

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

Paul makes a point of contrast between the Gentiles and Ephesian Christians. Does your life, and the life of your church, contrast favourably with the lives of unbelievers around you?

Spend a few minutes thinking about how your present life relates to your former life as an unbeliever. Have you “put off your old self” so that you can be “renewed in the spirit of your minds”? What would that look like for you?

How should the fact we are “members one of another,” inform the way we behave to other members of our church?

Christians are all united as one body in Christ. When one is hurt we all suffer. When we understand the nature of our calling, to set aside our old life and character, and adopt one that is rooted in the truth of Christ, we are much more likely to follow Paul’s lead in being “kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”



A Short Study of EPHESIANS 4:17-32

In this study from the fourth chapter of Ephesians we learn of the consequences and responsibilities of being united in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the source of all truth, righteousness and holiness.

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TBC010.01.04S

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EPHESIANS 4:17-32

17 *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.*

18 *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.*

19 *They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.*

20 *But that is not the way you learned Christ!—*

21 *assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,*

22 *to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,*

23 *and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,*

24 *and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

25 *Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.*

26 *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,*

27 *and give no opportunity to the devil.*

28 *Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.*

29 *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

OBSERVATION

Mark every occurrence of the word ‘Gentile(s)’ and any pronouns that refer to them.

- How do the Gentiles walk?

Paul elaborates on the nature of the Gentiles’ lifestyle. What four comments does Paul make?

Mark the word ‘but’ and the words ‘you’ and ‘your.’ How does Paul contrast the Gentiles to the Ephesians?

Note three aspects of what the Ephesians were taught in Christ.

Mark the words ‘true’ and ‘truth,’ and by way of contrast mark ‘falsehood.’

- What do you learn about the source of truth?
- What is the motivation that Paul gives the Ephesians to speak the truth?
- What do you learn about the source of truth?

INTERPRETATION

In verses 26 to 32 Paul tells the Ephesians four things they should not do, and two they should. How do you think each of these relates to the instruction to “put away falsehood” and “speak the truth.”