

LIVING OUT THE NEW LIFE

(Ephesians 4:17-24)

There is a constant temptation for every true Christian to revert to the old sinful ways and to return to the ungodly practices of the unbelieving world. But as believers of Christ, we no longer belong to the world, to the sinful flesh and to Satan. We now belong to God and to our Savior Jesus Christ. Hence, we are called to live out our new identity in Christ with a lifestyle that is totally different from our former unconverted manner of life. Let us then heed these two pastoral exhortations of the apostle Paul to every New Testament believer.

1. Leave behind the old _____.

The apostle Paul begins his exhortation with a strong, urgent and authoritative command: *“Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do”* (Eph. 4:17). He urges the Ephesian believers to leave behind and abandon the sinful and godless lifestyle they once embraced as unbelievers (1 Thess. 4:5). In order to persuade them to forsake the old Christless lifestyle, Paul provides a graphic description of how miserable, empty and hopeless the life of a non-Christian is. In verses 17-19, Paul teaches us that the old Christless lifestyle is characterized by a futile and darkened mind (Eph. 4:17-18; Eccl. 1:2; 2:11; Matt. 16:26; 1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:4), a hardened heart (Eph. 4:18; 2:1,12; Rom. 1:19,25), and a shameless, impure lifestyle (Eph. 4:19; Rom. 1:24,26,28; 1 Pet. 4:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:13).

2. Live out your new _____.

After rehearsing the godless and senseless lifestyle of an unbeliever, Paul declares to the Ephesian Christians who had fallen back to this sinful degradation: *“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”* (Eph. 4:20-21). To learn Christ means to know Christ in a saving way. To learn Christ is not merely knowing facts concerning Jesus. It is primarily and essentially enjoying and cultivating a personal and loving relationship with our living Savior (Matt. 11:28-29; John 17:3).

Paul further gives us three ways on how to live out this new life we have in Christ. First, we must *“put off our old self, which belongs to our former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires”* (Eph. 4:22; Rom. 6:6,13). Our old self must be renounced and laid aside because its sinful desires only corrupt, deceive and defile us. Second, we must *“be renewed in the spirit of our mind”* (Eph. 4:23). Since we cannot renew ourselves, we need God's divine enablement to renew us from the inside out. It is God who renews our mind through His refreshing and sanctifying Word (Psalm 19:7; 119:11; John 17:17). Finally, we have to *“put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness”* (Eph. 4:24). In Christ, we have a new wardrobe to wear, His robe of perfect righteousness and pure holiness (Gen. 3:21; Isa. 61:10; Titus 2:11-12).
