

**"The Practice of the Believer"**

**Ephesians 4-6**

**Part 5**

**Introduction:** Today in our study of Ephesians we have now come to a passage in which Paul will instruct us as to how we are to live our new life in Christ. In chapter 4:1 Paul called upon his readers to walk worthy of their calling and now in the text before us he is going to give us the details as to how we are to walk worthy. Paul has just taught to us all that God has done to make sure there is unity in the body of Jesus Christ. God gave us gifts and He gave us gifted people to teach the Scriptures so that we can be grounded and spiritually stable in this life.

**Notice Ephesians 4:11-16**

These are the verses we looked at the last time we were together, and we considered this as the blueprint for the church. The church is not a place of programs and entertainment. It is a barracks for soldiers to be trained in for the battle that exists outside of the walls of this building. Strengthening the soldiers only happens as the Word of God becomes a steady diet from the pulpit.

**"Let's Move Forward"**

**Part 1**

I have titled this section, "Let's Move Forward" because this is exactly what our Lord desires for us to do. He wants us to be fully given over to Him so that we will manifest Jesus Christ in the way that we live our lives.

**Romans 12:1**

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

This is what God desires from us. But the problem with many people is that they have not fully separated from their old way of living and therefore they have somewhat of a divided allegiance.

Let us notice what the writer of Hebrews wrote concerning spiritual growth.

**Hebrews 5:12-14**

<sup>12</sup> For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

<sup>13</sup> For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

<sup>14</sup> But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Then we read Paul's words to the Corinthians.

### **1 Corinthians 3:1-3**

*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*

<sup>2</sup> *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*

<sup>3</sup> *For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

The Corinthians were living lives of sin and they were just blending in with the unsaved. That kind of life is an offense to our Lord. He died to set us free from the old life.

## **I. The Warning**

### **Notice Ephesians 4:17**

The word "therefore" looks back to what Paul has taught us. We are "NEW CREATIONS" in Christ and therefore we are to live as such. The phrase "testify in the Lord" is the same as Paul saying, "What I am telling you is exactly what our Lord would say if He were speaking to you!"

The exhortation is that these believers were not to live like unsaved Gentiles lived in the vanity of their mind.

- **We need to take some time here and see the emphasis on the mind in this passage.**

### **Notice Ephesians 4:17, 18, 23**

The battleground is in the mind and this is why Paul places so much emphasis on the teaching of the Bible in the preceding verses. The more Truth we have in our minds the

more it will change our conduct. This thought can also be seen in Paul's letter to the Romans.

**Romans 12:1-2**

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

<sup>2</sup> *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

**Notice Ephesians 4:17 again.**

Unsaved Gentiles live in the VANITY of their minds. The word "VANITY" means "to be void of Truth", or "futility". This refers to the empty illusion in which the unsaved live. **It is in this VANITY that they believe they can somehow satisfy the desires of the flesh by feeding it with what the world has to offer.**

The unsaved world is grasping one thing after another in an attempt to find satisfaction. But it is all futile because there is no satisfaction in what the world offers. It does not matter if it is sin or stuff it will leave them empty.

**Ecclesiastes 2:1-11**

*I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.*

<sup>2</sup> *I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?*

<sup>3</sup> *I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.*

<sup>4</sup> *I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:*

<sup>5</sup> *I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:*

<sup>6</sup> *I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:*

<sup>7</sup> *I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house: also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:*

<sup>8</sup> I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.

<sup>9</sup> So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.

<sup>10</sup> And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy: for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.

<sup>11</sup> Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

This is the very way the unsaved live.

Now, let me explain how they became this way. They refused to acknowledge the true purpose of the mind which is to receive God's revelation which would give them guidance and light for life. Because they chose to suppress God's revelation, we see what happened in the next verses.

### Notice Ephesians 4:18

There are three results listed here:

#### 1. Their understanding has become darkened.

One commentary phrases it this way - "Their beclouded intellect and their emotions have been darkened permanently so that they are without the faculty of discernment and are unable to distinguish clearly between right and wrong."

The unsaved would be quick to deny this definition but that is simply the deceptiveness of sin.

#### 2. They are alienated from God.

This is a reminder that the unsaved are separated from God. They are spiritually dead. The word "alienated" is in the perfect tense which indicates a past completed action with ongoing effect or results. Because of Adam's sin all his offspring are born separated.

#### 3. Their hearts are blinded.

This means their hearts are hard and calloused.

**Notice Ephesians 4:19**

"Past feeling" is a reference to the calloused heart. They are given over to unbridled lust. The idea in the phrase "PAST FEELING" is that they do not feel pain anymore. When a person has a conscience that is tender, and they get involved in sin it becomes painful because of the guilt which they feel. But when someone continues to violate their conscience repeatedly, they go "PAST FEELING" in the sense that they do not feel the pain anymore.

**Illustration:**

I remember listening to a man years ago as he talked about his family. He and his wife had a son that was born without the ability to feel pain. He said that many would think that was a good thing, but it is not. His son would jump from high places and not realize he was hurting himself. His wife would bake cookies and his son would open the oven and grab the cookie sheet to get a cookie and he would not feel any pain. Pain is something which God has given to us to protect us. The pain inflicted by the conscience is also for our good. But some have seared the conscience and they no longer feel the pain of conviction.

**1 Timothy 4:1-2**

*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

<sup>2</sup> *Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;*

Let me share with you what Paul wrote in Romans 1. This helps us to see that people do this to themselves.

**Romans 1:18-24**

<sup>18</sup> *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*

<sup>19</sup> *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.*

<sup>20</sup> *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

<sup>21</sup> *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

<sup>22</sup> *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,*

<sup>23</sup> *And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*

<sup>24</sup> *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:*

List to the words of **J Vernon McGee**:

*"Continuance in this state of moral ineptitude brings them down to the level where they have no feeling of wrongdoing. There are a lot of folk like that today. They are apathetic. The resultant condition is to plunge further into immorality and lasciviousness. This vicious cycle leads to a desire to go even deeper into sin. If you paint the town red tonight, you have to have a bigger bucket and a bigger brush for tomorrow night. The meaning here is to covet the very depths of immorality. Men in sin are never satisfied with sin. They become abandoned to sin. This is what it means in chapter 1 of Romans that God gave them up to all uncleanness through their own lusts. You can reach the place, my friend, where you are an abandoned sinner."*

Now let me get you back to the warning.

**Notice Ephesians 4:17 again.**

Paul tells these believers not to live like the unsaved Gentiles. The warning here is that we all have the potential of falling back into the life of sin. We have been born again and we now have a new Divine nature but at the same time we must remember that we still have our old sin nature. It is this "old man" that longs to lead us back into the old sinful life.

When you go back to school or to work this week let us remember that we are walking into a group of people who have no spiritual understanding. Many of them are past feeling and are bent on living for sin. We must be very careful that we do not allow our sin nature to lead us back into what God has saved us from.

Maybe you are living with one foot in the old life now. Let me encourage you to repent. You are walking a very dangerous path. Sin will take you further than you want to go, and it will cost you far more than you desire to pay. Let me remind you of David's consequences.

**2 Samuel 12:7-11**

<sup>7</sup> *And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;*

<sup>8</sup> And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

<sup>9</sup> Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

<sup>10</sup> Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

<sup>11</sup> Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

**Conclusion:**

If you are not saved you are in a very serious situation. Your heart is being hardened more and more every day. The longer you go the easier it is to reject Jesus Christ.

**Ephesians 2:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

<sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.