

The New “Man” Without Grief

As we, God’s House On The Hill, approach the New Year and a new season in our congregational life that will include the appointing and anointing of our first leadership team, moving into our first permanent space and walking under the fresh anointing that we should expect the Lord to pour out on us as we gather with The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel Northeast District at the Fall Leadership Conference called: “TOGETHER Fresh Wind Fresh Fire” and our local leadership team anoints this pastor with a fresh anointing of God’s wisdom and an empowering from the Holy Spirit, with the laying on of hands in ordination, I encourage us to enter this time as new creations in Christ. It is when we put off the old and put on the new that we can expect the Lord to cause new things to happen in our lives.

Ephesians 4:17-32 (READ)

Here Paul writes to “the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:” (Eph. 1:1) These were not marginal halfhearted believers, they were called “faithful in Christ.” God’s word is to the faithful. We must be faithful. Not perfect but faithful to the extent we can be. This strong admonition says if we call ourselves Christians or “faithful in Christ Jesus” we should be and act differently than those who are **not** related to Christ through salvation.

He points out a sharp contrast between the two by the way each thinks. On the one hand the non-believer or “Gentile” is said to be operating in (v. 17) “the futility of their mind.” This futility is referring to an emptiness or purposelessness of a darkened understanding. This means the understanding they *think* they have is influenced by the dark side of the spiritual realm. It’s like saying Satan has colored their thinking and they can only see from his perspective missing the positive while only seeing the negative. The thinking of the people of the world is **blind** to the way God thinks because they have not entered into the light. They are by nature alienated from God because of only being born in the flesh and not by the Holy Spirit.

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This fruitless pointless useless thinking is because they simply don't care about the things of God. They are naturally ignorant. That's how we all begin before our salvation.

In verse 20 Paul brings a stark comparison. Paul even challenges the people of members of the church at Ephesus and us to look into our hearts and ask ourselves in the depth of our inner being if we each have heard **Him**, Jesus Christ, and have allowed Him to speak into our hearts permitting His revealed truth to transform our lives. Jesus is the truth and that must penetrate our hearts causing us to see our old wicked ways and reject them followed by deliberately changing how we behave.

Our conduct when we were walking in the flesh and ignorant of the Holy Spirit was the same as the world's around us. We didn't know any better but now we know Jesus. He knows the new path we are to follow and as long as we follow Him we will be on the right path.

It is this battle between the old man and the new that can keep us from knowing the fullness of the joy the Lord has for us. Only in totally surrendering to the leading of His Holy Spirit do we have any hope of getting it right.

It comes down to whether we serve Him or ourselves. The devil and his henchmen don't care if you serve them as long as you're not serving Him! Jesus Christ said put it this way:

Matthew 12:30 (NKJV)

30 “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.”

There is no middle ground. We are either with Him or we are not. It may be on again off again but our goal should be on all the time; on track, on the path, on the way to spiritual maturity. We can only arrive there if we are headed there and keep on moving forward.

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In our Wednesday night Bible study we just covered the subject of spiritual discontentment. This is a place we reach in our spiritual life where we are just not satisfied with our spiritual growth. Some want more. Now, if you don't want more and just get discouraged it could have the reverse effect and cause you to move back from what God has for you. Forward or backward there is movement in spiritual discontentment. The Bible calls us to press on for the calling for which you were called into the body of Christ for. Paul writes to the saints in Philippi in

Philippians 3:12 (NKJV)

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

That is the key, we must always press on! The way we do that is to constantly put off the old man. (v. 22) Our former conduct is no longer going to cut in the Kingdom of God; we must think and act differently. Or we are saying with our behavior we really don't know God. 1 John 4:8 “He who does not love does not know God for God is love.”

The old person that we were before we came to know Jesus as our savior has to be “put off” and the new person Christ has us to be has to be “put on” (v. 24) This New Man has been created according to God in true righteousness and holiness.

v. 25 Starts with the word “Therefore” meaning, considering all that has gone before here; this is what we conclude: we need to stop lying and speak the truth to our brother and sister. Lying isn't just speaking falsely it can be omitting things. You might go to someone and tell them you love them in Christ but underneath you are holding something against them and you don't trust them. That is lying as well. As they say in the oath in court; “tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth...” any other than that is a lie!

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The analogy of the body is used when he writes we are members of one another. Your hand and your mouth are both members of the same body. If the mouth says to the hand, “that is not hot!” and the item is a hot stove and the hand touches the stove the hand gets burned. How often do we get burned by members of the body of Christ that lie to us?

(v. 28) Paul goes on to point out that when one person comes to Christ others benefit as well using the example of a thief that now stops thieving and helps others so they will stop needing to steal because their need has been met.

Not only is our behavior to change but our speech as well. (v. 29) What we do is important and what we say matters as well. Only speak well of others. When Paul refers to “corrupt” words the word means decayed or rotten. No one wants something rotten and smelly. Everyone however wants a good word. It actually indicates here that it is necessary, a needed thing to build one another up and not tear down. He actually uses the word grace, equating encouragement to the life giving knowledge we receive from God.

Ephesians 2:8 (NKJV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

God gives us good gifts that we can then give to others and encourage them like He encouraged us when He came into our lives. As He encouraged us so we ought to encourage one another. As He loved us so we ought to love one another.

This is so essential to our walk of faith that to not do it actually greaves or breaks the heart of the Holy Spirit.

This section then concludes with contrasting what we need to put away and how we need to shape our character to be like Christ. (Continued next week) see Col. 3:12-17