

**(Theme Slide)**

*Ephesians 4:17 page 1081 in handout Bibles*

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.

*ESV*

2

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 18**

Ephesians 4:18-19 page 1081 in handout Bibles

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**.  
<sup>19</sup>They have become **callous** and have **given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice** every kind of impurity.

ESV

3

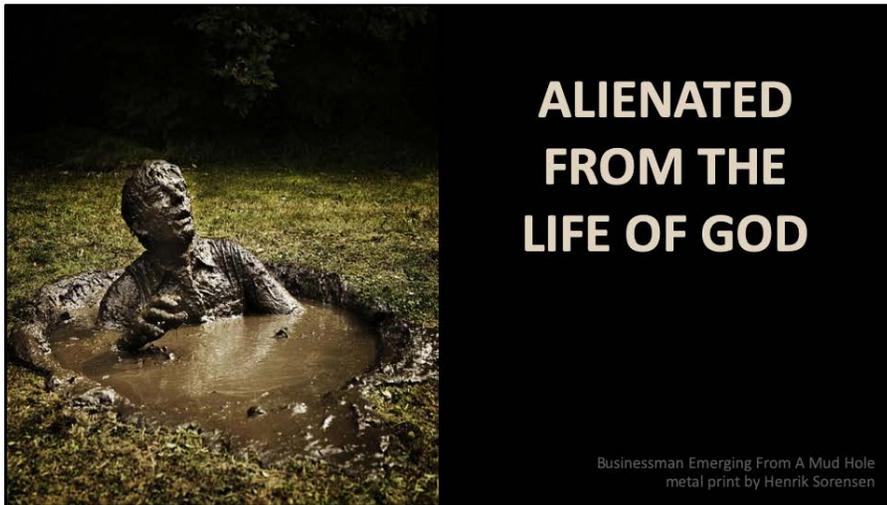
## READ SLIDE

- What a horrifying description!
- Walking as the Gentiles do = as unbelievers
- Remembering that Western Asia Minor, modern day Turkey, was mostly Gentile, that is, non-Jewish.
- The Apostle Paul did usually go to a city and first share the Gospel with the synagogue of Jews.
- As it says in Acts 18:19: *And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.*
- Acts 19 also tells how Paul entered the synagogue in Ephesus on another trip and for 3 months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But some grew stubborn and continued in unbelief . . . so Paul went to the hall of

**Tyrannus and continued for 2 years.**

**3**

**TR: So, the Apostle writes this letter to a predominantly Gentile church, but with enough believing Jews that the Jew-Gentile issues was very real to them. He told them, and us, of the great things God has done. He tells us not to walk, live in the dailies, like when we were unbelievers. The description is one of people . . .**



4

- . . . being sucked down into the pit of sin**
- alienated from the life of God**
- they don't know the life that Jesus came to bring us**
- they certainly don't know the abundant life that Jesus promised us**
  
- But this passage is not written as a condemnation and judgment of those outside of the professing church**
- It is written to those who would most likely identify themselves as blood-bought saints.**
  
- TR: These folks who would claim that their eyes have been opened and that they have put their faith and trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior . . . some of them were struggling to not WALK like the Gentiles.**



5

**Though this may not be in to order of the text, it is in the order of the logic of the text, with word like “because” and “due to” helping us follow Paul’s thought.**

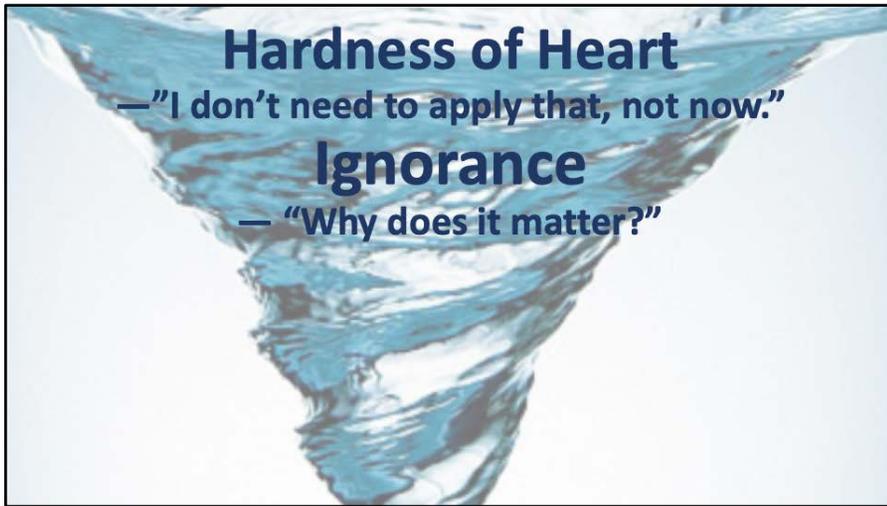
**-- They were struggling with the downward vortex, pulling them down, into . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- (Fold arms over chest)**

**-- This kind of attitude is not only “dead man walking” – dead in our sins and trespasses . . .**

**-- . . . but also “Gentile walking” – alienated from the life of God**

**TR: Gentile-walking also is based on and expressed in . . .**



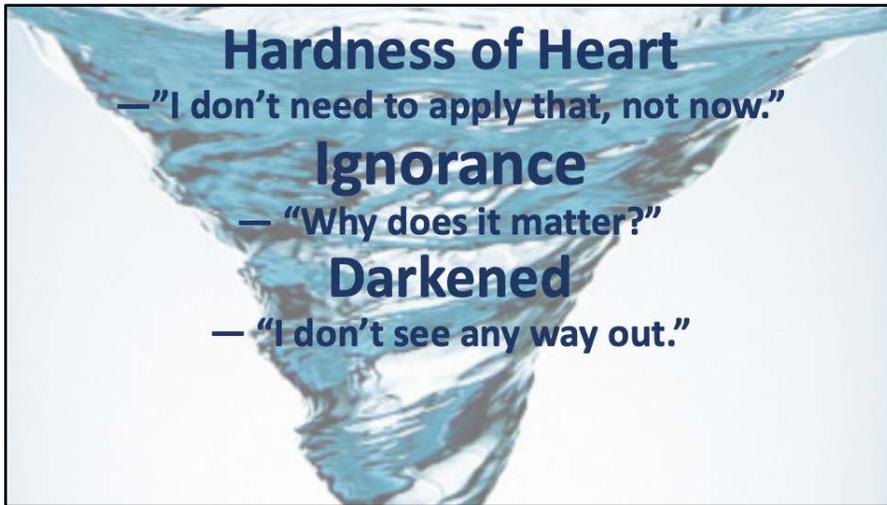
6

## **Ignorance.**

-- This is the opposite of knowledge, which is an obedient and grateful response to the whole person, not just intellectual assent (cf. O'Brien p. 321)

-- To ignore God is to say no to His commands. It is to be ignorant what life is all about and why our response matters.

**TR: Our former way of life included being . . .**



7

## **READ SLIDE**

-- You know it is dark in someone's heart when they say, "It's so dark, I might as well become a child of darkness."

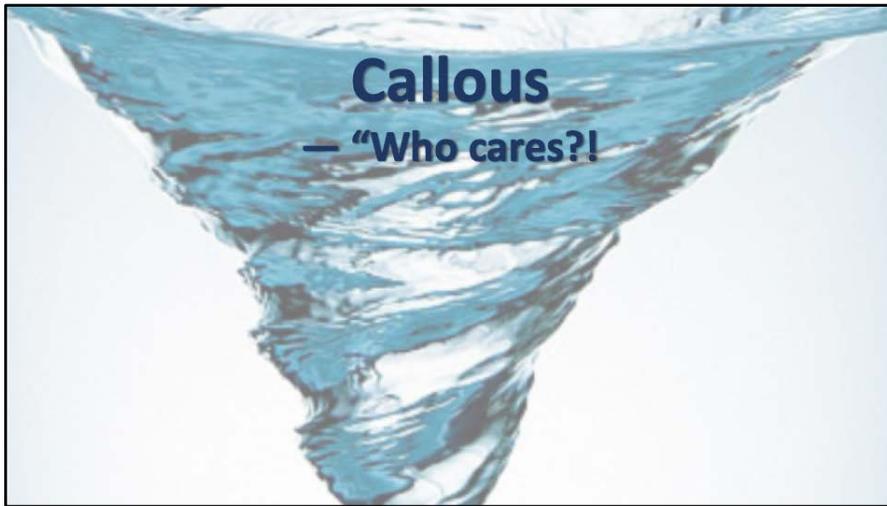
**TR: This takes us to the center of the pit, the worst thing of all . . .**



**READ SLIDE**

-- For the unbeliever who has never thought much about God, this may not be as horrible as for the one-time professing believer who feels like God has abandoned them.

TR: But, the Gentle-walker doesn’t turn around, doesn’t reach for the out-stretched hand of God, but rather they allow their hearts to grow more . . .

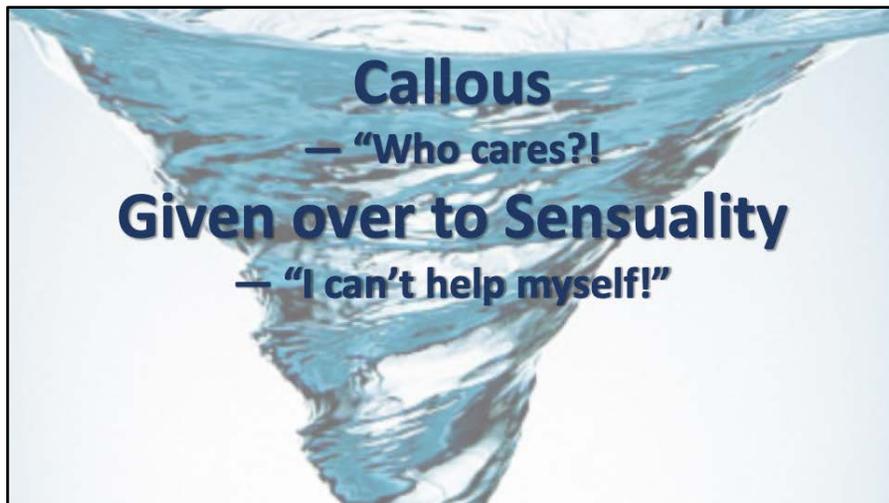


9

**READ SLIDE**

-- Their philosophy becomes, "Who cares? Let's eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

**TR: Their eating and drinking soon isn't enough to self-medicate the pain of not living WITH GOD as they were created to do.**

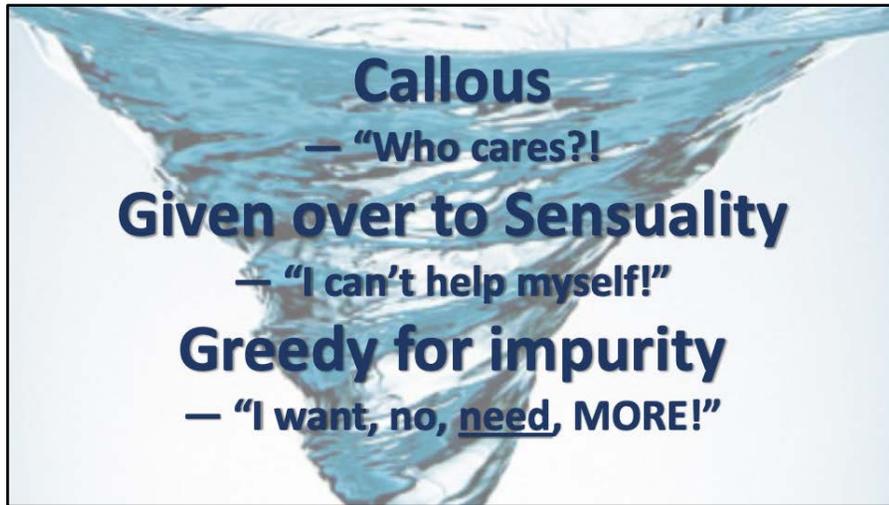


10

**And so they are . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- At first, they did the alcohol and now the alcohol does them. Or the drugs, or the sex, or the porn, or the power, or the fame, or the money . . .**

**TR: Even as Romans 1 describes sinners given over to their sin, we see that their being sucked into pit of despair and further sin is part of God's judgment.**



11

**They find themselves . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Always wanting more, never finding contentment and peace.**

**TR: All these put together give us a picture that needs a soundtrack . . . a sucking sound, pulling us down.**

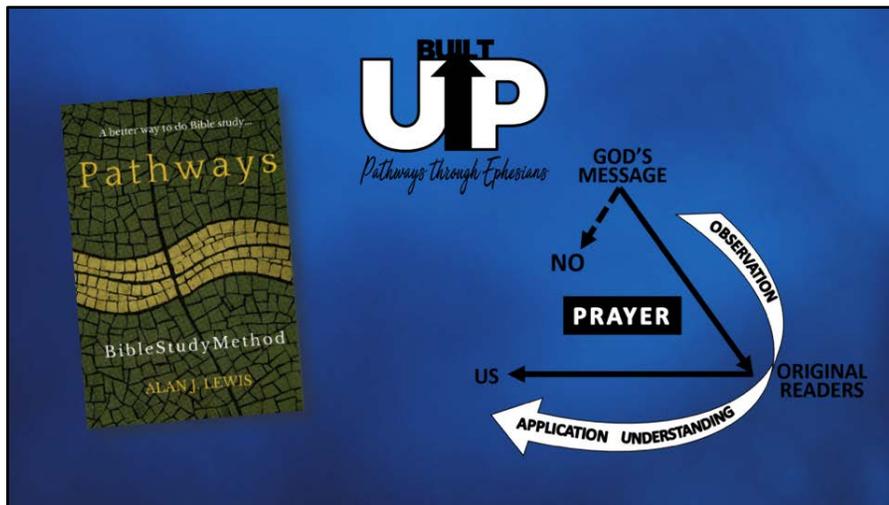


**I won't argue for the exact order, but I can vouch for the reality of the vortex, the quicksand, the mud pit . . . the slough of sin.**

**-- It begins with the Hardness of Heart —"I don't need to apply that, not now." Even our response to this week's text is a decision of faith.**

**-- How horrid to say that out of a hardness of heart . . . perhaps you understand why I pray again and again for "a tender and humble heart" for those in my protectorate.**

**TR: Hopefully, you have been staying with us . . .**



13

... as we are learning the Pathways Bible Study Method.

**TR: If you have, you are on the edge of your seat right now, waiting to get beyond this filthy imagery of the downward spiral of sin. You want to get out of the pit and stop the bombardment of the horrid sucking sound of sin. If you've been studying with us, you can't wait to get to that fantastic linking word after such a disgusting image . . .**

**But** that is not the way you learned Christ!— <sup>21</sup>assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,

ESV

14

The wonderful linking word of BUT . . . READ SLIDE

-- [heard about him] = when Gospel first shared and received

-- [ were taught in him] = by the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers . . . so that they could be equipped to do the work of ministry

-- the first step to being equipped to do the work of ministry is the LEARN CHRIST.

-- All of us in the hearing of this message, at both campuses or online, fit into hearing this for the first time OR being taught in Him.

TR: I've always been impressed that one church wrote this over their entry door to their facility . . .

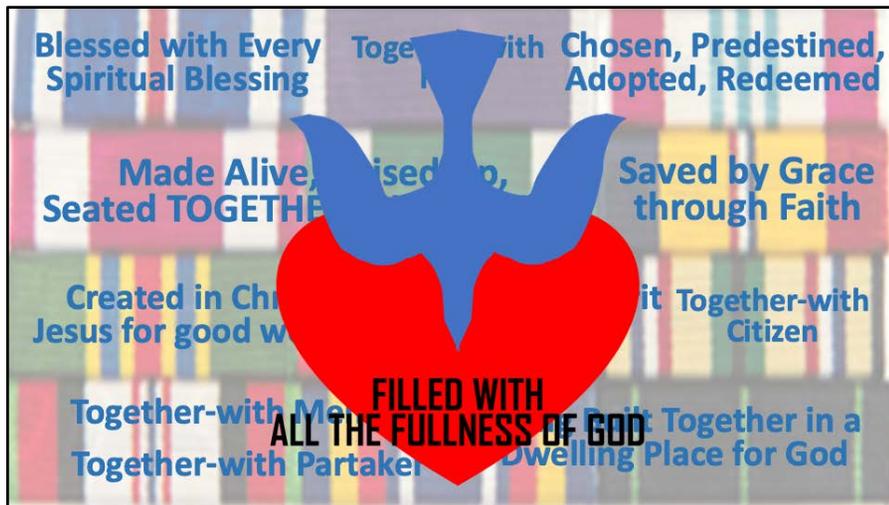


## **READ SLIDE**

**(From church in Rushville, Indiana) “Enter to learn Christ”**

- Not just about Him or from Him but in relationship with Him**
- Thinking back over the whole of the letter to the Ephesians thus far . . .**
- To learn Christ is to have the eyes of our hearts enlightened to every spiritual blessing**
- To learn Christ is to have strength in the inner person to know the love of Christ**
- To learn Christ is to be filled with all the fullness of Him who fills all in all . . . together-with our brothers and sisters as a dwelling place for God.**
- This is the work of the Holy Spirit, who is our teacher so that we can LEARN CHRIST.**

**TR: Remember last week . . .**



16

**when we used this image to remind us that we need the Spirit's powerful work to take all the ribbons that Christ's work provides for us . . .**

**-- . . . and move them from head-knowledge to heart-knowledge.**

**-- Let's pray right now for that!**

**TR: What does "learning Christ" entail? Verse 22 tells us . . .**

**Ephesians 4:22-24**

**to put off** your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,<sup>23</sup> and **to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,**<sup>24</sup> and **to put on** the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

*ESV*

17

**The truth that is in Jesus is this . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: We were just told to no longer walk as the Gentiles do . . . as unbelievers do . . . as the majority of the church in Ephesus did before they trusted Jesus as Savior and Lord . . .**



**to put off** your  
old self, which  
belongs to your  
former manner  
of life and is  
corrupt through  
deceitful desires,

**We are to PUT OFF that old self.**

**-- It belongs to our former manner of life**

**-- It is corrupt through deceitful desires.**

**-- It is NOT enough to be rehabilitated . . . we need to be regenerated.**

**-- The old self doesn't need another chance . . . it is corrupt, sucking us down like a vortex of quicksand.**

**TR: But the daily Christian life is not merely about DON'T do that anymore, it also . . .**



19

... tells us to ... **READ SLIDE**

**TR: Integral to these two action steps is a third one ...**

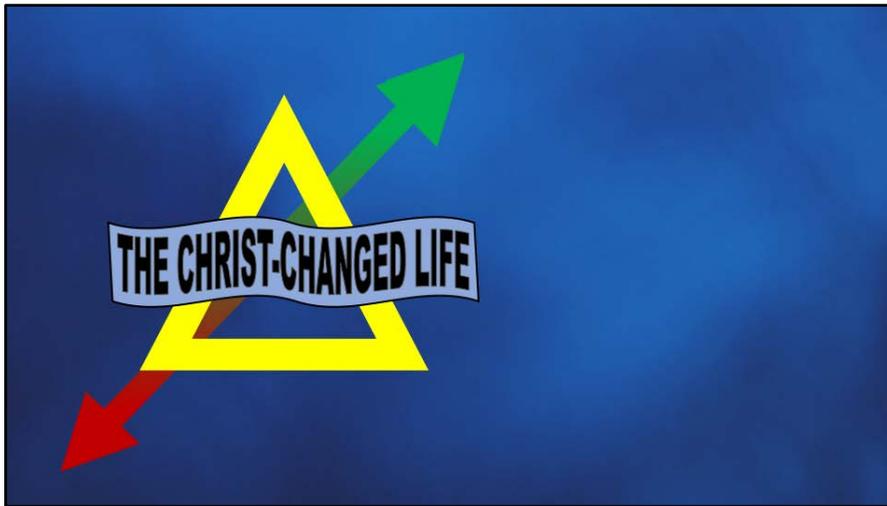


20

### **READ SLIDE**

- The symbols of the red down arrow and the green up arrow are obvious.
- The symbol of the triangle is really a DELTA. The letter used in science to indicate “change”
- Our minds need to be changed.
- We need the Spirit to open the eyes of our hearts and to strengthen us in the inner person . . . so that we can know and comprehend

**TR: When we put these three key ideas together, we learn Christ and . . .**



21

... we experience ... **READ SLIDE**

-- How often have folks come to me and confessed that they seem powerless against certain pitfalls.

-- They keep just falling into the same quagmire hole. For example: Pornography

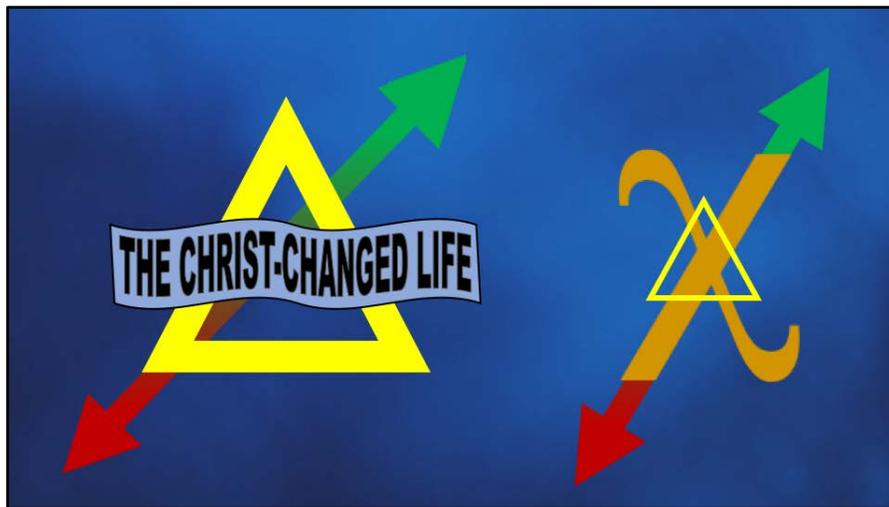
-- As we diagnose the situation ... usually one of these components (at least) is missing.

-- Radical Repentance – *continuing to allow easy access to the porn*

-- Divine Displacement – *not replacing the lust-filled thoughts with a positive thing, like prayer for the individual*

-- Turned-around Thinking – *continuing to treat that person like a commodity to be used up*

**TR: In the God's Man and God's Woman mentoring paths, I've called this . . .**



**. . . the X-changed life.**

**-- The X is really the Greek letter Chi, which begins the word CHRISTOS**

**-- By adding the up and down arrows and overlapping it with another Greek letter, Delta . . . we are reminded of the components of the Christ-changed Life.**

**TR: In this chapter, the letter to the Ephesians starts to reflect the common tension in the New Testament between . . .**

**INDICATIVE – IMPERATIVE  
ALREADY – NOT YET**

*Who we are, is who we are to become*

23

**READ SLIDE**

-- All these ribbons are ours in Christ (indicative) . . . now put them on (imperative)

-- We have died with Christ (indicative) . . . now die to self (imperative)

-- “You were taught” (indicative) . . . NOW . . . walk that way (imperative)

TR: If we were to put it into say it as we might imagine a wise mentor would, perhaps we would say something reflecting German’s practice of putting the verb last . . .

INDICATIVE – IMPERATIVE  
ALREADY – NOT YET

*Who we are, is who we are to become*

***“Who you are . . . be!”***

24

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Be who you are . . . and don't slip into the muddy abyss of . . .**

The Mystery Revealed-Declared



*DISCONNECT*

The Mystery Lived Out

**HYPOCRITE**

25

... hypocrisy.

-- To avoid the disconnect between our talk and our walk, we need to learn Christ.

TR: Paul then helps us with illustrations or specific applications of the Christ-changed life. Beginning in verse 25

**Ephesians 4:25**

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

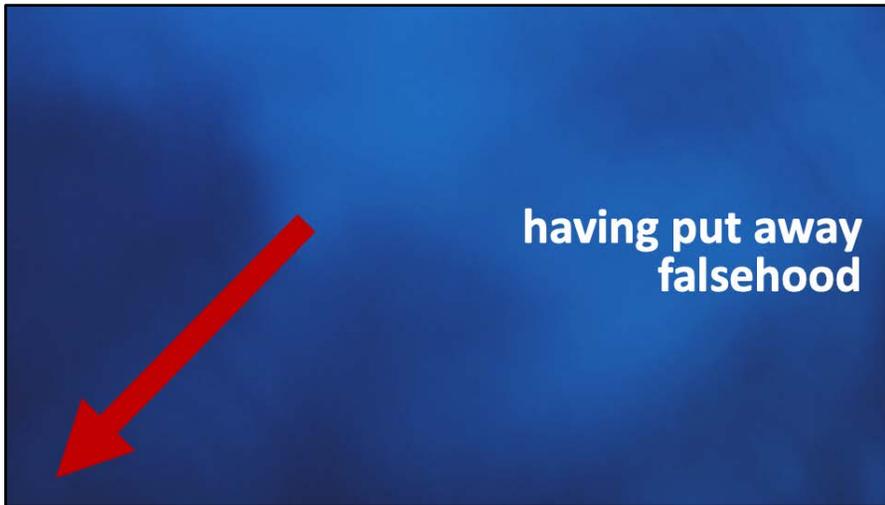
*ESV*

26

**READ SLIDE**

-- This seems to be a citation from Zechariah 8:16

**TR: Let's use our simple icon of the three components of learning Christ and not being caught up like the Gentiles in the futility of their thinking.**



**First, the red down arrow capturing what we are to put off . . .**

**READ SLIDE**

**-- Stop lying to each other, telling half-truths.**

**TR: Instead . . .**



28

**. . . put on, the green up arrow . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: To change someone who struggles telling the truth, especially if it puts them in a bad light, they need more than just this two-sided arrow.**



29

**They need to be renewed or changed in their thinking.**

**-- We stop telling falsehoods and start telling the truths . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- Don't forget chapters 1-3 . . . we are TOGETHER-WITH Jesus and one another, whether Jew or Gentile.**

**-- We are together-with heirs, together-with members, together-with partakers.**

**-- It makes no sense to lie . . . anymore than it is good for the body when one part doesn't let the other parts know it is damaged or being damaged.**

**-- EX: Auto-immune disease . . . the body attacking the body!**

**TR: The second illustration or specific example is in verses 26-27**

**Ephesians 4:26-27**

**Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup>and give no opportunity to the devil.**

*ESV*

30

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: See if you can pull out the three components. Start with the PUT OFF (give a few seconds) . . . what are we to put off in this verse?**



31

**I think it is . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: It is not that we can't have righteous indignation, as the PUT ON component tells us . . .**



**as a quote from Psalm 4:4 . . . READ SLIDE**

- the Bible is not opposed to righteous indignation**
- there is a time and place for anger against sin and evil.**
- But the PUT OFF command was to not let the sun go down on that anger.**
  
- We must not have the anger of a bad temper, or a response of injured pride, or a spirit of revenge.**
  
- TR: Anger seems to the “soup du jour” in our culture . . . most everyone is ordering a bowlful for tomorrow’s lunch. Why must we not let the sun go down?**



**The third component . . . we must renew of thinking and remember that the devil is seeking to take us down.**

**-- The evil one and his forces, the evil powers and principalities, are looking for an opportunity to guide you the life-sucking pit trap that has been set.**

**-- Marriages end, churches are split, partnerships fail, ministries are destroyed . . . because we allow ourselves the futility of thinking that we are not in the midst of a spiritual battle.**

**-- Are we walking like unbelievers? Walking in anger, with short-fuses? Walking with a callousness toward others?**

**-- We did not learn Christ that way, did we?**

**TR: The third example or specific issue Paul addresses is found in verse 28.**

**Ephesians 4:28**

**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.**

*ESV*

34

**READ SLIDE**

- Isn't it easy to rationalize taking what isn't ours?
- "I work hard for the company and they don't appreciate me, so I take home a few office supplies."
- "It isn't really hurting anyone because it is covered by insurance, right?"
- "No one will ever know. They'll never miss it. And if they didn't want it stolen, they should have done a better job protecting it."
  
- Or for students . . . stealing test information or plagiarizing other people's work.
- EX: My seeing the answer in Robertson's class . . . changing my answer . . . and having to go back and make it "wrong."
  
- TR: What are the three components? Put off . . .



35

**. . . stealing.**

**TR: Put on . . .**



36

**working . . . doing honest work.**

**-- This isn't limited to manual labor.**

**-- Though the word used here is for labor to the point of weariness (O'Brien, 343)**

**-- Christians should make the very best employees . . . absolutely trustworthy to do the work and not steal.**

**TR: What about the renewing of our mind component?**



37

### **READ SLIDE**

- We renew our minds with the truth in Christ when He said it is more blessed to give than to receive.**
- The Lord wants us to learn Christ so that we are givers and not takers.**
- Even in our studies . . . we want a surgeon to share their work with us . . . not their stealing of grades.**

**TR: The next two verses will hit all of us, even if we've never been tempted with theft.**

**Ephesians 4:29-30**

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.  
<sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

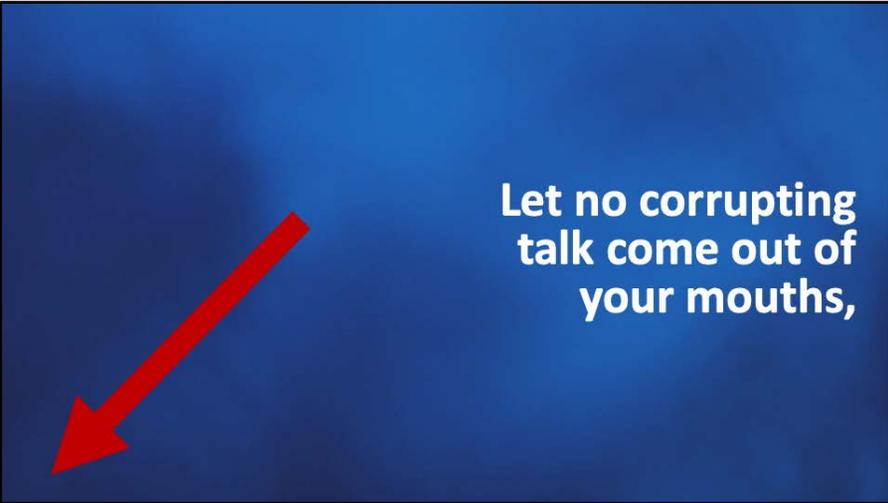
*ESV*

38

**READ SLIDE**

-- Perhaps verse 30 is an overall reason for all of these commands since all of these PUT OFFs would grieve the Holy Spirit Who lives within us, but for today, let's take it with verse 29.

**TR: Put off is . . .**



Let no corrupting  
talk come out of  
your mouths,

**. . . READ SLIDE**

**-- NLT – “do not use foul or abusive language”**

**TR: These are . . .**

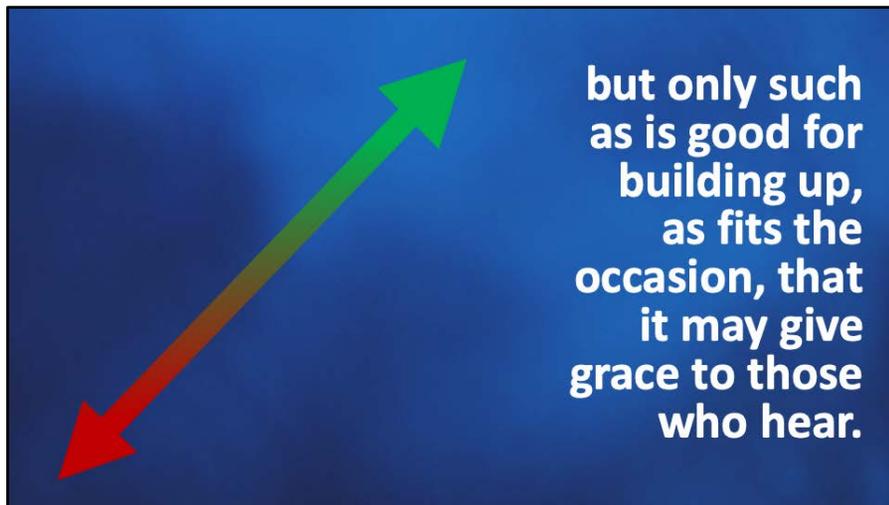


40

**“rotten apple words.”**

- Words that will tear others down**
- Words that are inappropriate**
- Words that suck the life out of others**

**TR: These kind of words are in contrast with . . .**



41

**words that are . . . READ SLIDE**

**-- James tells us that if we can rein in our tongues, we can control anything.**

**-- Many of us get in trouble by what we say . . . so we decide to become people who say nothing.**

**-- But even then, people get hurt . . . because if you make people guess what you are thinking for a long enough period of time, they'll assume the worst.**

**TR: When I've taught on communication, I have used this image to remind us of the kind of words we should serve up to others . .**

.



42

**We should serve them a cup of tea. Words that are . . . READ SLIDE**

- From verse 25 – speak the truth**
- Good for building up - edifying**
- fits the occasion**
- gives grace to those who hear**

**TR: Why would we stop using corrupting talk, or as the NIV translates it, “unwholesome talk” . . . not giving rotten apple words but a gracious cup of TEA? Some of us grew up in homes where the only communication was like a food fight with rotten apple words.**



43

**The mind renewing truths are (1) that TEA words give grace to those in need . . .**

**-- . . . AND (2) they do not grieve the Holy Spirit.**

**-- Remember, we were sealed for the day of redemption.**

**-- The Spirit sealed us with our baptism, and He seals us as those promised the full inheritance in the saints.**

**-- EX: changing behavior because we can picture our sweet grandmother cringing to her us sling the unwholesome slop at someone. . . . how much more the Holy Spirit**

**TR: One last example, from verses 31-32**

**Ephesians 4:31-32**

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

*ESV*

44

**READ SLIDE**

-- There is still a question in my mind about whether we should move on and include 5:1-2 in this section, as I have when I've taught this in previous years.

-- But, let's save those great verses for next week.

TR: Earlier we were told to be angry but not sin and not let the sun go down on our anger. It is hard not to see verse 31 as an opening up of the yogurt that is past use-by-date. We find under the lid, the slimy goo that we need to put off . . .



Let all bitterness  
and wrath and  
anger and clamor  
and slander be  
put away from  
you, along with  
all malice.

45

The term anger is used again, but this time speaking of what has gone from righteous indignation to a settled clenched jaw, scowling posture against another.

-- READ SLIDE

-- This seems to be a climactic list, moving from an internal resentment to an explosive series of attacks.

-- ALL bitterness, etc . . . let's not try to talk away into saying that our anger is somehow working the righteousness of God . . . it is not, as James tells us elsewhere.

-- [clamor] = harsh words; it's lack of restraint is captured in the NIV's "brawling"

-- [slander] = blasphemy, when used against other people "it has the sense of defamation and covers any type of vilifying, either by lies or gossip." (O'Brien p 350)

TR: What are we to put on?



46

**The kind of clothing one would wear to serve a cup of TEA . . .  
READ SLIDE**

**TR: Why do this? Why walk in the opposite direction from the way we used to, in the futility of our thinking?**



47

**Because our minds are renewed with the amazing Good News that . . . READ SLIDE.**

**TR: What is the answer for those who . . .**



48

- ... find themselves in the pit of habitual sin again?
- Who find themselves telling "little white lies,"
  - using our righteous indignation against sin as an excuse to become harsh and bitter,
  - seeing the easy way out of so much work when a version of the "five-fingered discount" would work just fine,
  - being caught up in the way everyone else speaks on the basketball team . . . a rotten apple food fight that is not fitting nor gracious . . . grieving the Spirit.
  - Allowing our bitterness to suck us deeper into saying bad things about people behind their backs for no good purpose.
- BUT, that is not how we learned Christ, is it?
- Today you have heard . . . but now we need to pray, asking that by the power of the Holy Spirit our heart's eyes would be opened and our inner person strengthened
  - . . . SO THAT we can be filled with all the fullness of God.
- TR: A call for humility and prayer . . . this is what I want to pray over you . . .

**Ephesians 1:18-19a**

**I pray that the eyes of your heart may  
be enlightened  
in order that you may know the hope  
to which he has called you,  
the riches of his glorious inheritance in  
his holy people,  
and his incomparably great power for  
us who believe.**

*NIV*

49

**READ SLIDE (from the NIV)**

**TR: And from our memory verses, but this time in the NIV translation . . .**

**Ephesians 3:16-17a**

**I pray that out of his glorious riches  
he may strengthen you with power  
through his Spirit in your inner being,  
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts  
through faith.**

*NIV*

50

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 17 continues . . .**

**Ephesians 3:17b-18**

**And I pray that you,  
being rooted and established in love,  
may have power,  
together with all the Lord's holy  
people,  
to grasp how wide and long and high  
and deep is the love of Christ,**

*NIV*

51

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 19**

**Ephesians 3:19**

**and to know this love  
that surpasses knowledge  
— that you may be filled  
to the measure  
of all the fullness of God.**

*NIV*

52

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: That's what I want to pray for you.**



53

**Are you tired of living in the pits?  
-- Are you ready to LEARN CHRIST?**

**-- Are you willing to humble yourself and ask for prayer so that you can in the Spirit's power PUT OFF, PUT ON, and BE MADE NEW IN YOUR MIND?**