

Every Spiritual Blessing

Lesson 7

Ephesians 4:17-24

Renewed by the Spirit

Memory Verse:

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesian 4:23-24

Day 1

1. First impressions: Read Ephesians 4:17-24 and highlight three things that stand out to you in verses below and then write how they relate to you and the new person God has made you in Christ.

¹⁷This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as ¹the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; ¹⁹who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²²that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

2. Reread Ephesians 4:17. Paul is emphasizing the condition of the Gentiles as those who have no knowledge of the true and living God and live and act without His guidance and goodness, as such they “walk” in the “futility of their mind.” In a Bible dictionary look up the word “futility” and write the definition here.
3. To be walking in futility means *to be void of useful aim, to have a pointless pursuit*, and in this text designates those who live in complete error because they do not know God. This same verb “futility” which in the Greek is *mataiote* is used also in Romans 1:21 and Romans 8:20; look these verses up and see how the term “futility” is used. How does this help your understanding of Paul’s meaning in this passage and the condition of the Gentiles? What are the common characteristics you find?

4. Read Ephesians 4:18-19. Paul is describing how as believers we should not walk (live) “like the Gentiles” do in “futility.” As believers we should not be acting as if we did not have the knowledge of God through Christ. What are the qualities Paul describes of Gentiles concerning the following:
 - a. Their understanding (v.18):
 - b. Their life with God (v.18):
 - c. Their feelings (v.19):
 - d. Their actions (v.19):
 - e. What is the reason for the Gentiles condition? (v.18)
5. Considering that we were once in the condition Paul is describing of the Gentiles in verses 17-19, how does this give you perspective on what God has brought you to through Christ? How should this impact our way of thinking and behavior?
6. Read Pauls’ declarative statement in Ephesians 4:20-22. Paul is making a contrast between the futile living, thinking and perspective of those who don’t know God and compares it to those who do know God through Christ. As a believer your mind is no longer darkened; your life is no longer alienated from God; and your heart is no longer hardened to God and impure. You have heard of Christ and you were taught in Him as a believer in the Truth—Jesus is the Truth! The Truth sets you free and the Truth has made you a new creation. Look up the following and write what you find:

John 14:6

John 8:36

2 Corinthians 5:17-18

 - a. How do these truths in these verses pertain to what Paul is teaching about the old man?
 - b. How does this relate to the new you vs. the old you?
7. Close today with a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God for making you new in Christ and free from futility and a hopeless life without Jesus. Praise God you are a new person in Christ! Isn’t it truly wonderful? Write down something you have hope and faith in Jesus for:

Day 2

1. Read Ephesians 4:22-24. Paul has exhorted us to put off our former conduct as unbelievers, which he describes as the “old man” meaning the old person or lifestyle we had before Jesus. In what way does Paul describe how the old man grows in corruption? What real life example can you think of when you read about this progression of sinfulness he describes in verse 22?
2. In verse 23, Paul gives us powerful insight on how to practically deal with our old ways of thinking, living, acting, and doing by being “renewed in the spirit of your mind.” How do you think this renewal comes about and how can we live it?

3. Look up the following verses and write what you further learn about what it means to live being renewed in the Spirit:

Colossians 3:15-16

Romans 6:12-14

Romans 6:20-23

Galatians 5:16

3. As believers we are new people, new creations in Christ and as such we cannot live as the Gentiles; we should not be living in our old sinful ways. Paul is exhorting us to put those old things off and put on (live, do, behave, think, act) in the new way—the way of Christ. Think back...what were some of your old ways? How have they changed? Write a comparison of an “old man” way you were (before Jesus) and next to it write the “new man” way you are now because of the change Jesus has made in you.

Old Me

New Me

Be encouraged about what God has done in your life! No one is perfect and when we consider ourselves sometimes we can be our own harshest critic. But, when we compare how we were before Jesus, to how we are now, we can't help but see a true change (even if we aren't perfect). God is working in the life of every believer, transforming them into the image of Christ by the work of the Spirit and the believer following after the way of the Lord. Our transformation in one sense is instantaneous: going from futility to purpose, going from enemy of God to child of God, from dead in sin to alive in Christ, from bondage to sin to freedom in Christ's righteousness. However, we also have a progressive transformation that is occurring as we walk with God and continue following after Christ as our Lord in obedience to His Word. As we do this we grow, mature and are in partnership with God—it is a joint work. The Lord does the work of transformation in us making us more like Him, and as a result we do the work of love and obedience to Him. The word "work" not only describes God's activity but also the action of a person cooperating with God. It is a labor of love and commitment, and one that we as believers have been empowered to do by the Holy Spirit as we live our lives, read His Word and apply it to our lives and choose to obey the Holy Spirit's leading. So, in essence it is all God that is the power behind our transformation and He gets all the glory—but that doesn't mean we don't have our part in that work. Paul here is beginning to instruct these believers of this very thing by showing them the contrast between the old man and the new and how their conduct should be as a new person in Christ. We too must remember this and work with God in love and obedience by walking worthy of our calling as the new person God has made us, and is making us, to be like Christ as His beloved children. We are to be a new and improved in Christ!

4. Considering the paragraph above, take time right now and reflect: Have you been working with God in obedience and love or have you been resisting the prompting of the Holy Spirit concerning a certain matter? Ask God to show you and take this time to really think and talk to God about it. Then open your Bible and ask God to give you a life verse to encourage you and ground you in His love and show you just what He is speaking to your heart concerning that matter. It may be from this section of scripture we are studying or from another. As a scripture comes to mind or maybe even if you just are hearing and remembering part of it, look it up in the concordance in the back of your bible or on a search engine on the internet to find the verse. Make sure to read the verse in its context so you will grasp the full meaning. Thank the Lord for showing you and then write the verse below and how it helped you.

5. Reread Ephesians 4:24. Paul tells us that God created the new you in Christ. This "new man" has been made in "true righteousness and holiness" based on TRUTH. You were set free by TRUTH and You are made alive in the Spirit by TRUTH. Jesus is THE TRUTH. Think about all the false 'truths' out there in the world that have captured the hearts and minds of people leading them in futility away from God. Praise God you are not one of them! What do you think God wants us to do for the lost that they too may know the TRUTH and be free, redeemed and made in true righteousness and holiness? What is something you know you could do today to share the TRUTH with someone?

Day 3

When we choose to put off the “old man” and that is our former conduct, we will see several changes in our lives. The Holy Spirit will always warn (convict) us when we are about to cross the line and do something we probably should not do or say something we should not say. Paul comes in a little closer to spell out the specific sinful activities that should NOT be happening in our lives.

1. Read Ephesians 4:17-29. It’s important to be mindful of the whole context of the verses you will study from for this lesson. What 5 specific things do verses 25-29 instruct you to do or stop doing as a result of being renewed in the spirit of your mind?

Paul has spent much of the letter exhorting the believers to unity. He is addressing some pretty obvious things that will divide even non-believers!

2. The first thing Paul addresses is the necessity to *speaking truth to one another*, because believers in Christ are connected, members of one another, they are the family of God. How does lying divide or damage relationships?
 - a. Protecting unity is important, but honoring God is the most important thing. What do these scriptures reveal about how God feels about lying?

Zechariah 8:16-17 (verse 16 is actually what Paul is quoting in Eph 4:25)

Proverbs 6:16-19

Proverbs 12:17-22

3. Next, we are faced with our need for “anger management.” Read Ephesians 4:26-27 again. It does not say that you cannot have anger. We will experience anger about injustices done to us or others, or we may feel justified anger when someone has wronged us, but we must remain controlled by the Holy Spirit in these things. What is the exhortation about anger?
 - a. What three things does Paul give us to “filter” or check ourselves in our anger?

Anger is not always a sin, but we need to make sure we don't sin in our anger. Sometimes it takes a righteous anger for us to stand up for what is right and expose wicked activity, to defend against injustices, or to protect someone. Jesus displayed a righteous anger when He denounced the religious scribes and Pharisees and called them a "generation of vipers" in Matthew 3:7. Jesus was evidently angry when He entered the temple seeing the people turning it into a den of thieves as they turned it into a market place instead of a Holy place of prayer and worship and He overturned the tables of the money changers in Matthew 21:12-13.

The Greek word used for "sin" in this instance is *harmartano* and it means "to miss the mark". So Paul is essentially saying, "be angry, but don't miss the mark". Perhaps simply put, control your anger, stay in the control of the Holy Spirit not your flesh nature.

4. To *not let the sun go down on your wrath* means don't let your day end without allowing God to calm your heart and spirit so that you do not allow anger to fester and make sure the enemy is not stirring you up to sinful behavior in your anger. A good way to test your response when angry is to think about your words and actions and ask yourself: would there be anything I would have to say sorry to Jesus or others about for how I behaved? Paul is quoting Psalm 4:4 as he writes "Be angry and do not sin." Read through Psalm 4:3-5. What can you learn from these verses to help you in times when you are dealing with circumstances that bring about anger?
 - a. Most of us know the saying: "you better watch your mouth!" Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-2,6. How do these verses warn you to *watch your mouth* when you are angry? Notice what verse 6 says. How can your wrong response have possible negative effect a good work that you are intending to do?

5. Imagine reading the letter Paul is writing and reading Ephesians 4:28. "Let those who stole, steal no longer." Imagine being called out like that! What was the new action that they were to take?
 - a. Explain what you think Ephesians 4:29 means to you in your own words making it personal (What are you to do?)

What a powerful testimony of a changed life; to go from being one who was stealing things to becoming a hard worker who is now known for giving things to others in need!

6. As you have completed today's lesson, was the Holy Spirit convicted you about any of these habits in your own life? If so, pray! Ask God to help you overcome any of these areas. If you have been struggling and need to confess your struggle to another person and be prayed for, don't wait! "Therefore, confess your sins to each one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." James 5:16 (ESV)

Day 4

The Holy Spirit is dwelling in us, and as we choose to walk in the Spirit we will bear the fruit to of the Spirit. That means we will have the results, evidence and characteristics of one who is yielded to God's direction and leading in our lives by His Spirit. With that being true, we must also realize that when we choose to resist the Holy Spirit we will see the negative evidence of that as well. Paul's exhortation in the beginning of chapter 4, is *Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called*. If we don't, there will be terrible consequences that not only affect you but those around you as well and ultimately defames the name of Christ of which you bear upon you as a Christian.

1. Read Ephesians 4:30-32. If possible read it in a couple different Bible translations to see the different ways it reads. Write out what Paul instructs in verse 30:
 - a. What does it mean to "grieve" someone?
 - b. Let's make this more personal. Have you ever experienced a situation where someone's actions caused you to look bad or misrepresented you? How did that make you feel?
2. It is important to look at the context of these verses, read again verses 20-31. What types of actions grieve the Holy Spirit?

As a child of God, knowing that the Holy Spirit is dwelling in you, doesn't it seem logical that the Holy Spirit of God would be grieved with us if we continually acted the way these scriptures describe? We should be sensitive to the One who sealed us for redemption, the Holy Spirit of God! We might begin to ask ourselves: Will what I am about to do or say please the Spirit or grieve the Spirit? Thank God for His mercy and grace!

3. Verse 31 in the NLT says “Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior.” These things take root in our hearts and take over if we do not choose to walk in the Spirit. What does God’s Word teach about these things in the following verses?

James 3:5-18

Proverbs 14:16-17

Hebrews 12:14-15

4. How does Proverbs 4:23-27 address your personal responsibility about what is happening in your own heart? Ponder what each verse is speaking as you answer this question.

Each of these exhortations deal with our relationship with each other. Our sinful behavior will affect others negatively, bring division and grieve the Holy Spirit. But our good behavior reflecting righteousness and love will bless others, unite the body and it pleases the Holy Spirit! We will be blessed because we remain useable by the Spirit and in return we will be a blessing to others!

5. Paul doesn’t just tell us what to stop doing, but he reminds us of how God would want us to behave. How does he encourage us to be towards one another in Ephesians 4:32?
 - a. What did Paul gently remind us should be our motivation for acting kind, tenderhearted and forgiving to each other?
6. These exhortations from Paul may have been a little convicting. Read Psalm 139:23-24 write it out as a prayer to your Lord and as He reveals any areas you may need to adjust write those down too as a personal prayer to God. Anger and unforgiveness are areas you do not want to neglect in your life, because you are giving the devil a foothold, and position of control in your life. There is no simple grudge or hard feeling that the devil is going to overlook as an opportunity to get into your life. Remember there is no condemnation in the Lord, only forgiveness and freedom if we come to Him with repentant hearts in agreement with Him. God wants us to come to Him with everything, He wants to set you free, heal you and use you in mighty ways, so don’t let something like anger or unforgiveness rob you and cause an even bigger issue in your life than the offense that made you upset in the first place! Lord by your grace we come to you, help us to forgive as you have forgiven us.

Day 5 Review and Reflect

1. Read through Ephesians 4:17-32 as a reminder of what you have studied. What spoke most directly to your heart from this week's lesson?
2. Review Paul's exhortation: "that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." What are some practical things that you do choose to do now to help you be *renewed in the spirit of your mind* (building up your spiritual life as a Christian)?
3. Is there an "action" you feel the Lord wants you to do (or not do) in regards to what He has spoken to your heart?
4. Think about what Paul describes as the "old man," this person you were before you came to Christ and were born again. What has been the biggest change in your life? If someone who has not seen you since before you became a new creation in Christ were to encounter you now, what would you hope they would see as a result of what you have allowed God to do in your life?
5. Learning that we can grieve the Holy Spirit reminds us that God does care about our words, our actions and how we treat one another. This week's lesson has come in a little close like a magnifying glass! As you reflect on these things, this is a good time to sit before your Abba Father and ask Him to help in any areas you may have been struggling with. Be brave and ask Him to bring strong conviction when you are close to stumbling with any of the behaviors that would grieve His Spirit. Prayer is a powerful way to be *renewed in the spirit of your mind*! Thank Him for His mercies that are new every morning!

2 Corinthians 3:18 NLT: *So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—Who is Spirit—makes us more and more like Him as we are changed into His glorious image!*" God is never finished working in our lives! Hallelujah and Amen!