

EPHESIANS



Rooted and Grounded
— in love —

Lesson Eight EPHESIANS 4:17-32

Day 1



Father, please give me your Spirit of wisdom and revelation that I may know you better as I read and study your word. Help me to draw close to you and enjoy your presence.

- Read Ephesians 4:17-32 several times. Read through the passage *prayerfully*—responding to what you are reading with praise, thanksgiving, confession or surrender. (God speaks to us through his word and we respond back to him through prayer.)
- Pick one word or phrase that stands out to you to ponder on throughout the day and week. (It may be something that resonates with you or that you want to understand better.) Write it here.
- Write one sentence summarizing the passage.

Day 2- Eph. 4:17-19

Write out verses 17-19

1. Paul continues to describe what it looks like to live as God's chosen people. In the first part of chapter 4 he focused on unity. In this next section he focuses on purity. In 4:1 Paul tells us how to walk (live). What does Paul say about how not to walk in verse 17?
 - Remember, Paul was writing to Gentile people. What does he mean telling them not to walk like Gentiles? Now that they have believed in Christ, what is their primary identity?

2. Paul says in verse 17, that people without Jesus, whom he calls Gentiles, walk *in the futility of their minds*. How would you describe this state of being?

3. How does Paul express the intellectual factor and the heart factor in the lifestyle of pagan people in verse 18?

4. How would you explain the progression to alienation from the life of God that we see in verse 18 and 19?

Digging Deeper:

In Romans 1, Paul elaborates on the downward path that leads to alienation from God.

- Highlight the phrases in Romans below, that show the **hardness of heart** that Paul mentions in 4:18

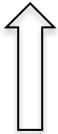
Romans 1:18 ,21a, 28 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth...For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him...And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

- Highlight the phrases that show **darkened in their understanding** (4:18):

Romans 21b, 22,28 but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools... And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

- Highlight the phrases that show **alienated from the life of God** (4:18):

Romans 24a, 26a, 28b Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity...for this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions...God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.



Father, thank you for intervening in my life when I didn't know you or want you! Thank you for opening my eyes to the truth and softening my heart so that I could know you.



Romans 1 tells us that what can be known about God is plain to all humans because God has revealed himself in his creation. Human beings suppress the obvious truth about God because we don't want God to be our King—we want to rule ourselves. But this only leads to death. There is no worse place to be than alienated from God. Surrendering to God is the path to life and this path is through Jesus Christ. If you have never surrendered your life to God and trusted in Jesus you can do so now by turning away from your own sinful ways and asking Jesus to forgive and cleanse you and be your King.

Day 3- Eph. 4:20-24

Write out verses 20-24

Scholar's Note: Just as evangelists 'preach Christ', so their hearers 'learn' Christ.."¹

For Discussion

What does it mean to *learn Christ*? How is this different than merely learning *about* Christ?

Scholar's Note: v. 21 *taught in him*— "the teaching is taking place in the sphere of the living Christ. Christ is the school, if you like. All ethical instructions are to be understood in light of our union with Christ."²

5. What is the old self like that Paul describes in verse 22?

For Discussion

Why are the desires of the old nature, deceitful?

Picture and Ponder:

"It is because we have already put off our old nature, in that decisive act of repentance called conversion, that we can logically be commanded to put away all the practices which belong to that old and rejected life."³



The best way to understand verse 23 is that the mind of the believer is being renewed by the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is one of the themes in Ephesians— being mentioned 13 times in this letter! Unbelieving people live in futility of mind, but the minds of those in Christ are being renewed by his Spirit.

- ❖ Jesus said, *But the Helper, the Holy spirit whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.* (John 14:26). Do you take in a steady input of God’s word with a hungry heart so that the Spirit can teach you and remind you? How can you make some space in your life for silence where the Spirit can speak to you?
 - ❖ What attitudes and habits in your life impede the Spirit from his renewing your mind?
 - ❖ When have you been aware of the Spirit at work, renewing your mind?
 - ❖ In this section of Ephesians Paul has been emphasizing the mind. He has talked about futility of mind, darkened understanding, ignorance, deception and also, learning, teaching and hearing. And finally, renewal of the mind. We know that what we think influences our emotions and behavior. Are there any changes that need to be made in your life over what has the biggest influence on your mind?
6. What is the new self that we are to put on, like, according to verse 24?

Picture and Ponder

“...change comes only as a result of bringing one’s life into conformity with their new identity in Christ.”⁴



When we trust in Jesus and become united to him we are made into new creations— given new hearts and new desires. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *if anyone is in Christ he is a new creature, the old has passed away, behold the new has come.* But even as new people we sometimes put those old grungy and tattered clothes back on and slip back into our old selves. Paul is reminding us to live out who we are— redeemed people delivered from slavery and poverty into freedom and riches in Christ. So keep taking off those old clothes and putting on the new ones that fit who you are in Christ.

- ❖ How does the image of putting off the old self connect to repentance?
- ❖ What parts of your old nature are still clinging to you that you need to throw off today?
- ❖ What do you need to intentionally put on that reflects the righteousness and holiness of God?

Day 4- Eph. 4:25-28

Write out verses 25-28

7. Because we are new people, what should we put away or take off according to verse 25?

- Name all the things that falsehood would encompass.

- What should we replace it with instead?

- Why is this essential for the body of Christ?

8. Paul says in verse 26 to *be angry and do not sin*. When is anger sinful?

- When is anger not sinful?

- How should anger be dealt with according to verse 26?

- Verse 27 says not to give the devil an opportunity. What does letting anger fester give the devil opportunity for?

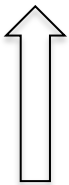
Digging Deeper

Internalizing, stuffing, or denying our anger can be just as destructive as expressing it inappropriately. As people of God, we have a better way. What do the Psalms teach us about how to deal with anger?

Psalm 4:4-5 Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD.

Psalm 37:7-8 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

Psalm 119:53-55 Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked, who forsake your law. Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my sojourning. I remember your name in the night, O LORD, and keep your law.



Father, I confess that my anger is often because I am not getting what I want. Please forgive me. Thank you for inviting me to come to you and pour out my emotions, even my anger. I do not have to solve things on my own—you are in control. Help me to trust you with the things that make me angry.

9. Stealing has no place in the life of people united to Christ according to verse 28. Besides blatantly taking something that isn't yours, what else can be included under stealing?
 - Instead, what should characterize the Christian?

 - Why should this characterize the life of the believer? What are the implications of this?

Day 5- Eph. 4:29-32

10. Verse 29 says, *let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths*. The word for *corrupting* in Greek is *sapros* which carries the meanings of rotten and

putrefied. What does this kind of speech do to people?

- Instead, what kind of speech is fitting for people in Christ?

- What is the purpose of our speech?



The NLT puts it this way: *Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them*. What if everything we said was good and helpful? What if our speech was devoid of criticism, boasting, gossip, negativity and just plain carelessness? What if our words built others up instead of tearing others down? How much sin and pain would be done away with in our lives!

- ❖ God's word says we should build each other up *as fits the occasion*. What are the implications of this?

- ❖ In verse 25, Paul tells us to speak the truth to our neighbor. How does this fit with encouraging and building up?

- ❖ God's word tells us that our words should *give grace*. Another way to say this is that our words should impart a blessing to those who need it. What are some ways you can do this?

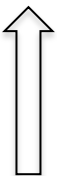
Picture and Ponder

“There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” Proverbs 12:18

11. In verse 27 Paul warns us not to give the devil opportunity, now, in verse 30, he urges us not to grieve the Holy Spirit. Why would the Holy Spirit be grieved by what we do or not do, say or not say?

- How can we tell from this verse that the Holy Spirit is a person?
- How does this affect your motivation to lead a holy life?

Scholar's Note: Verse 30- *sealed for the day of redemption.* “The sealing (as Paul has already explained in 1:13) took place at the beginning of our Christian life; the Holy Spirit himself, indwelling us, is the seal with which God has stamped us as his own. The day of redemption, however, although we already have redemption in the sense of forgiveness (verse 1:7), looks on to the end when our bodies will be redeemed, for only then will our redemption or liberation be complete. So the ‘sealing’ and the ‘redemption’ refer respectively to the beginning and the end of the salvation process. And in between these two termini we are to grow in Christlikeness and to take care not to grieve the Holy Spirit.”⁵



Father, thank you for marking me as your own with your Holy Spirit! Help me to remember that when I don't think and act and speak like you, your Spirit is grieved. Help me to cooperate with your Spirit inside me and through the power of your Spirit to become more like you each day.

12. In verse 31 Paul lists attitudes and behaviors that the believer should eliminate from their lives. Write a definition of each:

Bitterness-

Wrath-
Anger-
Clamor-
Slander-
Malice-

- Verse 32 names three virtues that are to be practiced continually in the life of the believer. What area in your life do you need help practicing these qualities?
- What is to be our motivation and model?

Taking Root:

- What in this portion of Scripture swells your heart with love for God, or makes your heart treasure Jesus?
- What from this portion of Scripture spurs you on to love others?
- How are you challenged to reach God's world after living with this portion of Scripture this week?

¹ Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 179). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition

² Merida, Tony Exalting Jesus in Ephesians. P. 108 B&H Publishing 2014

³ Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 180). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Zondervan,. Ephesians (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 10) (p. 410). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

⁵ Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 189). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.