation.” That line is not really for you. It’s for them. They are

protecting themselves. They are protecting their ignorance. They want their understanding to remain in the dark, because it conflicts with their view of reality.

And Paul says, “This is not the way you are now.”

²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

The good news is that you have a new self. If

anyone is in Christ he is a new creation. The Holy Spirit in you is completely like God, because He is God — God the Holy Spirit. He is true righteousness and true holiness. He wants to take what is His and live it through you.

²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

Your new self loves the truth. Loving truth will effect three different areas of your personality.

The gospel will effect your emotions. The gospel will effect your actions. And the gospel will effect your speech. In other words, grace will shoot right through the center of your being.

These are three areas you should always be experiencing growth in.

5 | Point #5 - The gospel will effect your emotions.

26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

Notice the Bible doesn't teach that we're never to be angry. If injustice in a society that calls good evil and evil good doesn't make you angry then there's something wrong with you.

“Anger isn't opposed to love. It's *part of* love. Anger is the loving response to anything that threatens what we cherish... A God who doesn't get angry is a God who doesn't care about

justice. A God who doesn't get angry is a God who doesn't love." (Trevor Laurence)

But you can't stew in that anger the way people who confuse politics with religion do. You can't always be angry. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. You shouldn't go to bed angry, which means you shouldn't wake up angry. The anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. That's why Paul says...

²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.

The way we handle our anger is key to either giving the devil an opportunity or not. We don't want our anger to give the devil an upper-hand. If you've ever been in a situation that you can look back on where you responded with anger and you remember how that played out because of the people you made angry with your anger — that's what he's talking about.

6 | Point #6 - The gospel will effect your actions.

28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

7 Point #7 - The gospel will effect your speech.

29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the

Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

So, here's the recap. The gospel will effect your emotions, your actions and your speech.

Ephesians 4:31-32

³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.