

Living Differently
Study 8 – Ephesians – Living In Christ and the World
Ephesians 4:17-24

Message Mate

- Followers of Jesus Christ are “in Christ”, yet we often continue to struggle with thoughts, words and actions that aren’t Christlike. Ephesians 4:17-24 helps us understand why this happens (v17-19) and how to live differently (v20-24).
- It is helpful to understand why people do wrong things. It starts with the mind and progresses to the heart which leads to behavioural change (Eph 4:17-19). It starts with futile thinking when our minds are influenced less by the Word of God and Holy Spirit and more by the world. This leads to darkened understanding and a shift in the moral compass. This leads to an increasing alienation from God causing individuals and society to become increasingly ignorant of biblical standards and the moral compass it defines. This leads to hardening of people’s hearts towards God and other people. It moves people away from loving God and loving our neighbour towards an increasingly individualistic and idolatrous world (Rom 1:24,25; Eph 5:5, Col 3:5).
- But it doesn’t have to be that way. We are called to learn Christ and know Him (v20) and live the way that He lived when He was on earth (v21). We are called to put off our old self which includes our mind, heart and behaviour from the way we used to live before we knew Jesus, or how the world might influence us. We choose to put our old way of life to death (Rom 6:6) and be set free from our past with its deceitful desires (v22). To deal with our sins, we need to experience renewing of our mind (v23) allowing it to be transformed by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:17, 3:16, 1 Cor 2:16). We then put on a new self created in the image of God (v24).
- As you put to death and take off your old self, as you use the Word of God and invite the Holy Spirit to renew your mind and as you step into your new self, you can experience the reversal of the process from Eph 4:17-19. What was ungodly is being renewed and replaced with what is godly. What you were and what you struggle with need not be who you are and who you are becoming.
- In Christ, you can stop living in ways of those who aren’t in Christ. Instead keep learning to live in Christ by continually putting off your old self, being renewed and putting on your new self, so that you can become who God intended you to be.

Some Questions to Consider

1. Wrong behavior starts with "futile thinking" when the mind is influenced by the world rather than the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Do you experience times when your thinking is more influenced by the world or your past? How have you dealt with these times?
2. Read Ephesians 4:17-19. This passage outlines a process from futile thinking to hardness of the heart which leads to ungodly behaviour. How have you seen this downward spiral play out in our community or your own life?
3. Read Ephesians 4:20,21. Verse 20 says that you have learned Christ. How does actually knowing Christ differ from knowledge of Christ. How does this help with following the example of Jesus from when He lived on earth.
4. Ephesians 4:22 says to put off your old self. Discuss what your old self means to you. What does it mean to put to death your old way of life and put off your old self?
5. We cannot change our behaviour without the "renewing of our mind". How do you actively allow the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to renew your mind? What would this look like for you if you were to do this tomorrow?
6. Discuss the following contrasts and why they give us hope that our old thoughts, words and actions do not need to continue, i.e. why our old self can be put off, our mind renewed and a new self put on.

former Gentile life (v17)
futility of their minds (v17)
sensuality, greedy, impurity (v19)
darkened ignorance (v18)
putting off old self (v22)
deceit (v22)
corrupted (v22)
alienated from life of God (v18)

life from having learned Christ (v20)
renewed in the spirit of your minds (v23)
righteousness and holiness (v24)
taught in (the light) of Jesus (v21)
putting on new self (v24)
truth (v21,24)
new creation (v24)
created after the likeness of God (v24)

Pray –

Pray with thanks for that the lifestyle of the old self listed in column 1 above can be replaced a lifestyle of a new self in column 2 above.

Pray that the Lord would help you to:

Stop living in ways of those who aren't in Christ, instead

Keep learning to live in Christ by continually:

- Putting off your old self
- Being renewed
- Putting on your new self so that you can

Become who God intended you to be.

