

Ephesians Chapter 4
Week 8, v. 17-24

Have you ever heard the saying, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do"?

Conforming to the customs of where we are is not a bad suggestion. It can avoid offending those around you. However, this is the opposite idea of what Paul is says to the Ephesian church. Paul says stop acting like those around you who are unsaved. No longer should you blend in as you did before you followed Christ.

Eph 4:17-19 This I say therefore, 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.

Read Eph 4:1-16. Because we are maturing in Christ, we are grounded in our faith, we are discerning of error in teaching and we are working together as a body contributing to the growth of the church, we will no longer walk as unregenerate men.

What do verses 17-19 say about those who are unsaved?

An unregenerate man is:

Depraved, foolish - (futility of mind)
unable to understand the things of God
alienated from the life of God because of ignorance
willfully hardened against truth
surrendered to sin and its practice

Verses 17-19 describe who we are without Christ. A hard heart and ignorance leads to a darkened understanding, exclusion from the life we can have with God and an indifference towards sin. We are controlled by things of the world and are morally unclean.

Do we look like the world? Paul is saying that although we live among an unsaved world we ought not to live like it.

Eph 5:3-8; 1 Cor 6:9-11

Eph 2:1-3 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, **in which you formerly walked** according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. **Among them we too all formerly lived** in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Ro 1:21 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.

Ro 8:6-8 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able [to do so]; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

To be “past feeling” [having become calloused] means to throw off all sense of shame, and to be utterly devoid of pain, for committing unrighteous acts. To be desperate, having neither hope nor desire of reformation...to be without remorse; to have no regard for conduct, character, or final blessedness. (ACC)

Because of our salvation, the lives we knew, the sin that controlled us, the thinking that was corrupt, is dead.

Ga 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

Eph 4:20-24 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.

This section of scripture begins with the moment of our salvation. The NIV translation says come to know Christ. It speaks of our personal relationship with Christ. Only because of this are we now able to “no longer act as the Gentiles”.

John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Verse 21 says “if indeed you have heard Him”. How do we hear Christ? What happens when we read the Bible or listen to someone preach?

According to v.22-24, what is the description of those who are saved and controlled by the Spirit?

Foolish behavior is put aside
We can resist sin, it no longer controls us
Our mind and soul is completely renovated
We are clothed in righteousness and truth

Tit 2:11-14 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

Lu 24:47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

What does it mean to repent of our sin? How can you tell when you or someone is truly sorry and understands their error?

It is not enough just to see our error, there needs to be a change involved. In the same way that true repentance causes change, true salvation will be accompanied by a change of heart that will lead to a change of lifestyle.

Col 3:5-10 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, and **in**

them you also once walked, when you were living in them. **But now you also, put them all aside**: anger, wrath, malice, slander, [and] abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, **since you laid aside the old self with its [evil] practices, 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

Ro 6:4-7 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with [Him] in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also [in the likeness] of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with [Him,] that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.

Ro 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, [he is] a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

The idea here is not just a facelift. It is a complete change, a different nature, a brand new self. **We can use products to change our hair color, but does that really hide the fact that we have gray hair?** There are all kinds of undergarments available to women to smooth this out or lift that up. They may change the appearance of our physical bodies for a while. **However, our shape is only redistributed temporarily.** There is just the appearance of change.

When we are saved by the work of the Holy Spirit, we die to sin. We live for Christ. We have a different nature. We are not just an improved version of who we were, we are a completely different person.

Think about your life before you were saved.

Is your understanding different, are your motives different? Do you have new desires, new principles, and new practices? Are your goals the same as those in the world?

What is your testimony of how God has changed you? Who were you before your eyes and heart were opened to His truth? What was your character? Do you see a change?

Eph 4:24 says our new self was created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Ro 8:29a For whom He foreknew, He also predestined [to become] conformed to the image of His Son,

In Genesis 1:26 it says we were made in God's image.

Is this the likeness we are seeking? Are we committed to learning about God and obeying His truths? Do we love righteousness and hate sin?

When we choose *not* to live a life worthy of His calling, whom do we fail? What does this affect? Look back at Eph 4:1-16.

Application Questions
Week 8, Eph 4:17-24

Small group prayer: take 5 minutes and quietly think about the study this morning. What is God saying to you personally? What one area do you need to focus on?

We focused on one major theme this morning: the difference between a life controlled by sin and a life controlled by Christ. Are there areas in our lives where we are blending in with the world instead of being set apart from it?

You will have an opportunity in your small group to pray about your personal application following ACTS. Your leader will begin each section with scripture.

Adoration – “I praise You for...”

Confession – “Forgive me for...”

Thanksgiving – “Thank you for...”

Supplication – “I pray for...”

If your group is done before 12noon please use the time to quietly work on your memory verses or begin to work on the life application questions below. Visiting time begins at noon.

This week: Read Ephesians 4 and use the “Apply It” bookmark to guide you in personal application. Pray for the concerns of those in your small group. Continue to work on memorization – Eph 4: 1-7, 12-16 – and pray for growth in the areas God has brought to your attention.

Are you dead to the *power* of sin over your life? Read Gal 2:20.

If you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit speaks to you through God’s Word. Are you willing to listen?

What steps are you taking to clothe yourself in righteousness and truth? Are you scantily clad or do you have your full armor on? Read Rom 13:12; Eph 6:11-17; 1 Thess 5:8

Think about who you were before your eyes were opened to the Truth. How are your responses to difficult circumstances different? How are your goals different? How are your motivations different?

Read Ephesians 4:1-24. Write a short summary of what God is teaching you in His Word. Asking yourself questions will help this process. For example, what does walking worthy look like?