

Ephesians Chapter 4 verses 17 thru 21

Rhema Worship Center Bible Study

Verse 17

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind.

Paul here calls on the Gentile brethren to walk differently from the unconverted Gentiles, who do not let Christ direct them as head, but follow their own thinking. This would take a lot of courage for the Ephesian Christians. They lived in the shadow of the glorious temple of Diana and with the multitude of her worshippers. To refuse to associate in the practices of their former friends took much conviction and courage. Today, it still takes a lot of conviction and courage to *no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk*. Social drinking, lewd movies, night clubs, dancing, gambling, and many other things are very much a part of our modern society. As followers of the Christ, we must not walk in these things.

In other words, Christians must not live like non-Christians. There is no virtue in a Christian being so relevant to the world that the distinction between saved and unsaved, Christian, and non-Christian, followers of Christ, and not followers of Christ disappear. The world's ways are not the standard which God's people are told to live by. No one becomes a Christian by watching a Christian act like a Non-Christian. We are to live full of light. It is not so much about what we don't do, but more about what we do that separates us from unbelievers.

Question...what are some character traits of a true believer (Christian)?

Verse 18

Having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart.

The world considers itself too wise to believe the things revealed in the Bible. But, as Paul wrote elsewhere, "Professing themselves wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:22). They have allowed satan to blind their minds to the gospel (II Corinthians

4:4), and are, therefore, alienated from the life of God. This alienation occurs for two reasons: (1) the ignorance that is in them, and (2) the hardening (callousing) of their heart. God warns sinners of the danger of developing a hard heart. A heart becomes hard, in other words truth cannot penetrate it, when one has (overtime) refused to accept truth. One rejects a little nugget of truth here and there because it makes them feel uncomfortable. One rejects truth because it threatens to hamper their lifestyle. At first rejecting truth makes them feel uncomfortable but then after a while they get used to it. Eventually they reach the point where they can't even recognize truth anymore. That's when a person is in big trouble. They're in trouble because at that point they're led by what is wrong, and what is false instead of what is right. They're in trouble because at that point they can't correct their wrong thinking and their wrong actions because they don't even recognize right and wrong anymore. People like that are on the road to hell because they're cut off from God. They don't see that they're cut off from God. They don't think about the fact that there cut off from God. They don't care that their cut off from God. Why? Because their mind has been darkened, their hearts have become hard. They seal their doom.

Question...at what point is your heart hardened beyond repair?

Verse 19

Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness?

Sin is like anesthesia. At first, it is offensive and our conscience revolts against it. However, if we do not get away from it, it soon becomes less offensive and will finally overpower us. We could also compare it to freezing to death. The cold numbs its victims, and they are doomed, but feel no pain. Being *past feeling* is the last stage before destruction. If one is never bothered by his conscience, he is in terrible peril. Have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. Those who lose all feeling of guilt readily enter licentiousness (cf. Romans 1:26-32). *Licentiousness* is a term that includes adultery, fornication, immodesty, shameless dress and speech, indecent behavior, etc. All these things are quite natural for one who has cast aside the feelings of conscience. Nothing is more terrible than the loss of shame. Immodesty should embarrass or anger us. If it does not, then we only need to remove the checks of circumstances to complete our descent into sin. These non-Christian Gentiles do not hesitate to involve themselves

in uncleanness. They desire the pleasures of sin and go greedily after them. This kind of greediness is usually associated with the love of money which Paul says is “a root of all kinds of evil” (I Timothy 6:10).

Let us never forget the depths from which we have been rescued, and the height of God's amazing grace to which we have been raised. We have passed from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son, for we have received the forgiveness of sins and newness of eternal life, in Christ Jesus, our God and our Savior - and nothing can pluck us out of His hand, and no one can pluck us out of His Father's hands (John 10:28).

Question...if nothing or no one can pluck us out of His hands does this mean we are eternally saved? Could we do something to pluck ourselves out?

Verse 20

But you have not so learned Christ.

Paul now reminds the Ephesian Christians, who were mostly Gentiles, that they are called to be different from the other Gentiles he just mentioned. What has made the difference? The opening of their hearts to learn of Christ. Our Christian life must go beyond head knowledge, but it must absolutely include head knowledge and influence our whole manner of thinking. This is not just in the sense of knowing facts, but the ability to set our minds on the right things. This is so fundamental to the Christian life that Christian growth can even be described as *the renewing of your mind* ([Romans 12:2](#)).

The Ephesians **learned Christ**, not only learning *about* Jesus, but also learning *Him*. This means a living, abiding knowledge of Jesus will keep us from the kind of sinful conduct Paul speaks of. Just knowing *about* Jesus isn't enough to keep us pure.

So, if you want to know the Lord Jesus Christ, you must live with Him. First, He must himself speak to you, and afterwards you must abide in him. He must be the choice Companion of your morning hours, He must be with you throughout the day, and with Him you must also close the night.

Question...many churches no longer have Sunday School, YPWW, etc. do you think the lack of these has kept us from “learning Christ?”

Verse 21

If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus.

When one hears of Christ and allows His teaching to permeate the heart, the obeying and doing of truth is the result. Paul frequently contrasts what we were before we were Christians, to what we have become since we first believed. He reminds us that although we were children of darkness, we are now children of light - although we were dead in our sins, we are now alive in Christ.

Because we were taught the mystery of the Gospel and believed in Christ Jesus as our Savior, our position in Christ and our eternal inheritance, is secured for us in heaven, and we are called to walk worthy of our calling - in humility of heart, unity of spirit and as children of the light.

Christ is the beginning, and He is the end of our faith. He is the sphere and the circumference of our lives. All that we have learned from the inspired Scripture about Jesus is in accordance with the truth, for we have been given the Word of truth and we have received the indwelling Spirit of truth, Who was sent to guide us into the Way of truth.

If we have believed the glorious gospel of grace and been taught in accordance with the God-breathed Scripture - then we **KNOW** that Christ is the truth as well as our life and our light. He is our hope and He alone is our Salvation.

Question...what is the difference in our position and our condition in Christ?