

Ephesians - Fullness: Living Like the New Person Jesus Made You

Dr. John Carmichael

[Eph 4:17-32 NASB95] 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. 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. 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. 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.**

- Truth – Megan Woods – “The truth is I am my Father's child; I make Him proud and I make Him smile; I was made in the image of a perfect King; He looks at me and wouldn't change a thing.”
- Really? Not change a thing? Actually, He changes everything. He loves us. He loves us enough to change us.
- Imagine taking a shower, getting completely clean, and then putting your dirty clothes back on. That would not make sense. If you have been washed, you should put on clean clothes.
- That is the picture Paul gives us in Ephesians 4.
- Through Jesus, we have been forgiven, cleansed, and made alive. But now we must learn how to live like the new people we have become. We cannot receive a new life from Jesus while continuing to wear the attitudes, habits, and behaviors of our old life.
- Salvation happens in a moment, but transformation continues throughout our lives. The Holy Spirit continually teaches us how to take off the old and put on the new.
- In Ephesians 1–3, Paul explains what God has done for us through Jesus: He chose us.
- He adopted us. He redeemed us. He forgave us. He sealed us with the Holy Spirit. He made us part of His Church.
- In Ephesians 4, Paul turns from what God has done to how believers should live.
- We do not live right to earn salvation. We live differently because we have already been saved.

How should people who have received a new life in Jesus live differently from the world around them?

Paul shows us four marks of a transformed life: we must leave the old life, learn the way of Jesus, live under the Spirit's influence, and love others as God has loved us.

I. Leave the Old Life

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- a. [Eph 4:17 NASB95] 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,
- b. In the Bible, our “walk” describes the way we live. Paul tells these believers that they must no longer live as they did before knowing Jesus.
- c. Paul describes the old life in verses 17–19: Their thinking was empty. Their understanding was darkened. They were separated from the life of God. Their hearts had become hard. They had lost spiritual sensitivity. They continually gave themselves to impurity.
- d. Notice the downward progression: Empty thinking leads to a darkened understanding. A darkened understanding leads to a hardened heart. A hardened heart leads to sinful living.
- e. Sin affects more than our behavior. It damages our thinking, dulls our conscience, and hardens our heart toward God.
- f. Paul is not saying believers never struggle. He is saying we must stop treating our former way of life as normal.
- g. [Rom 12:2 NASB95] 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
- h. [2Co 5:17 NASB95] 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, [he is] a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
- i. **[1Pe 1:14-16 NASB95] 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts [which were yours] in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all [your] behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."**
- j. Application: For thinkers: Ask yourself, “What beliefs and thought patterns have I carried into my Christian life that do not agree with God’s Word?” For doers: Identify one habit that belongs to your former life and take a definite step to remove it. You cannot move forward while continually returning to the life Jesus brought you out of.
- k. “That may be who I was, but that is not who I am anymore!”

II. Learn the Way of Jesus

- a. [Eph 4:20 NASB95] 20 But you did not learn Christ in this way,
- b. Paul does not simply say that believers learned information about Jesus. He says they “learned Christ.”
- c. Christianity is not merely learning religious facts. It is knowing Jesus, following Jesus, and becoming like Jesus.
- d. Paul gives three commands in verses 22–24: Lay aside the old self. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Put on the new self.
- e. The old self is who we were under the control of sin. The new self is the life God created for us in Jesus—a life marked by righteousness and holiness.
- f. The phrase “be renewed” points to an ongoing transformation. We take off the old and put on the new as our minds are continually renewed by God’s truth and the work of the Holy Spirit.
- g. We cannot overcome an old lifestyle while maintaining an old mindset.
- h. **[Rom 12:2 NASB95] 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**
- i. **[Col 3:9-10 NASB95] 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its [evil] practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him--**

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- j. [Phl 2:5 NASB95] 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
- k. [Jhn 16:13 NASB95] 13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.
- l. Application: For thinkers: Stop allowing your feelings, culture, or past to define what is true. Bring your thoughts under the authority of Scripture. For feelers: Your past may explain some of your struggles, but it does not own your future. Jesus has given you a new identity. For doers: Replace an old pattern with a new practice: Replace fearful thoughts with God's promises. Replace temptation with prayer and Scripture. Replace complaining with thanksgiving. Replace isolation with Christian fellowship.
- m. The answer is not merely, "Try harder." The answer is, "Think differently because Jesus has made you new."
- n. Before the new life becomes visible in our actions, it must take root in our thinking.

III. Live Under the Spirit's Influence

- a. [Eph 4:30 NASB95] 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- b. Paul now shows what the new life looks like in everyday situations.
- c. Speak the truth –
 - 1. "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor." —Ephesians 4:25
 - 2. Lying damages the unity of the Church because believers are members of one another. When one part of the body deceives another, the entire body suffers.
- d. Deal with anger quickly
 - 1. "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger." Ephesians 4:26
 - 2. Anger itself is not always sinful, but unmanaged anger can quickly become sinful. Anger becomes dangerous when we feed it, rehearse it, or use it to punish others.
- e. Paul warns:
 - 1. "Do not give the devil an opportunity." —Ephesians 4:27
 - 2. The word translated "opportunity" refers to a place or foothold. Unresolved anger can give the enemy room to work in our thoughts and relationships.
- f. Work honestly and become generous
 - 1. The person who once stole must now work honestly—not merely to provide for himself, but so that he can help someone in need.
 - 2. Jesus changes us from takers into givers.
- g. Use words that give grace
 - 1. "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification." Ephesians 4:29
 - 2. Our words should build people rather than tear them down. Before speaking, we should ask: Is it true? Is it necessary? Will it help? Does it give grace?
- h. The Holy Spirit is not merely a power we experience during worship. He is the holy presence of God living within us.
- i. We can grieve the Holy Spirit when we knowingly hold on to attitudes and actions that oppose His holy nature.
- j. Yet Paul reminds us that we have been "sealed" by the Spirit. This is not a message of hopeless condemnation. It is a call to live in agreement with the Spirit who has claimed us as God's own.

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- k. [Gal 5:16 NASB95] 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.
- l. [Gal 5:22-23 NASB95] 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- m. **[Jas 1:19-20 NASB95] 19 [This] you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak [and] slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.**
- n. [Pro 18:21 NASB95] 21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.
- o. Application: For doers: Deal with anger before it becomes bitterness. Have the conversation, make the apology, seek reconciliation, and refuse to give the devil a foothold. For feelers: Ask the Holy Spirit to show you whether your words have been healing people or hurting them.
- p. For the next seven days, refuse to speak words that tear others down. Speak something truthful, encouraging, and grace-filled instead.
- q. A Spirit-filled life is revealed not only by how we worship but also by how we speak, work, and respond when we are angry.

IV. Love Others the Way God Loved You

- a. [Eph 4:32 NASB95] 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.
- b. Paul concludes by contrasting two kinds of hearts.
- c. The old heart produces: Bitterness, Wrath, Anger, Loud conflict, Slander, Malice
- d. Bitterness is anger that has been allowed to remain. It quietly settles into the heart and begins to affect how we see people, interpret situations, and respond to life.
- e. The new heart produces: Kindness, Tenderheartedness, Forgiveness
- f. Paul does not base forgiveness on whether another person deserves it. He bases it on what God has already done for us: "Just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."
- g. We forgive from the forgiveness we have received.
- h. Forgiveness does not mean that the offense was acceptable. It does not always restore trust immediately, remove necessary boundaries, or cancel appropriate consequences. Forgiveness means we surrender personal vengeance and release the matter into God's hands.
- i. **[Col 3:12-13 NASB95] 12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.**
- j. **[Mat 6:14-15 NASB95] 14 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.**
- k. **[Rom 12:19 NASB95] 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath [of God,] for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.**
- l. **[Luk 6:36 NASB95] 36 "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.**
- m. Application: For feelers: You may have been deeply wounded, but you do not have to allow the wound to become your identity. For thinkers: Forgiveness is not pretending nothing happened. It is choosing not to remain controlled by what happened. For doers: Name the person you need to forgive. Bring that person before Jesus in prayer and make a conscious decision to release your right to revenge.

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- n. We cannot take bitterness into the new life God has given us.
- o. Forgiven people should become forgiving people.

- **Jesus did not save us merely to take us to heaven; He saved us to make us new—and our new life should be visible in how we live every day.**
- Jesus has given us a new life, but some believers are still wearing the clothes of the old life.
- The question is not merely, “Have I had a spiritual experience?” The question is, “Is the Holy Spirit changing the way I live?”
- **Declare: I have been made new in Jesus. I will not return to my old life. I will lay aside the old self. I will put on the new self. Holy Spirit, renew my mind, transform my life, and make me more like Jesus.**

Altar: