

# Ephesians 4:17-32

## Day 1

Ephesians 4:17-19 NAS

17 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,

18 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;

19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

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### Walk of the new man

1. What did Paul command the Ephesians about their walk? 4:17 (With what authority did he give this command? )

2. List how Paul described the ways that Gentiles think and walk. 4:17-18 (*In your small groups, compare different translations.*)

- 17c
- 18a
- 18b
- 18c
- 18d
- 19a
- 19b

IT'S GREEK TO ME: **futility/vanity** – “*mataiotes* NT:3153, ‘emptiness as to results’”

- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

**darkened** – Strong's NT:4656 *skotoo*; to obscure or blind (literally or figuratively): KJV - be full of darkness.

**Separated/excluded** Strong's NT:526 *apallotrio*; to estrange away, i.e. to be non-participant

**hardness/blindness** – Strong's NT:4457 *porosis*; stupidity or callousness

“an insensitivity to the things of God.” - F. F. Bruce (Compare Mark 3:5)

**Heart** “The heart, as regularly in classical and biblical literature, is viewed as the seat of the will and understanding, not the emotions.”

- F. F. Bruce

“This is not to say that man, in his rebellion against God, is not capable of mighty intellectual achievements. Instead it is to say that all such achievements fall short of true wisdom, because *the fear of the LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM* (Proverbs 9:10)”

- David Guzik

3. Mark the word “walk” in Ephesians 2:2,10 and 4:1,17. What walks are being contrasted?
4. Underline the reasons given in the following for a hardened heart that leads to ignorance.
- Romans 1:21a,22a For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, NASU
  - Romans 1:25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. NASU
  - Romans 1:28a And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, NASU
  - Psalm 10:4 In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. NIV
  - Isaiah 47:10 "You felt secure in your wickedness and said, 'No one sees me,' Your wisdom and your knowledge, they have deluded you; For you have said in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one besides me.' NASU
5. Why do you think a darkened understanding and hardened heart lead to the lifestyle described in 4:19? (See Romans 1:18-32 for an expanded picture of unbelief and its consequences.)

**IT'S GREEK TO ME: *Having become callous/lost all sensitivity/being past feeling*** *apalgeo* NT:524 signifies 'to cease to feel pain for' (apo, "from," algeo, 'to feel pain')...; hence, to be callous, 'past feeling,' insensible to honor and shame" - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

***Sensuality/lasciviousness/lewdness/licentiousness*** *aselgeia* NT:766 denotes "excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness" - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"**Licentiousness** is sin that flaunts itself, throwing off all restraint and having no sense of shame or fear; **uncleanness** is a broad word, mostly with reference to sexual impropriety." - David Guzik

***Greediness/ continual lust for more*** *pleonexia* NT:4124, "covetousness," lit., "a desire to have more" (*pleon*, "more," *echo*, "to have"), always in a bad sense." - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

6. How does 1 Timothy 4:2 described this state of being *callous/past feeling*?

- What does the word “*greediness/continual lust for more* (NIV)” say about these behaviors? (See Proverbs 27:20b; Ecclesiastes 6:7)

*Applying the Word: Contrast 4:17,18 with Paul's prayer in 1:17,18a. Can you think of a way that you have been enlightened about a former, dark way of thinking?*

## Day 2

Ephesians 4:20- 24 NAS

20 *But you did not learn Christ in this way,*

21 *if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,*

22 *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,*

23 *and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,*

24 *and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*

### Walk in truth

7. What corrects and changes ungodly thinking and behaviors? 4:20 (Why do you think Paul said "learn Christ" not "learn about Christ"?)

**FYI: "learn Christ":** "Christ Himself is the embodiment of His teaching, so much so that His teaching cannot be learned adequately without our coming to know Him...To receive the teaching is in the truest sense to **hear** Him."  
- F. F. Bruce

8. Where is truth found? 4:21 (Compare Colossians 2:3)

9. What claims did Jesus claim make concerning truth?

- John 8:12
- John 8:26
- John 8:31-32
- John 8:40
- John 14:6
- John 18:37

10. In the following verses, circle what or who is given the title of “*truth*”.

- Ps 31:5 Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth. NIV
- John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. NIV
- John 17:17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. NASU
- 1 John 5:6b ...It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. NASU

11. From I Timothy 3:15b, what is the church called?

### **Put off old, put on new**

12. What command did Paul give in 4:22a (Why would knowing Christ help to lay aside our old behaviors?)

- What process is the old self under? 4:22b (Cf. Ephesians 2:3)

IT'S GREEK TO ME: "**Lay aside/put off**" Strong's NT:659 "*apotithemi*; to put away (literally or figuratively): KJV - cast off, lay apart (aside, down), put away (off)"

"**lusts/desires**" Strong's NT:1939 "*epithumia*; a longing (especially for what is forbidden)"

13. Why do you think Paul calls these “*deceitful*” lusts or desires?

14. Underline what sin's deceitfulness/desires/lusts do to us.

- Galatians 6:7-8 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. NIV
- Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. NIV
- 1 Timothy 6:9 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. NIV
- 1 Peter 2:11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. NIV
- 2 Peter 2:19 They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. NIV

15. What picture does the command to “lay aside” (4:22,25) give you? (See Hebrews 12:1)

### New Self

16. What needs to happen to our thinking? 4:23 (Cf. Romans 12:2)

- How is this renewal described in Colossians 3:10?

17. What picture does the command to “put on” (4:24) give you?

- What is the nature of the “new self”? 4:24b (How does this compare to the old self? 4:17,18)

#### ***Digging Deeper***

From Romans 6:6-8, what happened to the old self?

Because of this, how can we regard old sinful desires?  
Romans 6:11

**IT'S GREEK TO ME “put on”** Strong’s NT:1746 *enduo*; (in the sense of sinking into a garment); to invest with clothing (literally or figuratively): KJV - array, clothe (with), endue, have (put) on.

“It is not Christ personally that is ‘created,’ of course; it is the Christlikeness in the believer.” - F. F. Bruce

“God dealt with [the old man] at the Cross, for then our old man was crucified with Him (Romans 6:6). Now each member of the Body is exhorted to count on this by faith and so make it experimental day by day. The old nature can never improve, or be reformed or changed. God gives it over to death and implants into His children the perfect thing He requires. This now can renew and control the mind with its thinking and planning through the Spirit’s works. It is a new beginning.” - Stuart Allen (94)

“Fundamentally, Paul says that for the Christian, there must be a break with the past. Jesus isn’t merely *added* to our old life; the old life dies and He becomes our new life.” - David Guzik

18. Underline the things we are told to put on.

- Romans 13:12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. NASU
- Romans 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. NASU
- Ephesians 6:11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. NIV
- Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. NIV
- Colossians 3:14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. NIV

**Applying the Word:** *It has been said, 'Don't fight negative thoughts but replace them with the truth.' Is there an area of your life where you feel you need to grow in understanding God's truth and allow that truth to replace lies?*

*Or*

*Since we have died to the old self (Romans 6:6), why do you think it's difficult to lay it aside? (i.e. What makes us want to continue to hold on to these old habits and ways of thinking?)*

### **Day 3**

Ephesians 4:25-28 NAS

25 *Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.*

26 *BE ANGRY, AND YET DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger,*

27 *and do not give the devil an opportunity.*

28 *He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.*

### **Walk of the new man**

#### **Honesty**

19. Why should we speak the truth to each other? 4:25 (To what does the “therefore” in 4:25 refer? Mark the word “truth” - 1:13; 4:15,21,24,25)

- Why do you think Paul started his instructions with this behavior? i.e. How destructive do you think lying is? (Consider: One of the ten commandments is to “not bear false witness” Exodus 20:16)

20. What did Jesus say about lies in John 8:43,44? (Contrast Titus 1:2)

#### **Anger**

21. To what should we not let anger lead? 4:26 (From Paul's quote within these verses, what can you conclude about the nature of anger? Is it always sinful, or is it sometimes acceptable?)

- What command is given about anger in 4:31?

22. What is dangerous about anger? 4:27 (See Psalm 37:8)

**IT'S GREEK TO ME: Sin** Strong's NT:264 "*hamartano*;...to miss the mark (and so not share in the prize), i.e. to err, especially (morally) to sin"

**sun go down:** "Even if it is not practicable before sundown to seek out the person who has occasioned the anger, one can still be reconciled with him at heart by taking the trouble to the Lord and leaving it with Him." - F. F. Bruce

**"foothold/opportunity/place"** Strong's NT:5117 "*topos*; a spot ..., i.e. location (as a position, home, tract, etc.); figuratively, condition, opportunity"

"Anger should never be prolonged, for this is dangerous...Those who nurse their grievances do not realize that they are giving place to the devil. They are giving him room to operate in their lives, which he will not be slow to use with deadly effect."  
- Stuart Allen (95)

"Those who nurse their wrath to keep it warm may not realize that they are giving the devil a golden opportunity to exploit their cherished indignation to gain his own ends."  
- F. F. Bruce

23. What do the following say about the benefits of restraining anger?

- Proverbs 15:1
- Proverbs 15:18
- Proverbs 25:15

### **Stealing**

24. What remedy did Paul give for stealing? 4:28 (Cf. Exodus 20:15)

- Beyond earning a living, what further goal did Paul give for working? 4:28b

25. What example did Paul set? 1 Thessalonians 2:8,9; 2 Thess. 3:7-10; Acts 20:33-35

**Applying the Word:** What relationships do you see between lying and anger and stealing? (e.g. How can lying be stealing?) What are subtle ways or common excuses we use to steal, lie, or show anger?

## Day 4

Ephesians 4:29-32 NAS

29 *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.*

30 *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

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

32 *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*

## Words

26. What command did Paul give in 4:29a? How do you feel about that? (See also

27. Instead of harmful talk, what should be the goal of our words? 4:29b (Cf. 4:12; Romans 15:2)

- What effect do edifying words have on you?

**IT'S GREEK TO ME:** "unwholesome/corrupt" Strong's NT:4550 "sapro; rotten, i.e. worthless (literally or morally)"

"Unwholesome...describes that which is rotten, putrefying, corrupt, disgusting, perishing, rank, foul, putrid, worthless. In secular writings **sapro** was used to describe spoiled fish, **rotten** grapes on the ground, **crumbling** stones...Using this vivid metaphor Paul commands believers to put off speech like one would toss out rotten fruit or fish!"  
- preceptaustin.org

28. Read James 3:3-11.

- How much power do our words have over the course of our lives? vv. 5-6
- How difficult is it to control what we say? v. 8
- What are we doing when we speak evil towards men? vv. 9-11
- What concluding advice is given about words? James 3:19,20

29. What effect can what we say and do have on God? 4:30



30. What should we do with the attitudes listed in 4:31?

- What kind of a witness did Paul say this would give? Philipians 2:14-15

**FYI: "Put away (142) (airo)** means to lift up something, such as an anchor of a ship to that the ship could set sail (see Acts 27:13). It is used figuratively here to picture taking up and carrying away (removing) these evil works just mentioned along with malice. It means to make a clean sweep of these vices! Imagine these vices as the worn out, filthy, dirty coat our old unregenerate self once wore continually, for it was the only "coat" we owned.. Now, that the old self has been crucified with Christ and made effectively inoperative (it can still spring into action if "fed" or stimulated!), let us put off the old "coat" (put away) and put on the new garment of Christ-likeness, that the world might see Him in our words and works. (Lawrence Richards)" - preceptaustin.org

31. How do the qualities listed in 4:32 compare to 4:31? What reason/motivation is given for putting on these qualities? 4:32

**Digging Deeper**

Read Proverbs 4:23-27. List the 4 things we are to *guard/watch/put away...* How does that correspond to Paul's teachings in Ephesians 4:17-32?

32. What does God's forgiveness ("just as") indicate about the extent that we should put away bitterness/anger and forgive others? (Compare 1 Peter 2:21-24)

- When we forgive, to whom are we responding first and foremost?

**IT'S GREEK TO ME: Forgiving** *harizomai* Strong's NT:5483, "to bestow a favor unconditionally" - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"Our forgiveness to others is patterned after the forgiveness of Jesus towards us. God's forgiveness offers complete restoration and honor. He loves, adopts, honors, and associates with those who once wronged Him.... The older King James Version puts it like this: *even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*. This gives us an assurance of forgiveness - that it is *for Christ's sake*. 'Get hold of that grand truth, and hold it, though all the devils in hell roar at thee. Grasp it as with a hand of steel; grip it as for life: 'God for Christ's sake hath forgiven me,' - may each one of us be able to say that. We shall not feel the divine sweetness and force of the text unless we can make a personal matter of it..." (Spurgeon)" - David Guzik

33. Who can forgive sins? Luke 5:20-24

- What does that say about our responsibility for forgiving the sinner versus forgiving the sin?

34. In the following, underline the motives for living Godly lives:

- Luke 6:36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. NIV
- Colossians 3:12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience NASU
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. NIV
- 1 John 4:11,19 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another...19 We love because he first loved us. NIV

**Applying the Word:** *Think of a time where you were demeaned or maligned by destructive words? How does it affect you to know that that God was grieved when you were hurt?*

*Practice listening to your words this week, especially with those with whom you are closest. How many of your words are edifying and gracious? How many are critical or disrespectful or demeaning?*

*Try this week to change to only edifying and gracious words. Record any reactions or differences you see.*