

Ephesians 4:17-24 Old Versus New

Verses 17-19

Therefore – Based on the previous truths – our unity and diversity in Christ.

Walk no longer as the Gentiles – Our position in Christ should result in a change in our condition.

The walk of unbelievers (Gentiles):

-*In futility of their mind* – The word *futility* has the idea of “void of any useful aim or goal.”

-*Darkened in their understanding* – This is a state of darkness. They are covered with darkness like a blanket thrown over an object to keep out the light.

-*Excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them* – They cannot understand spiritual things because of their lack of knowledge.

-*Because of the hardness of their heart* – The word means to be covered as with a callus. It is used three times in the N.T., Mark 3:5, Romans 11:25, and here.

-*Having become callous* – Literally they have ceased to feel pain or grief. The idea is they are “past feeling.”

-*Having given themselves over to sensuality* – Sensuality here is unbridled, excess lust.

-*For the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness* – They indulge in self-gratification without regard for others. The word for greediness implies a person who cannot be satisfied. He is constantly wanting more.

Verse 20

But you – The contrast is strongly emphasized.

You did not learn Christ in this way – Christ was learned exactly opposite of all the above Gentile characteristics.

Verse 21

If indeed – This is a first class conditional in the Greek and can be translated “since.” They had heard Jesus.

And have been taught in Him just as truth is in Jesus – Jesus is the truth (John 14:6) and to know Him is to be taught in the truth. Whereas the unbeliever is darkened in his mind, the believer is enlightened and understands the truth.

Verses 22-24

That, in reference to your former manner of life...

-*You lay aside the old self* – The old self is the person we were before our regeneration.

-*Which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit* – That person can never be reformed as he is progressively getting worse.

-*You be renewed in the spirit of your mind* – The opposite of being futile, darkened, excluded, and hardened is the ongoing process of renewing the mind. Note the parallel in Romans 12:2. This is the walk of sanctification.

-*And put on the new self* – The new self is the person we are after our regeneration.

-*Which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth* – The new self, sometimes called our new nature, is incorruptible. Our job as believers is to strengthen the new man and allow the Holy Spirit to help us live by our true, heavenly nature.

OLD MAN: (Put off as if taking off a stained garment)

Futile, darkened, excluded, hard or heart, calloused, self-centered and greedy. The old man is continually being corrupted and deceived.

NEW MAN: (Put on as if putting on a new garment)

The person we become by regeneration, the new birth, the moment we believe in Christ. The new man is created in the likeness of God and does not sin.

The battle between the old man and the new man rages as we walk with God. Victory is not automatic unless we put off the old self and put on the new self. Putting on the new self involves spiritual growth by learning and applying the Word of God and allowing the Word to renew our minds. Galatians 5:16-25 describes the battle between Spiritual and fleshy desires. The more we learn to walk by the Spirit the more we strengthen the new self and put ourselves in the place of victorious living.