

## NOTES WEEK FOUR/Walk Renewed/Ephesians 4:17-32

**Intro: Review, review, review your previous notes and read the Scripture over and over with them.**

**A few** thoughts before we dive into chapter 4. First, the Christian life is not just a “*let go and let God*” mentality. It is an intentional pursuit. It is active, not passive. It is an ongoing journey of learning to live in all that we have and all that we are in Christ. We must actually open and use all of the wonderful blessings we have been given in Christ. (Ephesians 1)

**Position and Practice.** In our Christian life we have a new position. We have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness and transferred to the Kingdom of Light. (Colossians 1:13) We have been declared holy and blameless. This is our position; it is how God sees us. BUT now we must live holy and blameless lives. Hang with me.

Romans 4:5 tells us we have been declared righteous (right with God or the rightness of God). God sees us as righteous. BUT now we must live righteously—we must PRACTICE righteousness.

Romans 5:1 tells us we have peace with God because we know Christ. NOW, we must live in and practice that peace.

Our position is who we are (review the list from Ephesians 1), and how God views us. Our practice is how we live. We are not living right in order to EARN something from God. We already have everything because of Christ. We are practically living out our Christian life in response to what has already been done for us. We live righteously because we are already righteous. We live holy and blameless lives because we have already been declared holy and blameless. Get it?

**Dependent Responsibility.** This phrase was coined by one of my favorite writers, Jerry Bridges. It helps me understand not only my responsibility as a Christian, but also the power that I must depend on to live. In other words, God equips us to live as He has commanded us to live. We are not living this Christian life in our own strength. We have the Holy Spirit living within us, giving us the desire as well as the ability to live it (Philippians 2:13). BUT we are responsible for listening to the Holy Spirit, and then trusting Him enough to obey Him. Trust and Obey. It really is that simple. *We are dependent on Him and responsible to Him.*

In Ephesians 4:17-32, Paul draws a stark contrast between those who know Christ and those who do not. Remember, this is not about good people and bad people. This is about spiritually dead people and spiritually alive people. (Ephesians 2:1-10). In drawing this contrast, Paul emphasizes the mind, the way we think. Why? Because what you believe (with your mind) determines how you behave. These verses contrast the old way of thinking and the new way of thinking and then instruct us how to live out our new way of thinking (Proverbs 23:7). Practical and also wonderful!!

Three phrases to look for as you read Ephesians 4:17-32:

**LAY ASIDE**

**BE RENEWED**

**PUT ON**

### I. Lay Aside the Old Self (Ephesians 4:17-22)

Paul is issuing a stern warning. He is saying DON'T GO BACK to the way you used to live. Do not walk (daily lifestyle) like a person who does not know Christ. He knows that Ephesus is a wicked city. He knows these new Christians will have to work with, live with, and associate with unsaved people (Gentiles). He understands that there is always going to be a pull in every Christian to go back to the way they used to live. Why? Because we still have a sin nature. While we are crucified with Christ (Our position) we must practice daily dying to self. The old selfish nature is still there and we must kill it—spiritually, by an act of the will—every single day. Otherwise, like the Ephesians, there will be the temptation to go back.

Verses 17-19 describes the person without Christ. Let's look at key words and phrases.

- a. **Futile mind.** The lost person lives in the futility of the mind. *Futile* means *void of substance, the pursuit of selfish goals that cannot attain righteousness*. Even good people, who do good deeds, cannot attain the perfect holy standard of God's righteousness. The mind is the conscience thinking part of us. To live in the *futility of the mind* means the person has no understanding of God. Spiritual things make no sense.
- b. **Darkened in their understanding.** Spiritually uninformed.
- c. **Excluded (estranged) from the life of God.** *Zoe* is the Greek word for *life* but Scripture gives it a higher meaning than just *physical life*. It means *the highest and best life of which Christ is, and He gives this life to believers*. They are excluded because of their ignorance. Ignorance is not naivety. It is a willful lack of knowledge which requires repentance and is the grounds for guilt and blame. Scripture is saying they are accountable for their lost condition Paul also says, their hearts are hardened. It means they are spiritually insensitive, spiritually blind.

Paul is describing a person willfully staying in sin. John 3:19-20 speaks to this condition, saying Light has come but people love darkness rather than Light. The resulting lifestyle is in Ephesians 4:19.

- d. **Callous.** This is an interesting word in the Greek. It means *without pain*. Leprosy was a deadly disease because the leper would eventually feel no pain. The leper could hurt himself or be inflicted with an injury, but never know it because he cannot feel pain. The injury causes life threatening infection—all because there is no pain. The lost person cannot see or feel the results of his/her sinful life.
- e. **Given over to sensuality.** Readiness for all pleasure, acknowledging no restraint, doing whatever satisfies the senses. They practice this lifestyle (live habitually), with every kind of impurity (moral uncleanness) and greediness (selfishness). The moral compass is broken. They have rejected God's divine guidelines for living and rejected the protection those guidelines provide.

These verses are a progressive, downward spiral. Every lost person is in this spiral. Some will not experience the same degree of decay. Romans 1 tells us God has given every person a conscience, a basic ability to understand right and wrong. Good people may still be operating within a moral framework, but remember the illustration about the dead cat and the dead rabbit? One was the ugly dead and one was the beautiful dead. BUT BOTH ARE DEAD. One has experienced more decay. And so it is with people who do not know Christ. Some are religious and moral. They are the beautiful dead. Yet all of their goodness misses the mark and is like a filthy rag when compared to God's perfect holiness. It just does not measure up. Others are like the cat; sin has wrecked and ruined their lives. They are the ugly dead and they too can do nothing to measure up to God's standard. BUT GOD...rich in mercy, reaches out to the beautiful dead and the ugly dead, offering the same forgiveness, redemption, mercy, and grace,

Paul is reminding us, yes, shouting to us, "**Don't go back**" There is only decay, and death, and destruction in the old way of life. Lay aside the old way of living! Ephesians 4:20 says, "But you did not learn Christ in this way". We are not just in the classroom learning about Christ. We are learning Christ Himself. Like a husband and wife learn one another through the course of marriage. The marriage ceremony is not the ending—it is the beginning of a lifetime of learning the other person. So it is with Christ.

**Lay Aside.** This little phrase is often used in Scripture in reference to a garment, or coat. Paul is saying take the old life off and cast it aside. Lay aside the old sinful way of living that is opposed to God. We do this by identifying sin, confessing it (agree with God that it is indeed sin), repenting (turning from it). Laying aside the old life is our dependent-responsibility. We are responsible for laying aside anything that is sinful and we are relying on the power of Holy Spirit to do it through us. It is not just us trying harder to do better. It is the Holy Spirit at work in us, giving us the desire to please God. We respond in obedience and He in turn equips us, gives us the ability to do as He has commanded.

## **II. Put on the New (Ephesians 4:17-22)**

How do we know what to lay aside? The thinking part of us (the mind) must be made spiritually new. (Ephesians 4:23) The Holy Spirit using the Word of God renews our minds. Romans 12:2 tells us to be transformed by the renewing of the mind.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 is a great passage to memorize. The usefulness of God's Word, Scripture, The Bible--- however you want to refer to it—is undeniable in the life of a Christian. Not only does the Holy Spirit use the Word of God to teach us, but also He uses it to correct us and reprove us. He lets us know what needs to be laid aside. He also lets us know what to put on.

Being renewed in our mind is not just being a good person and living under a moral code of ethics. In fact, the Word of God is essential in distinguishing between good religious upbringing and Christ centered, Christ focused living. Hebrews 4:12 is an important passage of Scripture. It lets us know, God's Word can get into some tight places in our lives, helping us distinguish between the good and the Godly, the action and motive, the thought and the feeling. Tight places!

God's Word is the PRIMARY tool the Holy Spirit uses in our lives to teach, correct, train, and guide us. AND WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KNOWING THE WORD OF GOD. We must pick it up and read it, study it, meditate on it, memorize it, even sing it and speak it. God's Word is not an ancient, dusty, Sunday School relic. It is living and active, and we must aggressively pursue knowledge of God's Word.

### **Put On**

As our mind is renewed by the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit uses it to tell us how we should live. WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBEYING THE HOLY SPIRIT. We choose to live in a way that is pleasing to God. We choose to put on the new life and then we are empowered to do it. Ephesians 4:24 uses the phrase "put on." It too is a common phrase closely associated with a garment. We are choosing to put on Christ, practicing righteousness and holiness. WE have already been declared holy and righteous, now we must live that way. This is not behavior modification. It is not a new code of ethics. It is the person of Jesus Christ living in us, transforming us, and living through us as we cooperate in obedience.

Can a saved person "go back"? Yes, but if they are truly saved, God will discipline them (Hebrews 12:6). To be sure, some turn back from the Christian who were never truly Christians. It is not an unusual thing for an unbeliever to get tired of trying to live like a believer. Soon they are defeated and go back to the old way of living. NO ONE can live the Christian life apart from the Holy Spirit of Christ living in them.

Listen carefully. If we take even one step back we are in danger. Even if we pick up a small piece of that dead decaying cat, stick in our pocket and try to pretend we are ok. Guess what? That tiny piece of rotten cat stinks up everything! Even if we hang onto a tiny piece of the beautiful rabbit, being religious or legalistic, thinking we can handle it...guess what? That dead rabbit will eventually stink too! Lay aside the old life –every rotten, decaying, putrid scrap of it!

### **III. Now Walk it Out (Ephesians 4:25-32)**

Paul gives us five examples of laying aside the old and putting on the new. Let the Holy Spirit apply these to your life.

- 1. Lay aside lying. Put on telling the truth. (Verse 25)** A lie is a statement contrary to truth, spoken with the intent to deceive. A person who is lying is always trying to protect the flesh. PUT IT AWAY. Why? Not just because lying is wrong, but also because we are all connected to one another within the body of Christ. Lying damages relationships, marriages, homes, friendships. Put on Truth. Tell the truth in all things and do it in love.
- 2. Lay aside sinful anger (verse 26-27)** Anger is a valid emotion, but what causes the anger, what we do with the anger, and how long we hang on to the anger matters greatly. Our anger must be under the control of the Holy Spirit. It must be resolved quickly so that the devil does not gain any opportunity in our lives for us to be his pawn. Remember, he wants to destroy unity between you and God, you and other believers, you and your family.

3. **Lay aside stealing. Put on generosity. (verse 28)** There are lots of ways to steal. Stealing is always selfish, taking what does not belong to us. We can be depleters or replenishes. Takers or Givers. Let the Holy Spirit apply this principle of stealing vs. generosity to your life.
4. **Lay aside rotten speech. Put on words that edify. (Verse 29)** Matthew 12:34 “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.” Your words will eventually show what is in your heart. Let the Holy Spirit direct your speech-- speech that is transformed because our minds have been made new. Put away words that tear down. Let your speech be seasoned with grace, building up those around you.
5. **Lay aside bitterness. Put on kindness and forgiveness. (verse 31-32)** Paul gives an escalating list in verse 31. The list however, begins with *bitterness (a settled disposition that poisons the inner man)* and ends with *malice (every kind of evil)*. Let your mind be renewed and put on kindness (to *graciously furnish what is needed*). Forgive one another to the degree that we have been forgiven. Whew! When we recognize who we were before Christ, we have a better understanding of God’s great forgiveness toward us. Now practice that degree of forgiveness with others. Biblical forgiveness does not mean denial of the pain, it is not negating the consequences, it is not immediate restored trust with the one who hurt you, it is not a onetime event, it is not given only when we are asked. Forgiveness is more about your relationship with God than it is about your relationship with the person who has offended you. Let your mind be renewed. Listen and obey all the Holy Spirit is telling you in the area of forgiveness.

*Now go back to verse 30. “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit.”* Grieve is a relationship word. It is a love word. We grieve the Holy Spirit who loves us and lives within in us, when we choose to disobey, living even momentarily in the old way of life. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit. He will not let us go, but we can certainly grieve Him by our actions.

In closing. The Christian life is not a theatrical life, filled with overt miracles and mountain top experiences. While there may be moments of mountaintops and miracles, the majority of the Christian life is lived one step at a time, one choice at a time, one word at a time, and one action at a time. Moment by moment living characterized by laying aside the old and putting on the new. Daily renewing the mind. Daily dying to self. Daily living in surrender to Christ.