

Ephesians, Chapter Four, Lesson Four

WALKING IN LIGHT Ephesians 4:17-20

STIMULATE

** In our last study together we looked at the results of "Walking in Unity" given to us in chapter 4:11-16. The apostle showed us six such results, which were:

- 1) The saints are equipped
- 2) The saints do the work of service
- 3) The body is built up
- 4) We share in the unity of "the faith"
- 5) We share in the unity of the knowledge of Christ
- 6) We share in our common maturity in Christ

** We also learned the importance of avoiding being "tossed here and there by waves; and carried about by every wind of doctrine". At the conclusion of that study we were challenged by Scripture to do our part in the **proper** working of our spiritual gift and service to the body (Ephesians 4:16).

Hopefully we will each be committed to doing all that we can individually for the cause of Christ!

MOTIVATE

** For our study time together today I would like you to consider the four methods by which the Word of God instructs us on how to live a holy life for God's glory.

They are:

- 1) By direct command (Deuteronomy 6:4-5, John 13:34-35)
- 2) By exhortation (1Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:1)
- 3) By positive example (1Corinthians 11:1, 1Peter 2:21)
- 4) By negative example (1Corinthians 10:5-6, Ephesians 4:17-20)

Today the apostle will use that fourth method to instruct us on the importance of "Walking in Light". Using the darkness that the unsaved world walks around in, Paul will show us by contrast the kind of life we are to live. Please join me now in Ephesians 4:17-20 as we enjoy this rich time together in God's Word.

Read passage (V.17-20)

Opening Prayer

Walking in Light

INVESTIGATE

V.17 ** Before Paul addresses what is on his heart, he gives us the reason for which he is going to share it by using the word "therefore". To what is he referring?

Since he has called us "to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which [we] have been called" by "Walking in Love", "Walking in Grace" and "Walking in Unity" - we therefore should avoid the extreme negative example he is about to give us.

** Is Paul the origin of what he is about to say?

No - he is merely "affirming together with the Lord" what we need to hear. It is not that the Lord was affirming an idea of Paul's! We need to adopt this practice - not merely sharing our ideas with others, but the richness of God's Word instead. cf. Colossians 3:16

** Alright then, what is the negative example that Paul and the Lord are calling for us to avoid?

"that you no longer walk as the Gentiles walk"

** What does that imply regarding our former manner of life, and for some Christians, even their current manner of life?

They had been and were still acting like the unsaved world around them!
cf. 1Corinthians 3:1-3, 1Peter 4:3-5

** It is understandable that before our salvation we would "walk" in this manner. How does Paul describe the mental state of this type of person?

It is futile! The phrase "the futility of their mind" describes that which fails to produce the desired result or that which never succeeds. All - cf. Acts 14:8-15

Now back in Ephesians, chapter four -

V.18 ** Paul is going to give us a four fold description of the unsaved nations around us. Let's look at these one at a time remembering these are the negative examples that we are to avoid acting like in our own walk with Christ!

1) "being darkened in their understanding"
(1Corinthians 2:14 and 1John 5:20)

2) "excluded from the life of God"
(Ephesians 2:12 and Romans 6:4)

3) "ignorance that is in them"
(1Corinthians 3:19-20 and Ephesians 1:17)

4) "hardness of their heart"
(Romans 1:24, 26 & 28 and Acts 15:7-9)

If we realize that the unsaved walk in darkness, then our description ought to be very different because we are "Walking in Light" - the light of His Word.

V.19 ** Having thus described the unsaved nations around us, Paul now uses an interesting phrase to expose their current condition. What is it?

They have "become callous".

** We know what that means in a physical sense when we work hard and form a callous condition on our hands, but what does Paul mean by saying the unsaved have become callous?

To exist without feeling or to cease to care! They are completely self-centered, shameless and totally insensitive to the things of God.

** With their souls being blinded, ignorant and insensitive to God, what is the predictable natural course of their lifestyle?

They "have given themselves over to sensuality".

** To what does the word "sensuality" refer?

"aselgeia" - total licentiousness, the absence of all moral restraint, especially in the area of sexual sins. cf. 2Peter 2:9-12, Revelation 21:8 (Judgment)

** How does Paul describe the depths of their sinful practice?

He says they practice "every kind of impurity with greediness".

** Is there any limitation to the kinds of impurity that is pursued by those who walk in darkness?

No - They will chase after "every kind".

** What motive do they display while engaging themselves in this immoral pursuit?

Greediness - they simply can't get enough

** What are the chances of someone like this ever being saved?

Excellent! Remember what we have already seen in this wonderful letter.

Ephesians 2:8-10 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God not as a result of works..."

Ephesians 2:1-2 "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world..."

V.20 ** What refreshing contrast does Paul now offer for our consideration?

We are NOW different because, we "did not learn Christ in this way".

** What does he mean by the expression "learn Christ"?

manthano - can be used in reference to the process of learning truth. However, it can also mean "to come to know". In Walter Bauer's *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, he points out that the verb is used here in an aorist active indicative form, indicating a one-time act at the moment of our salvation. cf. 1John 2:4, Matthew 11:29

** To what "way" is Paul referring when he implies that we are different?

The "way" of the unsaved, unbelieving world around us. Because we are "Walking in Light" our walk should be radically different from the darkened, excluded, ignorant, hard-hearted life of those who do not know Christ!
cf. Ephesians 5:8

** Next week we will see how our "learning" about Christ causes us to desire "Walking in Truth", but for now - As you personally apply the statement here in verse 20 to your own life today, for what do you find yourself to be most thankful?

Our salvation! It is because of our exposure to Jesus Christ, the drawing of the Father and the conviction of the Holy Spirit, that we have come to know Him. By God's grace we are no longer in the dark world of sin, but have been transformed into His kingdom of light!

All - cf. Colossians 1:13-14

** Back in our passage for today, is it possible to find ourselves acting like our former way of life?

Absolutely! That is why Paul, at the beginning of our text for this today was agreeing or affirming with the Lord that we should "walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk". (V.17)

EXTRICATE

** Has our passage today helped you to see the plight of unregenerate man?

Yes - theirs is a dark and desperate condition needing the grace of God to the same degree as did our own lives.

** If we are truly "Walking in Light", how will we be different from the negative example we have seen today?

We will avoid any fleshly manifestation the ungodly character traits which belong to the unsaved.

DELINEATE

** What was the four fold description of the lost, which the apostle Paul shared with us today?

- 1) "being darkened in their understanding"
- 2) "excluded from the life of God"
- 3) "ignorance that is in them"
- 4) "hardness of their heart"

EVALUATE

** In your own words, how would you describe the lifestyle of the unsaved base upon verse 19?

** Seeing their plight, understanding how God's word describes their character, and recognizing the elements of their depraved lifestyle; can we be even more effective in reaching them with God's saving truth?

Yes! If we are "Walking in Light" ourselves, we can be used by God in the winning of the lost!

Matthew 5:16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven."

ACTIVATE

** Will you make a special effort this next week to remember the "light" that has been entrusted to you, not only to "walk" in it, but to proclaim it to all who would listen?

Closing prayer