

Contra Mundum

A Fresh Start

Ephesians 4:17-24

April 26, 2015

...be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. **-Ephesians 4:24**

I. THE DARK LIFE (vss. 17-19)

- There is a futility to sin (Prov. 9:13-18; Acts 26:14; 1 Pet. 4:3-4).
- There is futility in the mind of the reprobate (Rom. 1:21-22).
- Ignorance leads to separation from God, illogical thinking, and, ultimately, a hard heart (Matt. 23:23-24; Mark 3:5).
- Calloused people will do almost anything to please themselves—their god. It leads to a downward spiral of self-gratification and sin (Rom. 1:18-32).

II. THE TRANSFORMED LIFE (vss. 20-24)

- The Ephesians had “learned Christ.” Their new knowledge was leading them to a holy life (2 Cor. 4:6; 10:5).
- This knowledge taught them, and teaches us, to...
 - *Put off the old self—the old way of life—corrupted by sin (Rom. 13:11-12; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).
 - *To be renewed in the spirit of the mind (Rom. 12:1-3).
 - *Put on the new self—created to be like God (Rom. 13:11-14).

KNOW: Knowledge of God moves us toward renewal. Ignorance moves us toward a darkened life separated from God. We must pray against a spirit of callousness that leads to a hardness of heart. We must seek renewal, and that only comes from a work of God in our lives.

DO: Allow God to renew your spirit and your mind.

Suggested Reading:

A Real Christian—The Life of John Wesley, by Kenneth J. Collins

The Practice of Godliness, by Jerry Bridges

Daring to Draw Near, by John White

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please read Ephesians 4:17-24

1. What makes it so difficult to live a virtuous life according to the Christian ethic in our world today?
2. Paul speaks in broad terms referring to “Gentiles” in vs. 17 (see Titus 1:12-12 for another example). Is it right to speak in such broad terms? Is Paul saying “these people without exception”?
3. Paul condemns the Gentiles’ ignorance. We often think of ignorance as a disability forced upon us by unjust circumstances, not a chosen state of being, but what is their ignorance due to in Paul’s full thought (see vs. 18). Is this type of ignorance sinful?
4. As you see the progression of sin in vs. 19, how realistic does this sound in your own experience and those you have witnessed around you? Does Paul “get” sinful behavior?
5. How do we go about taking off the old self and putting on the new? What does that process look like? Is there anything we can do to expedite the process?
6. Our new self was created to be like God. That’s a tall order. How can we be like God as sinful human beings?