



Poema
“The Work of The Disciple”

Ephesians 4:17-24

When a person trusts Christ as Savior and the truth of His sacrifice takes root in the heart, a transformation takes place in his or her basic nature.

Salvation is not a matter of improvement or perfection of what has previously existed. It is a total transformation. The New Testament speaks of believers having a new mind, new will, new heart, new inheritance, new relationship, new power, new knowledge, new wisdom, new perception, new understanding, new righteousness, new love, new desire, new citizenship, new life, and new creation...just to name a few.

Why, then, do we continue to sin after we become Christians? Although an individual becomes a “new person” when becoming a Christian, some things remain the same. Sin is still present in our flesh. While our soul is set in heaven as perfect, blameless, without sin...our earthly existence is at war with the sin in our flesh. Believers in Christ have been chosen and predestined by God to become conformed to the image of Jesus through our obedience to the truth of His Word.

Paul teaches us the intensely practical aspects of faithfully living out this truth on a daily basis. He helps us to grasp the differences between the sinful walk and the new walk. After first giving the characteristics of the old lifestyle, he then offers the characteristics of the new lifestyle.

➤ ***The characteristics of the old lifestyle. (Ephesians 4:17-19)***

“Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.”

Pointless and ineffective intellect.

The first characteristic of unregenerate people is that they live in the “...**futility of their minds**...” It is important to understand that the basic issue of life-style is centered in the mind. The operation of the natural (sinful) mind is empty and unproductive. The Greek word for **futility**, refers to that which fails to produce the desired result, that which never succeeds.

Ignorance of God’s truth.

Because people are determined to reject God, God judicially and sovereignly determines to blind their minds, exclude them from His presence, and confirm them in their spiritual ignorance. The sinful lifestyle is unresponsive to truth “...**due to their hardness of heart.**” The Greek language points to this as being rock hard – immobile – solidified – paralyzed.

Spiritual and moral callousness.

When people constantly think about indulging their selfishness and living every day to satisfy their self-centered agenda, two things will result: the mind will lose all touch with spiritual reality and actions will occur that are destructive to the individual and to others. When a person purposes to think his own way, do things his own way, and pursue his own destiny, he cuts himself off from God.

➤ ***The characteristics of the new lifestyle. (Ephesians 4:20-24)***

“But that is not the way you learned Christ! – assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Christ-centered radical change of life perspective.

A life perspective that supports self-centered behavior and the justification of sin is not of Christ. It is nowhere close to the proper attitude and actions reflective of a true follower of Jesus Christ. Because we have been given everything we need for life and godliness, our life should center on Christ alone. In other words, the more we learn Christ, the more we live Christ.

Knowledge of the truth through the Word.

Instead of being ignorant of God’s truth, the Christian has not only heard of Christ but has also been taught in Him – ***“...assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus...”***
There is no excuse for a true believer to be Biblically ignorant.

Deliverance from the old sinful nature by the power of the cross.

Success over the power of sin is evident here. Our participation in the divine nature we have been given is ***“...to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds...” (cf. 2 Peter 1:3-11)***

This is not a work for salvation, but a subsequent reality of our salvation. We need to understand that we have the power to overcome sin by the discipline of our mind. It is in the mind that sin is conceived, and our actions give birth to the sin.

Determination to allow the new nature to control our life.

The partnership we have with the Holy Spirit is a powerful one, yet so many Christians live in defeat. We have become lazy in this truth. We must understand that because of our redemption and regeneration from death to life – we now have the power to say “no” to sin. This is a choice that starts in our mind and is decisively demonstrated in our actions of obedience to the Word of God.

(cf. Romans 6:3-14)

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