

"The Practice of the Believer"

Ephesians 4-6

Part 6

Introduction: Last week in our study of Ephesians we looked at the start of Paul's call for believers to move forward in their spiritual growth. He began this section with a NEGATIVE as he exhorted his readers not to walk as the unsaved Gentiles walk.

Notice Ephesians 4:17-19

We have the exhortation in verse 17 and then Paul explains what it is that governs the walk/lifestyle of the unsaved Gentiles. They are governed by the sin nature. They walk in the vanity of their mind which means they have bought into the philosophies of the world. They look for satisfaction and fulfillment in what the world holds out to them.

Their understanding is darkened which means the unsaved struggle to know the difference between what is wrong and what is right. Their moral compass is completely inaccurate. They are separated from God and their hearts have been hardened because of their own choices.

Romans 1:18-24

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

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

²⁰ 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:

²¹ 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.

²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

²³ 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.

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

They are "past feeling" which means they "feel no pain of conviction". Their conscience has been seared by their steady pursuit of sin. The word "greediness" here speaks of how they are never satisfied with the sin they dive into. They are always looking for something darker and more daring and this leads them deeper and deeper into the darkness.

Now in all of this Paul also issued a warning for believers. It is very possible for believers to fall into sin and to get involved in what we have been saved from. Jesus died to set us free from the power of sin.

1 John 3:5

⁵ *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

For the believer to go back into sin is an offense to our Lord who gave His life to free us from the slavery of sin.

So, the unsaved person is governed by the sin nature and they can do nothing BUT sin.

Romans 6:20

²⁰ *For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.*

"Let's Move Forward"

Part 2

Notice Ephesians 4:20

Here we are introduced to a contrast. The unsaved Gentile is governed by the sin nature, but it is not so with the believer. We need to notice here that Paul does not say ye have learned ABOUT Christ but that ye have LEARNED CHRIST.

Notice Ephesians 4:21

Paul reminds these believers that they had been taught by Jesus Christ as to how they were to live lives of righteousness. The question is when did they hear Him and when were they taught by Him? The answer is, "At all times".

John 10:27

²⁷ *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*

Each one of us who knows Jesus Christ as Savior are taught by our Lord. We have living within us the Holy Spirit and there is not one believer who does not have the Spirit.

Romans 8:9

⁹ But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

It is the Holy Spirit Who lives the life of Jesus Christ through us. Notice the Words of Jesus.

John 16:13-14

¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

¹⁴ He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you

Let us notice what John wrote concerning the anointing of each believer.

1 John 2:20-21, 27

²⁰ But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

²¹ I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

²⁷ But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

I want to take this a little further because there is something very important that we need to see. When we were saved, we were saved by grace through faith. Now that we are saved, we now live under grace and there are many facets to living under grace.

Romans 6:14

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Now let me show you what Paul says concerning the grace we are under when he writes to Titus.

Titus 2:11-15

¹¹ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

¹² Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

¹³ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

¹⁴ Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

¹⁵ These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Let us now notice what we are taught.

Notice Ephesians 4:22-24

The "old man" here is the "sin nature" or "the flesh". The "new man" is the "new creation" that has taken place within us.

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Jesus teaches us to lay aside the old man like an old garment and put on the new man. He does not tell us to clean up the old man for that is not possible. The idea here is that our "FLESH" or "OLD MAN" has been stripped of his power. Before salvation we were controlled by him and we were enslaved under his power.

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

² Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

When we were saved the OLD MAN was removed from his throne of power.

Romans 6:4-7, 18

⁴ Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

⁶ *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

⁷ For he that is dead is freed from sin.

¹⁸ *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

The OLD MAN is rendered powerless by the CROSS. The cross is the only thing he will submit to. You cannot put him under the Law and change him. You cannot bludgeon him into submission. It is only the CROSS that will take the power from the OLD MAN.

So, we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God.

Romans 6:11

¹¹ *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

So, to put off the OLD MAN is to recognize he has been made powerless and then allow the NEW MAN/the NEW CREATION/the HOLY SPIRIT to control our lives.

Notice Ephesians 4:22-23 again.

There are two things here we need to put off that go with the OLD MAN.

1. Put off following deceitful lusts.

The flesh LUSTS after many different things but the flesh is deceived by them. The things which the flesh lusts after can never bring contentment and satisfaction. They have no lasting value.

1 John 2:15-17

¹⁵ *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

¹⁶ *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

¹⁷ *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

2. The old way of thinking.

Notice Ephesians 4:23 again.

We are to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. This means our old way of thinking is to be put off. This requires self-discipline.

2 Corinthians 10:5

⁵ *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*

Let us notice what the Bible says about the sin of man's thoughts.

Proverbs 15:26

²⁶ *The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.*

Isaiah 55:7

⁷ *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

Isaiah 59:4, 7

⁴ *None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies: they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.*

⁷ *Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.*

The point I want you to see is that our thoughts are also sin. Paul calls upon his readers to change their way of thinking. **But how is this done?**

Hebrews 4:12

¹² *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Our thinking is changed by what we put into our mind.

Conclusion:

Since our Lord teaches us and His Word changes the way we think then we must do two things.

1. **Abide in Him.**

John 15:4-8

⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

⁵ I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

⁶ If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

⁷ If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

⁸ Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

2. Feed upon His Word.

Psalm 119:100-105

¹⁰⁰ I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

¹⁰¹ I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

¹⁰² I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

¹⁰³ How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

¹⁰⁴ Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

¹⁰⁵ Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.