

Eph. 4:17-24

I. I am solemnly commanding you this: (17a-b)

A. Therefore, I am saying this (17a)

B. And I am testifying in the Lord (17b)

A solemn request that has the weight of a command

II. Live your new life, not your old life (17c-24)

A. Neg: Don't live like the brokenness of the Gentiles (17c-19)

1. That you would no longer walk (17c)

“walk” = lifestyle

2. Like the Gentiles walk in brokenness (17d-19)

a As the Gentiles live in futility because of their broken mind and relationship with God (17d-18)

1) As also the gentiles walk in the uselessness/futility of their mind (17d)

Notice that the mind of unconverted people is characterized by futility, without value

Without Christ, any worldview is ultimately vain and focuses on futile things

This is why even brilliant people can have huge blind spots that make them absurdly silly in these areas

2) Reason: Their mind and relationship with God have been broken (18)

a) Being darkened in [their] reason/thinking (18a)

Darkness is symbolic for evil and lack of God's light and life

Their lack of God leads to lack of enlightenment and reason

In some ways they can be completely logical and intellectual, but in the big-picture areas where it truly matters, there is defective reasoning

-cf. Rom. 1:21-28, Jer. 17:9, Gen. 6:5, Psa. 51:5, Isa. 64:6

b) Being estranged from the life of God (18b)

through the ignorance which is in them

because of the hardening of their heart

This describes the reason why they are ignorant, not the reason they are estranged from the life of God

“hardening” has the connotation of obstinacy and willful ignorance

their ignorance is culpable, not innocent

It is an issue of Lordship –

Is God the Lord of what we think?

or do we insist that we are autonomous, determining truth and reality

on our own, by our own standards?

This rejection of God's Lordship over our mind automatically entails an estrangement from God

b Result: Their moral life is also broken (19)

1) Who, being callous to any sense of right and wrong (19a)

They don't care about morality, right and wrong never even register into their thinking, only such things as “how does this look?” and “can I get away with it?”

It is tragic that in our society public opinion decides morality because we have forsaken an eternal, objective standard.

Once God is out of consideration, anything goes, and when anything goes, everything goes

- 2) Who have given themselves over to a lack of moral restraint into all works of moral corruption in covetous desire (19b)

They lack moral constraint, and social constraint, and end up lacking all self-constraint and self-control

While addiction is a disease in some sense, it is also morally culpable, being the just result of rejecting God's moral standards

When we refuse to serve God, we become slaves to sin

Moral corruption can have a connotation of sexual sin, but is not limited to that – it can refer to all kinds of immorality and filthy indecency

B. Pos: But live in the holiness of Christ (20-24)

1. But you did not learn Christ in this way (20)

“in this way” refers to the preceding verses

The intellectual and moral corruption is the opposite of the cause for their conversion

It is the opposite of the manner of their conversion

It is the opposite of the discipling instruction they received

And it should be the opposite of the outcome of their conversion

2. Reason: You have heard and been taught to live a transformed lifestyle (21-24)

- a Since you have heard Him (21a)

Possibly “heard about Him”

To receive news/information, to hear the message about Christ (the Gospel)

- b You have been taught to forsake your old life and be conformed to Christ (21b-24)

- 1) And you were taught truth which is embodied in Jesus (21b-c)

- a) And you were taught in Him (21b)

- b) Just as truth is in Jesus (21c)

Notice above the darkening of the mind/intellect leading to moral darkness

The opposite here, the truth of Jesus (addressing the mind) impacts the moral lifestyle

- 2) To forsake your former lifestyle and be conformed to Christ's lifestyle (22-24)

- a) [for] you to lay aside, according to [your] former way of life, the old man which is corrupted according to the deceptive lusts (22)

According to your former way of life

Describes “to lay aside”

Tells how to lay it aside – according to the standard of how you lived, this is how you are to change

Go down the list of your old lifestyle and check off what you put away from your life

The Old man

Paul contrasts life without Christ as being of this age with new life in Christ as being of the age to come

-cf. Rom. 6:1-14, Col. 3:1-10

Which is corrupted

It is deteriorating and being destroyed

All things of this world are decaying and ultimately will be reduced to nothing

-cf. book of Ecclesiastes

According to the deceptive lusts

Describes “Which is corrupted”

Life without Christ is ruined by lusts which deceive them

-cf. Jms.1:13-15 sin comes from evil desires and brings death

“deceptive” cf. Col. 2:8; 2 Thes. 2:10

b) [for you] to be made new in the spirit of your mind (23)

Passive – “let yourselves be renewed

Just as the mind of the old man is futile and corrupt, in order to live the life of Christ, our minds need to be changed, renewed, made new

c) And [for you] to be clothed with the new man which is created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the truth (24)

The new man as contrasted with the old man

Created according to God – conforming to God’s standards

The renewing brings us from the former broken state in opposition to God back to God’s standards

The new creation is not just a return to the original human state, but a renewal to the state of God’s eternal plan for humanity in the new humanity

The new creation is characterized by righteousness and holiness of the truth

Righteousness, holiness and truth are all in Jesus, cf. v. 21