

Ephesians: Identity and Inheritance
Ephesians 4:17-32: The New Life
A Beautiful Mind Replaces a Heart of Darkness

Ephesians 4:17-32 (ESV)

17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.

18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!—

21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,

22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,

23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,

24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

27 and give no opportunity to the devil.

28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

30 And 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, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Here in this section of Ephesians, we find Paul, through the Holy Spirit, offering some insights into the way the mind works. He is going to offer suggestions on proper thought patterns and give amazing practical advice to those striving to honor God with their lives. This we will see comes when we allow our minds to be renewed by the Spirit of God.

Paul's teaching includes a stark contrast between the mind that is stayed on God through the spirit and the mind that is led astray by the hardness of heart. Let us consider first the Darkened mind.

Characteristics and Cause

1. **V.17** Darkened thoughts are futile or useless. They exist but they are worthless.
2. **V.18** Darkened thoughts are separated from the life of God because of ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.
3. **V.19** Darkened thoughts lead to a lack of sensitivity for the things of God. (immunity to the cutting conviction of the Spirit).
4. **V.19** The darkened thought life will always drive a person to physical, sensual pleasures and to indulge in worldly impurities. Greed will accompany the darkened thought life, always driving a person to seek more, there is never enough earthy pleasure to satisfy the darkened mind.

Romans 1:21 (ESV)

21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

We are called to a higher calling in our thought life:

1. **V.17** Do not live like the Gentiles do. You are a gentile, but don't act/think like one.
2. **V.22** In accordance with what you have learned about Christ, Put off your old self.
3. **V.23** Be made new in the attitude of your mind!
4. **V.24** Put on the new self.

Philippians 2:4-5 (ESV)

4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

1 Corinthians 2:16 (ESV)

16 "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

How do we put into practice what is taught between V 17-24?

1. **V.25** Put off falsehood and speak the truth to your neighbor.

2. **V.26** “In your anger, do not sin”. Be angry but sin not, (Righteous Indignation)
3. **V.26** Don’t let the sun go down on your wrath
4. **V.27** Don’t give the Devil a foothold
5. **V.28** Stop stealing (negative action) repent and get to work (positive action).
Repentance is both stopping the bad and turning toward the good. This will lead to a sense of purpose (having something to give to others).
6. **V.29** Don’t let unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building up others.
7. **V.30** Do not grieve the Holy Spirit.
8. **V.31** Get rid of bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, and every form of malice.
9. **V.32** Be Kind and compassionate to one another, forgive each other the way Christ forgave you.