

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

Lesson 16

Chapter 4:17-24, The Study

"The Church As The New Mankind" P-4"
***"Solving the Problems between
the Old and New Men"***

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REVIEW – Lesson 15

Our Condensed Outline to date:

GOD'S SPECIAL SECRET

- I. CHAPTER 1 – The Church AS The Body of Christ**
- II. CHAPTER 2 – The Church AS The Temple of Christ**
- III. CHAPTER 3 - The Church AS God's Top Secret**
- IV. CHAPTER 4 – The Church As The New Mankind**
 - A. The Coordination of the Church 4:1-6
 - B. The Corporateness of the New Mankind 4:7-11
 - C. The Church's Given Goals 4:12-16**
 - 1. **Goal One: Teaching The Team To Serve 4:12-13**
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THE LESSON – 4:17-24

GOD’S SPECIAL SECRET¹

Our Outline to date:

- I. CHAPTER 1 – The Church AS The Body of Christ
- II. CHAPTER 2 – The Church AS The Temple of Christ
- III. CHAPTER 3 - The Church AS God's Top Secret
- IV. CHAPTER 4 – The Church As The New Mankind**
 - A. The Coordination of the Church 4:1-6
 - B. The Corporateness of the New Mankind 4:7-11
 - C. The Churches Given Goals 4:12-16
 - D. Solving the Problems Between the Old and New Men 4:17-24**
 - 1. **The Negative Experience 4:17-21**
 - 2. **The Negative Nature 4:22**
 - 3. **The Positive Nature 4:23-24**

Chapter 4 has taken us over a fairly long road, first defining for the Ephesians, and us, **how we should walk** as members of this new family, then second defining **Jesus’ position in the Heavens over this new body**, and third defining **what our goals should be as a new body**.

Now Paul will concentrate on defining and solving the problems with us. Specifically, the problem with us... the problems between the “Old” and “New” man(kind). The emphasis on these last two lessons is on the fact that now the believer is a citizen of heaven, a member of the Family of God and a brother to Jesus the Christ, and having God the Holy Spirit dwelling in your body.

“How then should you live?” Chapter 4:1 to Chapter 6:9 focuses on, “Therefore, **Walk Worthy of who you are in Christ.**”

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THE STUDY – 4:17
Live no longer as the Gentiles Live
GOD’S SPECIAL SECRET

Our Outline to date:

V. CHAPTER 1 – The Church AS The Body of Christ

VI. CHAPTER 2 – The Church AS The Temple of Christ

VII. CHAPTER 3 - The Church AS God's Top Secret

VIII. CHAPTER 4 – The Church As The New Mankind

A. The Coordination of the Church 4:1-6

B. The Corporateness of the New Mankind 4:7-11

C. The Churches Given Goals 4:12-16

D. Solving the Problems Between the Old and New Men 4:17-24

1. **The Negative Experience 4:17-21**

a) **Live no longer as the Gentiles live 4:17**

4:17 [Mac]

I say this,

therefore,

and testify in the Lord:

you also are to be living your lives

no longer

as the Gentiles are theirs,

with their minds fixed on futile things.

4:17 [NASB]

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that

you walk no longer

just as the Gentiles also walk,

in the futility of their mind,

THE COMMENTARY

I'll let Paul, from Romans define what he means here.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who

suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”² (Romans 1:18-32).

We then should also consider – How was the Jew, in Israel, supposed to live their lives (not how they actually lived.)

*Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!
You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart
and with all y our soul and with all your might.*

*And these words, which I am commanding you today,
shall be in your heart;*

*And you shall teach them diligently to your sons and
shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when
you walk by the way and when you lie down and when
you rise up.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)*

² New American Standard Bible 1995, Lockman Foundation, Zondervan, Grand Rapids MI

THE STUDY – 4:18
They stand alienated from
the life that concerns itself with God

GOD’S SPECIAL SECRET

CHAPTER 4 – The Church As The New Mankind

E. Solving the Problems Between the Old and New Men 4:17-24

1. The Negative Experience 4:17-21

- a) Live no longer as the Gentiles Live 4:17
- b) **They stand alienated from the life that concerns itself with God 4:18**

4:18 [Mac]
Their minds

are in a **darkened** condition,
 so they stand **alienated**
 from the life that **concerns itself with God.**

This was caused by two things:

first, the **willful** ignorance that is in them;
 second, the **insensitiveness** of their hearts.

4:18 [NASB]

being

darkened in their understanding,
 excluded from the life of God
 because of the ignorance that is in them,
 because of the hardness of their heart;

THE COMMENTARY

Over verses :17-32 we will witness 7 items that will bring a perfect and complete indictment of the worldly un-believer.

In verse 17 we found that the unbeliever’s mind is fixed on futile things. While personal gain may seem huge... But, in terms of eternity living in a place of horror and without God – totally futile.

Here in verse 18 we find that the unbeliever's heart is empty because of willful ignorance and a lack of sensitivity to the precious things of God. When they found a need for a god, they created one that was easily manipulated for their own needs and desires. MacCorkle reminds us that this is "spiritual darkness," for quite often "The brains of unbelievers are often sharp as a tack on a variety of non-spiritual matters."³

"The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good." [Psalm 14:1]

*"But **you** are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that **you** may proclaim the excellencies of **Him** who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"* [1 Peter 2:9]

³ God's Special Secret, Copyright 1993 by Douglas B. MacCorkle. Printed and bound in the United States of America. Published by the not-for-profit MacCorkle bible Ministries, Inc. Books, P.O. Box 320909, Cocoa Beach, Fl. 32932, p. 163

THE STUDY – 4:19
They pursue all impure activities

GOD'S SPECIAL SECRET

CHAPTER 4 – The Church As The New Mankind

**D. Solving the Problems Between the Old and New
Men 4:17-24**

1. The Negative Experience 4:17-21

- a) Live no longer as the Gentiles Live 4:17
- b) They stand alienated from the life that concerns itself with God 4:18
- c) **They pursue all impure activities 4:19**

4:19 [Mac]

Such people,

because they are in the condition of being **past feeling**,
have **given themselves up** to outrageous conduct
in order to pursue all kinds of impure activities.

4:19 [NASB]

19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

THE COMMENTARY

"This is a matter of the will of man. It is the will that played the role of treason. This is rebellion against all divine authority and revealed truth... outrageous conduct rages throughout the Gentile world even today and is most likely a rebellion against restraint."⁴

Harry Ironside remarks, "A very common saying is, 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do,' but that does not apply to the Christian. No matter where you find him, he is to walk as a heavenly man, as one whose interests are really in another scene, as a stranger and a pilgrim here. He is called upon to

⁴ Ibid.

refrain from everything that would in any way tarnish his pilgrim character... Without a new life and a new nature there can be no real apprehension of divine things, and so the greatest of this world's sages is but as an ignoramus when it comes to the things of God, until he has been regenerated."⁵

How sad it is for many of our young men and women who labor in our colleges and universities under instruction of brilliant but unconverted professors – many who seek to undermine and tear down faith and belief in the Word of God. Remember, when in Rome – don't do as the Romans, do as Jesus did and still does.

⁵ Ironside, H.A., LITT.D., "In The Heavens, Practical Expository Addresses on the Epistle to the Ephesians, Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune, NJ, June 1974, p. 208

THE STUDY – 4:20

You have not come to learn Christ in this manner

GOD’S SPECIAL SECRET

CHAPTER 4 – The Church As The New Mankind

D. Solving the Problems Between the Old and New Men 4:17-24

1. The Negative Experience 4:17-21

- a) Live no longer as the Gentiles Live 4:17
- b) They stand alienated from the life that concerns itself with God 4:18
- c) They pursue all impure activities 4:19
- d) **You have not come to learn Christ in this manner 4:20**

4:20 [Mac]

But

you have **not** come
to learn **Christ**
in this manner.

4:20 [NASB]

20 But you did not learn Christ in this way,

THE COMMENTARY

This simple statement is a vital, real, and stark revelation. “But,” His word calls us to literally stop and turn around in our thinking. Look back and see who you were before you believed in Jesus. I bet the old you is nothing like the new you. Sure, there are probably things in your life you wish you had conquered a long time ago – but that’s not the point. Judge for yourself, you are not the person you were before Jesus came into your life by grace and faith. Did you make that change? Mostly no, it was God’s holy spirit working through you to bring changes into your life so that you would look and act more and more like Jesus – God’s Son. So, NO! you did not learn Christ Jesus in this way. No, you are learning Christ Jesus His way, at every moment of this life,

every day. If you haven't yet done so, put off the Old Man, be through with him, put off his tastes, his appetites, and all he once delighted in... and learn the truth as it is in Jesus.

Keep your eyes open in the next three verses. MacCorkle tells us three things we should look for. 1) A clue to real life is learning Jesus Christ. 2) The content of real life is the Truth found in Jesus. 3) The conversion to renewal in your life is through your daily experience under the Holy Spirit's leading and teaching about the only one who matters – Jesus, the Christ, the only mediator between you and God.

THE STUDY – 4:21

It was Him you heard and In Him you were taught

GOD'S SPECIAL SECRET

CHAPTER 4 – The Church As The New Mankind

D. Solving the Problems Between the Old and New Men 4:17-24

1. The Negative Experience 4:17-21
 - a) Live no longer as the Gentiles Live 4:17
 - b) They stand alienated from the life that concerns itself with God 4:18
 - c) They pursue all impure activities 4:19
 - d) You have not come to learn Christ in this manner 4:20
 - e) **It was Him you heard and In Him you were taught 4:21**

4:21 [Mac]

Since it was **Him**
You heard and
you were taught in Him,
 just as **the truth is in Jesus** —

4:21 [NASB]

21 if indeed you
 have heard Him and
 have been taught in Him,
 just as truth is in Jesus,

THE COMMENTARY

Paul starts right off with "If indeed you have heard Him." The RSV says, "Assuming that you have heard about Him." And there's the warning. As in all "church" situations, there will probably be some "Christians" who have never committed their lives to Him. It is always good to "evangelize" in every situation – at least a little bit. The presence of the Holy Spirit in an unbeliever's life can use your life and words to encourage them to faith in Jesus Christ. If

they show interest – continue. If they cast your words aside, move on.

Paul then moves on to speak directly to you about where you should be “In-Christ.” As a believer you have heard and have been taught about Christ’s place in your life and the value you should have acquired in that knowledge. It is essential that your belief and faith in Him are based upon His Truth, as brought forth in the Word of God – and essentially in His words and teachings – for, “The Truth is in Jesus.” This is also why it is so important to find and belong to a “Church,” fellowship of believers, whose lives and teaching is centered on Jesus Christ, and the accurate portrayal of the Bible as the Word of God. It is also essential that the “Church” that you belong to shows the traits of the changed life of it’s believers. They should portray the qualities of verses :17-32. The words of the old Boy Scout’s Oath, “they are to be: Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, and Reverent.” Living like Christ is so essential to the plan and program of God’s plan for the Church, this “new” organization known as “The Church of Jesus Christ,” His “body” of believers.

THE STUDY – 4:22
To put away once for all your old man

GOD'S SPECIAL SECRET

CHAPTER 4 – The Church As The New Mankind

E. Solving the Problems Between the Old and New Men 4:17-24

1. The Negative Experience 4:17-21
 - a) Live no longer as the Gentiles Live 4:17
 - b) They stand alienated from the life that concerns itself with God 4:18
 - c) They pursue all impure activities 4:19
 - d) You have not come to learn Christ in this manner 4:20
 - e) It was Him you heard and In Him you were taught 4:21
 - f) **To put away once for all your old man 4:22**

4:22 [Mac]

to once for all
 put away from
 yourselves
 your edition of the ancient man
 (that characterized your former manner of life)
 which is constantly being corrupted
 in accord with the cravings
 that proceed from deceit.

4:22 [NASB]

22 that,
 in reference to your former manner of life,
 you
 lay aside the old self,
 which is being corrupted
 in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

THE COMMENTARY

This is quite a sentence! It's probably best to address it backwards! We'll start with "deceit." A false image, pointed lies, a plan to deceive. Then we move to "the lusts of deceit." So, the words indicate that, in your old, pre-Christ life, the lies of the world and the devil, caused you to lust after the wrong things. The world and the devil's objective is to get you caught-up in anything but God, His Son, or His Spirit. Those lies are in place to make you lust after those alternate things – members of the opposite or same sex, in an immoral way. A focus upon money, things, and power.

The "old you" was found to be "corrupted" by the things in Paul's list: Bitterness, Wrath, Anger, Clamor, Slander, Malice, Unkindness, hard heartedness, Unforgiving.

The "New you," is to be found Bitter-less, Easy going, Caring, Quiet, Honest, and Trustworthy, Kind, Tender hearted, and forgiving AS God forgave you in Christ.

THE STUDY – 4:23
Instead, be renewed in your mind

GOD'S SPECIAL SECRET

CHAPTER 4 – The Church As The New Mankind

F. Solving the Problems Between the Old and New Men 4:17-24

1. The Negative Experience 4:17-21
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 - b) They stand alienated from the life that concerns itself with God 4:18
 - c) They pursue all impure activities 4:19
 - d) You have not come to learn Christ in this manner 4:20
 - e) It was Him you heard and In Him you were taught 4:21
 - f) To put away once for all your old man 4:22
 - g) **Instead, be renewed in your mind 4:23**

4:23 [Mac]

Instead,
 [you]
 be renewed
 constantly
 in the disposition of your minds,

4:23 [NASB]

23 and that you
 be renewed
 in the spirit of your mind,

COMMENTARY

When I think about "renewal," I visualize an old wooden floor in a house. The finish is badly worn, moisture has swollen some of the edges of the boards, dirt and mold have accumulated in the cracks and crevices. Then, the decision is made to "renew" the

floor. The men come with their sanders and scrapers. The surface is smoothed and the rough places fixed. The dirt is cleaned and the mold is bleached away. Then there is the final sanding and the urethane or varnish finish, often with a beautiful wood tint, is applied, and left to harden. And a quick coat of wax to protect the new finish and make it "glow." Or a car or truck that is special to you that has been victimized with dirt, soft drinks, mud and grease – and then it has been detailed by those who do such a wonderful job of cleaning and restoration – brought back "Better than new." That should be you. You, upon coming to Christ, need to be renewed. That renewing will be enabled by your faith in Jesus Christ, and your willing and voluntary reliance upon the Holy Spirit of God, now in residence in your body. Leave the old man behind, renew to be the new man... and don't turn back.

THE STUDY – 4:24

Now put on the New Man in Righteousness and Holiness

GOD'S SPECIAL SECRET

CHAPTER 4 – The Church As The New Mankind

G. Solving the Problems Between the Old and New Men 4:17-24

1. The Negative Experience 4:17-21
 - a) Live no longer as the Gentiles Live 4:17
 - b) They stand alienated from the life that concerns itself with God 4:18
 - c) They pursue all impure activities 4:19
 - d) You have not come to learn Christ in this manner 4:20
 - e) It was Him you heard and In Him you were taught 4:21
 - f) To put away once for all your old man 4:22
 - g) Instead be renewed in your mind 4:23
 - h) **Now put on the New Man in Righteousness and Holiness 4:24**

4:24 [Mac]

and for your own benefit

[you]

put on

your edition of the new man

created in accord with God's standards

in the sphere of true

righteousness and holiness.

4:24 [NASB]

and put on the new self,

which in the likeness of God

has been created in

righteousness and

holiness of the truth.

THE COMMENTARY

As Paul continues on the same line of thought, he focuses upon this process of renewal. He changes his terms a little to make sure you "get it!" Renew is like putting on a clean and fresh garment. It is clean, it smells good, it looks good, and more important this new garment is NEW. Paul says that this newness "has been created in accordance with God's standards. This garment looks and smells like Righteousness and Holiness – which is based in "The Truth."

This new, renewed, person is now changed. Maybe not completely at first, for change sometimes takes time. But your reliance upon God the Father, God the Son [Jesus], and God the Spirit can and will change you from the "Old," to the "New," as you submit your mind and your life to Him.

Become that person who manifests Jesus Christ to all those around them. When they see you, they will see Jesus. Let God change you – for your sake.

**HOMEWORK:
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS – 4:17-24**

Look at the question and ignore the answer. Then study the answer!

4:17

“17 I say this, therefore, and testify in the Lord: you also are to be living your lives no longer as the Gentiles are theirs, with their minds fixed on futile things.”

1. What Is the core idea Paul expresses here?

“Minds fixed on futile things.” People of the world generally live their lives with their focus on “anything but God.” They may have gods in their lives, but their gods are there to provide them with what they, the person, wants. Their lives are futile, in that without Faith and Belief in Christ – their destination, post life, is to be cast away from The God of the Universe forever into a literal “Hell.”

2. What is Paul’s mandate for the Believer?

“Live your lives no longer as the world lives.” Don’t live a futile life. Live with the purpose of becoming the “New Man,” In Christ.

4:18

18 Their minds are in a darkened condition, so they stand alienated from the life that concerns itself with God. This was caused by two things: first, the willful ignorance that is in them; second, the insensitiveness of their hearts.

What is the root cause of “minds in a darkened condition?”

Two things are mentioned in this verse, and they are things that alienate them from living their lives as if God matters. **1.** They are “willfully ignorant” of the things of God. **2.** Their hearts are completely “insensitive” of the importance of having God as their God. Thus they live in a “darkened condition.”

4:19

19 Such people, because they are in the condition of being past feeling, have given themselves up to outrageous conduct in order to pursue all kinds of impure activities.

1. Taking the sentence backwards again, What is Paul saying?

The language here intimates that the unregenerated man/woman wants to "pursue all kinds of impure activities." Thus they give themselves up to outrageous conduct (Think about drunken bar activities and "rave" events – where the ultimate point is normally wanton sex and sexual activities). That which brings this about is that "feeling," wanting but not having, is the "normal" state of those who dwell in the "darkened condition."

4:20

20 But you have not come to learn Christ in this manner.

This is both a general statement and a warning. "Yes," you did not learn Christ in this manner, and "No," you better not be still living this way as a believer. The "Glory of God" is at stake. A child of Christ should not be living like the lost world.

4:21

21 Since it was Him you heard and you were taught in Him, just as the truth is in Jesus –

This again, is the warning: "Since... IN HIM... YOU were taught, the TRUTH."

4:22

22 to once for all put away from yourselves your edition of the ancient man (that characterized your former manner of life) which is constantly being corrupted in accord with the cravings that proceed from deceit.

1. What were you taught IN-CHRIST?

To "once for all" put the "Old Man/Woman" (from your Old Life) away – because the World corrupted it and lied to you about it.

4:23

23 Instead, be renewed constantly in the disposition of your minds,

Do you see it? Paul's directions are to saved individuals. He's telling them "STOP IT!" "Stop living like the unconverted, those who are lost!" AND: "Be Renewed CONSTANTLY. He speaking of the war, the battle, between the OLD YOU and the NEW YOU. Never give up, Never give up being renewed by, and for The Christ!

4:24

24 and for your own benefit put on your edition of the new man created in accord with God's standards in the sphere of true righteousness and holiness.

We've spoken about how prepositions are so important to understanding language. They make language "positional." Here MacCorkle's translation uses the word "sphere." This indicates, in this case, that the calling and supplies of "true righteousness and holiness" are like going into a very large store, perhaps like Home Depot," where their supplies are in long rows of very tall shelving, full of stuff. God's grace is manifold and plentiful. His righteousness and holiness comes in unlimited forms, tailored just for believers – You. Of big importance here is God's Standards. Do you lack some item of righteousness or holiness? Go to His door, Knock on it, He will open it and show you what you need from His storehouse. Take of it, learn from it, and continue to do so... in your journey to become like Christ.

NOW: Put together a list of all the don'ts and do's of verses :17-32

Put Away:

Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, malice.

Be:

Kind, tenderhearted, forgiving "As God In Christ forgave you."

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The Writings of Douglas B. MacCorkle

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Jeremiah 18:15

"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path."

2025-02-07 updated