

## **Unity+An Equipped Church=A Different Walk**

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Toby DeHay

Ephesians 4 / Discipleship; New Creation / Ephesians 4:17-24

In today's sermon, we learn that a unified local body of believers who understand they are to be equipped to do the work of ministry will "walk differently" in a society that is opposed to God.

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### **Ephesians 4:17-24 NASB95**

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

But you did not learn Christ in this way,  
if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,

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,  
and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,  
and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

## Remember Your Former Life (Without Christ)

### You had a darkened understanding

Paul is literally saying they didn't have the ability to understand.

We say things like this:

"I can't understand why people do the things they do!"

They do it because they are lost!

**Romans 1:21 NASB95**

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.

This is where we are. People talk casually about God.

"I worship God."

"How can you not have a belief in God?"

"God is my strength."

"We are one nation under God."

All the while not honoring Him with their thoughts, actions, or living like He is there UNTIL IT IS CONVIENENT for them to do so!!

These people, many of them self-proclaiming Christians, are the ones who talk about God, Christ, the Church, the end times, and even salvation without having so much as a Biblical basis behind any of it never mind attempting to live it themselves!

Now check this out. These people are exluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.

Ignorance means you simply do not know. Here it's not because it's not been told, it is because of a darkened understanding. Salvation hasn't properly been understood, the Holy Spirit has not revealed Himself, therefore there is separation from God.

If you have never experienced a life-altering encounter with the God of the Bible, through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ in the form of the Holy Spirit, YOU CAN NOT KNOW THIS!

This is how we once were. "Well, I've always been a Christian."

Friends, this lie from hell is designed to keep you numb to the realization that you are a sinner, separated from Him for all eternity so you won't go wondering "what must I do to be saved?!?!"

## You were callous

You know what a callous is right? Those of you who work with your hands do!

I don't work with my hands like I used to and I still have callous' on my hands.

What happens before you get a callous?

You get a nasty blister, it gets all red, and it hurts!

Paul says before Christ people are callous. This word conveys the meaning that a person has lost the ability to feel shame or embarrassment.

Paul goes on to say that "you didn't learn Christ this way."

## Embrace Your New Life (In Christ)

### You received forgiveness from God

**Ephesians 4:20 NASB95**

But you did not learn Christ in this way,

The new life we embrace in Christ not only includes our conversion, but our ongoing walk as a disciple of His.

**Acts 26:18 NASB95**

to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

Talk to any brand-new Christian and they'll tell you just this: "it's like my eyes have been opened!"

**Romans 6:4 NASB95**

Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

## You were taught to walk according to scripture

The New Living Translation gets the beginning of verse 21 the closest to its original meaning.

[Ephesians 4:21](#) (NLT)

21 **Since** you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him,

This implies confidence.

Our confidence is that we are able to walk according to His Word.

This confidence gives us the boldness to speak truth into lives of others.

This confidence is we have in what Jesus gives is the direct opposite of what verse [Eph 4:22](#) describes.

**Ephesians 4:22 NASB95**

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,

In our former life we were confident in what WE knew.

We were still living in the "old self," which was corrupt.

I honestly remember having the utmost confidence of an early teenager that both abortion and homosexuality were just fine.

My confidence was based in what the world was telling me. "Who am I to tell these people they can't do with their lives as they please?"

Then I encountered the Word of God. "Who am I?" I do not have authority! God's Word says He knew us from the foundation of the world. We were created in His image. In the womb we are a person. "Woe is me for thinking I had confidence in listening to godless people on the issue of life.

"Woe is me for thinking I could fall in step with those who say a homosexual relationship is OK; especially with God."

## Your spirit was renewed in Him

We are also enabled to embrace our new life in Christ because our spirit is renewed in Him.

Listen to what this word "renewed" means:

It means "to cause something to BECOME new different, with the implication of becoming SUPERIOR.

Now, make sure you hear this: we are not better than anyone else. When you are saved, you become a new creation, a child of God, a sinner saved by grace, but you are not better.

But you are superior in that you are able to live in the truth while others don't have a clue.

You are superior in that you are worshipping the creator instead of the creation.

You are superior because you have the source of truth and can back up your moral claims while everyone else can't.

This final truth tells us why.

## A Biblical Exhortation

Put on the new self!!

The why is that we've put on a new self.

**Ephesians 4:24 NASB95**

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

Think about how a change of clothes can make you feel.

Think about this analogy of underdressing:

You thought it would be okay to show up in jeans and a tee shirt, when in fact you needed to wear a suit and tie?

When you change clothes, you fit!

This is why many people who claim to be Christians, really aren't. They really haven't "put on the new self."

## Remember, it is the likeness of God!!

This likeness of God is holiness, righteous, forgiveness, community, a desire to serve.

Without putting on the new self, spiritually we are wearing a pair of fake Nikes, a street Rolex watch, and a pair of fake American Eagle jeans.

Most people probably don't notice, but many of the discerning, mature believers aren't fooled, and 100% of the time, God isn't fooled.

[Mk 1:15](#)

**Mark 1:15 NASB95**

and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

To repent is to not only agree with God that you've sinned and are separated from God, but to TURN from that sin.

Are you ready to admit His ways are right and you've rebelled against Him?

To believe in the Gospel is to know that the gospel is Good News. The Good News is that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin as prophesied, lived a perfect life, as prophesied, called people to faith and repentance, as prophesied, died on a Roman cross at the hands of both Jews and Gentiles, and was raised on the third day;

In order that His perfect life could back up the perfect sacrifice that was required for you and me!

Friends, when you repent and believe in the Gospel, your life is changed, there is something different, you can't help but feel the power and presence of the Holy Spirit living in you.

My invitation today is this: has this happened to you today? Have you repented of your sin and believed in the Gospel?