



# **Peninsula City Church**

## **Ephesians: Chapter Four: In Christ**

**All Brand New**

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## Ephesians: Chapter Three: All Brand New

### An Introduction

**Q.** What did Paul reveal here regarding their walk, and how does it deepen our relationship with God?

The following material is from the fourth chapter of the Letter to the Ephesians. Paul is now challenging their walk as followers of Christ. In this section, Paul challenges the Ephesian church to pursue holiness, not morality. He explained how Christ-followers are in Christ and are called to walk in unity, as well as the spiritual gifts they possess to live in a Kingdom perspective. We can learn a great deal about how they were to live as children of God. Basically, Paul was instructing the local church to live a life of holiness. All of this was based on what Paul had said to the Ephesians up to that point.

“Believers are to walk in holiness as well as unity. Paul first showed negatively how a believer should not walk; then he gave the positive aspects of Christian conduct”<sup>1</sup>

So, how do we examine this material and gain a deeper understanding of it? In times when the truth is subjective, we can always find guidance in the Bible. We need to know that the Bible is the source of truth in our day. So, reviewing what Paul, a trusted teacher of truth, had to say can help us appreciate his perspective to deepen our understanding. We will review two principles from these verses to grasp what Paul taught. But what was he doing here? We will look at these verses dealing with the following two points,

- The New Person
- Do Not Grieve the Holy Spirit

### 1. The New Person

**Q.** What did Paul teach the Ephesians in these verses about their daily lives?

In the first three chapters of the letter, we have already seen that Paul taught the church in Ephesus regarding their status as blessed children of the Father. Paul introduced the letter by mentioning the way their Heavenly Father saw them. That is, they were saints. It is essential to understand the context of the letter to appreciate its focus. So, Paul was not just encouraging them to live moral lives; instead, they were to live holy lives. That is, in Eph 1:2 we read,

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus” (Eph 1:1 NASB).

Now, the word that Paul used here, i.e. ‘saint’, is from the same root as the word ‘holy’. Thus, he was reminding the Ephesians that they were ‘holy ones.’

He also wove this idea throughout the letter, using it another eight times. See also the following verses,

“For this reason, I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints” (Eph 1:15 NASB).

“Pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Eph 1:18 NASB).

“So, then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household” (Eph 2:19 NASB).

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<sup>1</sup> Walvoord, John F. & Zuck, Roy B. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. (Whitby, ON, 1984), 636.

“To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ” (Eph 3:8 NASB).

“May be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth” (Eph 3:18 NASB).

“For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:12 NASB).

“But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints” (Eph 5:3 NASB).

“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints” (Eph 6:18 NASB).

Paul was reminding them that they were saints, that is, holy. They were holy because they were set apart to be in the presence of God. Holy essentially means set apart, dedicated, and not common, or dedicated to God. Paul’s purpose here was to guide them in understanding the concept and purpose of holiness. As I mentioned earlier, “Paul was not encouraging them to live moral lives; instead, he was encouraging them to live holy lives.” This is a crucial contextual feature of the letter, especially in light of what is to follow. He also used the word “holy” to refer to the following passages: Ephesians 1:4; 4:24; 5:27. Those who followed Christ in the city of Ephesus were going to be watching the church to see how they lived and what made them different from the other religions there, as well as this new idea. They were to live in Jesus Christ, their transforming saviour.

The following is the structure of the section of the chapter.

See the following regarding the New Person,

<sup>17</sup> “So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, <sup>18</sup> being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; <sup>19</sup> and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. <sup>20</sup> But you did not learn Christ in this way, <sup>21</sup> if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, <sup>22</sup> that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, <sup>23</sup> and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, <sup>24</sup> and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth” (Eph 4:17-24 NASB).

The following is an expanded translation that can help us see what Paul meant. That is,

<sup>17</sup> “This, therefore, I am saying and solemnly declaring in the Lord, that no longer are you to be ordering your behaviour as the Gentiles order their behaviour in the futility of their mind, <sup>18</sup> being those who have their understanding darkened, <sup>19</sup> who have been alienated from the life of God through the ignorance which is in them, through the hardening of their hearts, who, being of such a nature as to have become callous, abandoned themselves to wantonness, resulting in a performing of every uncleanness in the sphere of greediness. <sup>20</sup> But as for you, not in this manner did you learn the Christ, since, <sup>21</sup> indeed, as is the case, you heard and in Him were taught just as truth is in Jesus, <sup>22</sup> that you have put off once for all with reference to your former manner of life the old self who is being corrupted according to the passionate desires of deceit; <sup>23</sup> moreover, that you are being constantly renewed with reference to the spirit of your mind; <sup>24</sup> and that you have put on once for all the new self who after God was created in righteousness and holiness of truth” (Eph 4:17-32 *Wuest*).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, *The New Testament: An Expanded Translation*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1961), (Eph 4:17-32).

These are truths that the local church needs to understand. We need to remember that Paul made his statement in Eph 1:3 and continued to build on that truth of blessing. Paul had heard they were trying to live by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and wanted to encourage them to continue.

“To understand what great wealth they had in Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

They were rich in Christ but needed help to recognise this fact. The Father had given these riches in Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit is now illuminating them to them. They had been given by grace, not by works. These non-Jews may have been working in the past for the gifts associated with the cult of Diana in Ephesus. They were called to live a life of holiness, not morality.

In this section, Paul gave them an understanding of themselves as new people in Christ. The Ephesians were encouraged to live a holy life. They were no longer to live like the rest of the Ephesians, as they had lived before. They were not to strive for a moral life, but a holy one. So, their nature was to be as such,

So, here we see what Paul was saying to them, and encouraging them together with the Lord: v17-24

- That you walk no longer just as the non-Jews also walking, in the futility of their mind: v17
  - Who, being darkened in respect to their understanding, being excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart: v18
  - And they, having become callous (*hardening of the skin*), have already given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness: v19

But as for you (*in contrast*), you did not learn about (*the past*) Christ in this way: v20

- If indeed you have heard (*once and for all*) Him and have been taught (*once and for all*) in Him, just as truth is in Jesus: v21
  - That, in reference to your former manner of life, you put off (*once and for all*) the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit: v22
  - And that you are being inwardly renewed in the spirit of your mind: v23
    - And having put on (*once and for all*) the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth: v24

Therefore, what we have here is that Paul was encouraged by the church's walk in holiness. They were not to walk in the futility of their mind. Paul wanted the Ephesian church to realise that no longer just as the non-Jews also walking, in the futility of their mind.

That is as pointed out in Eph 4:17-24,

- Being darkened with respect to their understanding
- Being excluded from the life of God
- They were not to be ignorant
- They were not to have a hardness of heart
- Not to become callous
- They were not to live sensually for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness

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<sup>3</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. *Ephesians: Be Rich*. (Sydney, Australia, Christian Press, 1986), 238.

- Live practising every kind of impurity with greediness

But as for you, you did not learn about Christ in this way, as pointed out in Eph 4:25-32,

- You heard the truth about Jesus
- You have already put off the old life
- It is being corrupted in accordance with the lust of deceit
- You are being renewed in the spirit of your mind
- You have already put on the new life
- Which is in the likeness of God has been
- Created in righteousness and holiness of the truth

All of this can be summed up in the fact that they had already put off the old self once and for all and put on the new self once and for all. They were to live from this truth. They need to have this perspective in mind.

## 2. Do not Grieve the Spirit

**Q.** How does the material in this chapter help to deepen our understanding of God?

Paul went on to lay out the heavenly practice that he had been praying for them. That is, the holy living that they were told to live by. It had been given to them by the Father and Jesus Christ. Remember that all of this flows from the blessing that is from the Father, as mentioned in Eph 1:3.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

It is broken up and laid out in the following expanded translation based on Paul’s teaching regarding Jesus Christ. Here, Paul was teaching to help the Ephesian church understand the gifts that they had been given. That is,

- The following section states that they should be careful to live their lives as saints.
- The Ephesians were also to live in such a way that they did not grieve the Holy Spirit.

Paul now proceeds in the next part of chapter four to outline how they were to live. He highlighted things that must have been issues for them in the church. See below,

<sup>25</sup> “Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth to each one of you with his neighbour, for we are members of one another. <sup>26</sup> Be angry and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and do not give the devil an opportunity. <sup>28</sup> He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labour, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. <sup>29</sup> Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup> Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, along with all malice (*a desire to injure*). <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you” (Eph 4:25-32 NASB).

The following is an expanded translation that explains what Paul meant and may be helpful to you.

<sup>25</sup> “Wherefore, having put off the lie once for all, be speaking truth each with his neighbour, because we are members belonging to one another. <sup>26</sup> Be constantly angry with a righteous indignation and stop sinning. <sup>27</sup> Do not allow the sun to go down upon your irritated, exasperated, embittered anger. And stop giving an occasion for acting [opportunity] to the

devil. <sup>28</sup> The one who is stealing, let him no longer be stealing, but rather let him be labouring, working with his own hands that which is good, in order that he may be having that wherewith to be sharing with the one who is having need. <sup>29</sup> Every word that is rotten and unfit for use, out of your mouth let it not be proceeding, but whatever is good, suitable for edification with respect to the need, in order that it may impart grace to the hearers. <sup>30</sup> And stop grieving the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed with a view to the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> All manner of harshness and violent outbreaks of wrath and anger and brawling and slanderous speech, let it be put away from you together with all manner of malice. <sup>32</sup> And be becoming kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other even as and just as also God in Christ forgave you" (Eph 4:17-32 *Wuest*).<sup>4</sup>

Now, if we break this section down, we will see what Paul was teaching the local church. That is, they were holy and needed to live like they were holy. Here, Paul begins this next section by reflecting on what he has just said in verses 17-24. Here, he connects the two sections.

He said,

Therefore: v25

- Being the ones who have laid aside for your benefit (*or taken off once and for all for your benefit*) falsehood: v25
  - I command you to be speaking truth to each one of you with your neighbour: v25
    - For we are members of one another: v25
  - I command you, you may be angry, and yet I command you do not sin: v26
    - I command you do not let the sun go down on your anger: v26
    - I command you do not give the devil an opportunity: v27
- Those who have been stealing, I command that you must steal no longer: v28
  - But rather they must labour: v28
  - Performing with their own hands (*for their own benefit*) what is good: v28

So that they will have something to share with one who has need: v28

- I command you let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth: v29
  - But only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment: v29
    - So that it will give grace to those who are hearing: v29
- I command you not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God: v30
  - By whom you were sealed (once and for all) for the day of redemption: v30
- Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander: v31
- I command be put away from you (*once and for all*): v31
  - Along with all malice: v31
- I command you to be kind to one another: v32
  - Tender-hearted: v32
  - Forgiving each other: v32
    - Just as God in Christ also has forgiven you: v32

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<sup>4</sup> Wuest, *The New Testament*: (Eph 4:17-32).

So, as pointed out in Eph 4:25-32,

- Put away lying with their neighbours, tell the truth instead
- In their anger, they were not to sin and not carry it over to the next day and give the devil an opportunity for you to sin
- They were not to steal but work to provide for themselves and others
- Do not speak unwholesome things, but build others up
- Do not grieve the Holy Spirit by whom you are sealed
- But let your life and words glorify the Holy Spirit

Paul wanted the Ephesian church to realise that no longer just as the non-Jews also walking, in the futility of their mind. Therefore, what we have here is that Paul, in light of Eph 4:25-32, was encouraging the Ephesians not to grieve the Holy Spirit. They were not to grieve the Holy Spirit. In these verses, Paul applied the truth of what he taught them here. There must have been people lying, getting angry, and sinning while angry, as well as those who were stealing and not living as holy people.

## Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

**Q.** What did Paul reveal here regarding their walk, and how does it deepen our relationship with God?

We have seen that Paul taught the Ephesians that their holy lives were important. He reminds all Christ-followers through the ages that it was not about living the morality seen in the society in which they live, but about living holy lives as a new creation. As was mentioned earlier,

“Believers are to walk in holiness as well as unity. Paul first showed negatively how a believer should not walk; then he gave the positive aspects of Christian conduct”<sup>5</sup>

Here, the challenge that Paul gave the church applies to all believers. We are not to walk in the futility of our mind, but as we have been taught. Christ-followers need to understand what Jesus Christ has already become part of their holy status in Him. It is how we live that we reveal this holy life. We need to realise that we have already put off the old self once and for all and put on the new self once and for all. Therefore, live not grieving the Holy Spirit, but glorifying Him.

I hope your journey through understanding these verses will be rewarding. We can be so focused on the destination that we miss the joy of the journey. I hope that is a joyful journey of discovery for you. Can I encourage you not to merely regurgitate someone else’s work, e.g., a commentary, website, or book? Instead, read the passage/s and the surrounding context to find the gems for yourself. So, although I have given some helpful insights within these pages, use them as mere tools to begin your digging. Once you find the gems, clean them up and polish them to reflect how you will live, work, and play. It is much more fulfilling when your Bible study is done this way. So, enjoy your journey of discovery and then live out the gems you have discovered.

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<sup>5</sup> Walvoord, & Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 636.



In response, we need to ask through this process:

- What personal application can be found in the passages?
- What is God teaching me today?
- That is, “What is God saying to me?”

How should I respond to what is being said, or what does it mean?

- What are you going to do about it?
- What do you need to do to respond?
- Pray and respond