

**EPHESIANS 4:17-32**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Ephesians chapter 4 as we continue our study through this amazing letter that Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus and we finish up this chapter this evening.

As we have seen in our study last time, Paul has spent the first three chapters of Ephesians telling us all we have in Christ, the rich blessings. He gives to us doctrine or the right information regarding our spiritual lives.

And then, in the last three chapters of Ephesians Paul tells us to walk according to the high calling with which we have been called. In other words, in light of all the blessings we have received, walk accordingly!

He opens up chapter 4 by saying, **“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.”** Ephesians 4:1.

And this is how these last three chapters are broken down.

***WALK IN UNITY – EPHESIANS 4:1-16***

***WALK IN PURITY – EPHESIANS 4:17-5:18***

***WALK IN HARMONY – EPHESIANS 5:19-6:9***

***WALK IN VICTORY – EPHESIANS 6:10-24***

And unity is important for us as Christians, but, as we saw last time, it is a unity that is based in Christ and not apart from Him. It is a unity that is based in the Word of God and not apart from the Word of God. That is so important for us to understand today in a world that is trying to conform us into its image and the church is buying into it!

Remember what David said in Psalm 133:1, “**Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!**”

How true that is as we gather together and encourage each other in the faith and, at times, even correct each other in love!

Also, as we concluded last week Paul not only spoke of the unity that we have in Christ but also how God placed certain men in leadership positions to help the saints grow and mature in the Lord.

You see, children can be swayed easily but as we grow, we become wise, or at least we should be.

In the Christian faith many remain babes in Christ and they are tossed to and fro by all kinds of bizarre doctrine, bizarre ideas that blow through the church. Here comes one blowing in and they set their sail and they are carried away by it.

But Paul wants us “**... to grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ.**” Ephesians 4:15.

This evening we are going to focus on the second point of Paul’s that is related to our walk and that is this, ***WALK IN PURITY!***

I am not even sure why, but today, for many Christians, this is not even an issue. They do what they want because Jesus saved them and I guess, it is all covered by the blood.

But if that is how you approach your Christian faith; something is seriously wrong. Yes, we are saved by the finished work of Christ in our lives but if you live a life of sin, of impurity, and there is no guilt, no conviction, then I would doubt if you are saved!

And it is getting bad out there and I can understand the world moving into all this immoral activity, but Christians? Something is not right!

Let me share this with you to show you where we are at, how the world views Christians today and the statistics back up what they are saying they see. This is from The Freedom from Religion Foundation, not a Christian sight, obviously. But the statistics that he takes is from George Barna, a Christian sociologist who has been trending where Christianity is going for years. And I think I have shared this with you before, but it bears repeating.

This is what he wrote,

Are Christians more moral or successful than non-Christians?

The Second Coming Of The Church by George Barna (Word Publishing, 1998), reports that they are not. The author, a born-again Christian sociologist, is founder and president of Barna Research Group (CA), which releases many meaningful survey results.

Although most of Barna's book is a sermon to Christian ministers on how the church should regain its lost status, it does contain some frank statistics showing how the present church has "failed" in its mission. The numbers are based on Barna's own studies, and other national surveys.

Barna compares the behaviors and attitudes of Christians with Non-Christians . . . and concludes: "We think and behave no differently from anyone else."

#### Examples of the Similarity of Behavior Between Christians and Non-Christians

(from The Second Coming Of The Church, p 6, partial list)

Have been divorced (among those who have been married) Born Again Christians: 27%; Non-Christians: 23%

Gave money to a homeless person or poor person, in past year Born Again Christians: 24%; Non-Christians: 34%

Took drugs or medication prescribed for depression, in past year Born Again Christians: 7%; Non-Christians: 8%

Watched an X-rated movie in the past 3 months Born Again Christians: 9%; Non-Christians: 16%

Donated any money to a nonprofit organization, in past month Born Again Christians: 47%; Non-Christians: 48%

Bought a lottery ticket, in the past week Born Again Christians: 23%; Non-Christians: 27%

Attended a community meeting on local issue, in past year Born Again Christians: 37%; Non-Christians: 42%

#### Examples of the Similarity of Attitudes Between Christians and non-Christians

(from *The Second Coming Of The Church*, p 21, partial list)

Feel completely or very successful in life Born Again Christians: 58%; Non-Christians: 49%

It is impossible to get ahead because of your financial debt Born Again Christians: 33%; Non-Christians: 39%

You are still trying to figure out the purpose of your life Born Again Christians: 36%; Non-Christians: 47%

Satisfied with your life these days Born Again Christians: 69%; Non-Christians: 68%

Your personal financial situation is getting better Born Again Christians: 27%; Non-Christians: 28%

Barna also sheds light on the definition of “God” that most Americans claim to believe in:

“Since more than nine out of ten Americans own at least one Bible, and 86 percent call themselves Christian, you might expect people to pay homage to the deity described and followed by the Christian Church. In July 1997, we asked a nationwide sample of 1,012 adults to describe the God they believe in. Two out of three adults (67 percent) said they believe that God is the all-knowing, all-powerful Creator of the universe who rules the world today. The remaining one-third described their god as ‘the total realization of personal, human potential’; or ‘a state of higher consciousness that a person may reach’; or said, ‘Everyone is God’; ‘There are many gods, each with different power and authority’; or ‘There is no such thing as God.’ The remaining 5 percent said they did not know.” [Pages 25-26]

According to Barna, a third of Americans does not really believe in “God” at all.

In spite of all the sermons about how belief makes a difference in life, the numbers show that Christians are not better off than unbelievers. At least one born-again sociologist is honest enough to admit it.

Or did we know this already?

- <http://bit.ly/2Kv0OeP>

So what Paul wrote to the Ephesians is very applicable to our lives today. These are lessons that God wants us to learn and live out, to ***WALK IN PURITY!***

With that said, let’s begin reading in Ephesians chapter 4, starting in verse 17 as we begin a section that deals with walking in purity, and let’s see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

**EPHESIANS 4****VERSES 17-19**

Notice what Paul is doing here. Before Paul tells us how we, as Christians, should walk, he tells us how not to walk!

And please understand that this is not Paul's own opinion, this is not based upon his feelings, but, as he says, **"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord . . ."** As a spokesman for God, he tells us what we need to do!

Now why is Paul telling us these things?

Think about it. When you first got saved was your walk perfect, no struggles, no problems, no temptations? Of course not! You have to make a conscience effort to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

Remember that is exactly what Paul said in Galatians chapter 5, **"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh . . . If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."** Galatians 5:16, 25.

And let's think about this for a minute. Look at all that God has done, all the blessings we have in Christ, the unity we walk in Christ, and because of that, our walk or conduct should be far different than that of the unsaved world.

Paul, in II Corinthians 5:17 tells us, **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."**

Thus, we are brand new in Christ; don't go back walking in the old ways, the old life, but walk in purity!

Now, look at how the unsaved walk and we need to be careful here because many Christians are walking the same way.

In these verses Paul lists several characteristics for us, and we are going to look at them and see what we can glean from them.

How does the unsaved walk?

First of all, ***THEY WALK IN THE FUTILITY OF THEIR MIND!***

In other words, their focus is on empty things and they truly believe that they will find satisfaction in sin. Maybe for a time, but sin will never give you lasting satisfaction, it will not bring to you that abundant life, but it will bring you a life of bondage!

And here's the thing. Before Paul talks about actions, he first talks about thinking because you will never walk in purity until you change the way you think about purity and holiness.

And the exact opposite is true. If you fill your mind with wicked things, immoral things, than what you have filled your mind with will eventually overflow in your actions, the things that you do!

David said in Psalm 26:2, **“Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart.”**

Let the Lord show us by His Word, opened up to us by His Spirit, to show us what is right and what is wrong. May we fill our mind with the things of God!

Next, we see Paul tells us that, ***THEIR UNDERSTANDING IS DARKENED!***

This is something that we as Christians tend to forget about the unsaved. You see, since the unbeliever rejects God he can't therefore understand the meaning of life or the reality of the afterlife. He can't understand the things of God because they are spiritually discerned!

He can't understand the world around him - his world view is distorted and therefore causes him to call evil good and good evil. And that is exactly what we are seeing today in this country. Evil is flaunted and good is looked down upon!

You see, the reason this is true is because they reject the light of Jesus Christ and thus, God gives them over to a debased mind, a wicked mind and darkness is what then flows from their lives.

J. Vernon McGee put it like this, “‘Having their understanding darkened’ means that the lost man has lost his perception of moral values. That is exactly what is being promoted in our day - a loss of perception of moral values.” Exactly!

And the last point is this, they are, ***ALIENATED FROM THE LIFE OF GOD!***

The reason this is true is because sin has separated them from God, and they refuse to receive the free gift of God in Jesus.

They are ignorant because they refuse to see.

They are insensitive to the things of God because they have hardened their hearts to the things of God.

The word “**hardening**” is the Greek word POROSIS, (po'-ro-sis) and it started out meaning a stone that is harder than marble but finally came to mean the loss of all sensation.

They are unable to feel because they have made themselves hard to the things of God and when God speaks, it bounces off of them, it does not penetrate into their hearts!

That is what Paul said in I Timothy chapter 4, that man, in the last days, will depart from the faith and “**having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.**” I Timothy 4:2.

You see, they keep hardening their hearts to the things of God and they can't feel any longer.



And we see here that by rejecting God they have given themselves over to “**lewdness**” or ASELGEIA, (as-elg’-i-a) in the Greek. This word speaks of a person who no longer hides his sin but displays it as long as he can gratify his own desires.

What a picture of what is happening today as man flaunts his sin before God and is proud of it!

Not only that, but Paul tells us that they are “**unclean**” or impure in their thoughts and actions.

We also see “**greediness**” or PLEONEXIA, (pleh-on-ex-ee’-ah) in the Greek and it speaks of an irresistible desire to have what we have no right to possess.

Let me say this. If you can live in sin without conviction upon your life, something is very wrong.

Let me share this story with you and you will see what I mean. We are told,

After Dr. Donald Barnhouse, the classic preacher from a generation ago, shared a message about the repercussions of sin, a young man approached him and said, “I sin, but it doesn’t seem to matter at all. I’m not haunted by it. I don’t get depressed about it. It doesn’t bother me a bit.”

Dr. Barnhouse looked at him and said, “Tell me, son, what would happen if I dropped an eight-hundred-pound weight on the body of a dead man? Would he feel it? Would he be in pain? Would it bother him?”

“Of course not,” said the young man.

“That’s the point,” said Dr. Barnhouse. “If you don’t feel the weight of sin, if it’s not heavy upon you, if it’s not having an impact on you, it’s because you are spiritually dead.”

Exactly!

Let me close these verses out with these words from Ray Stedman. He wrote,

The world I live in is filled with hatred, violence, [and] racism . . . As the influence of religion waned in the world, these horrors seemed to be on the rise!

Without question, the twentieth century - with its two World Wars, its Stalinist purges, and genocidal slaughter from Armenia to Nazi Germany to Cambodia to Iraq to Bosnia - has been the bloodiest, most tortured century in human history!

The mind of fallen man is darkened, blinded, and does not see things as they really are. It ignores the obvious truth of the human condition and persists in a faulty hope that humanity is getting better all the time.

We see the darkened understanding of humanity in talk of moral relativism, of “tolerance” for sexual perversion and promiscuity, in the declining level of moral and ethical behavior among our leaders, and a general attitude of “if it feels good, do it.”

People are increasingly becoming slaves to animal passions, addicts to pleasure, faithless to commitments and covenants.

This is the darkening of the fallen mind.

- Ray Stedman

#### VERSES 20-24

This is important for us to understand. Before we can walk in purity, we have to fill our minds with pure things because if you don’t, you will not walk in purity and holiness because your thinking is off! We have touched on that already.

Or think of it like this. You will never live like a Christian until you start thinking like a Christian. I hope that makes sense to you.

And Paul's point is simple here. When you first were saved this is not what you learned of Christ and yet some have walked backward into the old ways, not walking in purity!

You see, we don't just add Jesus to our old life, the old life is dead, crucified with Christ and we are a new creation in Christ. Folks, there must be a break with the past!

I am absolutely convinced that the reason so many Christians are living worldly lives is because they're thinking worldly thoughts.

Their minds are still conformed to this world's way of thinking and they have not allowed them to be transformed by the renewing that comes from God's Word.

And I have also seen this with some. They think that the Christian life is all about knowing facts regarding the Scriptures.

Now don't get me wrong, having the correct doctrine is important for us but unless you apply that doctrine to your life, it is worthless, it is empty.

And it is a choice on our part, a choice we must make and as we surrender our lives to Him, walking in His ways, our mind will be transformed.

With our minds being transformed our actions will flow from this new nature we have in Christ as Paul shows us in Romans 12:1-2, **"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."**

You see, to learn Christ is more than just knowledge about Him; it is an intimate relationship with Him. It is a communion with our Lord and Savior.

Thus, as you read God's Word, as you hear God's Word being taught, He will convict you of sin, encourage you as needed, He will bless you and-so-on.

Learning Christ is not just learning about Him but making Him part of your life!

Now let me deal with this because some are confused by it and that is this idea of the ***"old man"*** and linking it to being the ***"old nature"*** or our fallen sinful nature that we inherited from Adam.

We saw this in Romans chapter 6, but it does bear repeating here. You see, the ***"old man"*** isn't our old nature because our old nature doesn't ***grow*** corrupt, **it already is corrupt.**

There is no way we can **"put off"** the old nature, it will be with us until the Rapture when it will be finally shed with our physical body - what Paul called ***"the body of death."***

In fact, Paul tells us in Ephesians that our ***"old man"*** is our former ***conduct.*** (Which we can and must put off every day)

The old nature is just that - your ***nature*** which you inherited from Adam. It speaks of what we ***are*** in Adam, not what ***we do.***

So then, the ***"old man"*** is not my old nature.

The ***"old man"*** is my old conduct or lifestyle, the old desires, my old habits and actions that have died with Christ and are now buried with Him in death. In other words, the death of the old life.

And here's the thing, and it should just make sense. We are told to **"put off"** the old man and his wicked ways, because, if you don't, you will continue to become more and more corrupt.

The old man, that sin nature is like an ugly monster, the more you feed it the more it grows and the more it grows the more it wants to be fed!

Put it off, put it away, discard it from your life or it will control your life! Put on Christ instead!

Paul put it like this in Romans 13:14, “**But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**”

And in Colossians 3:8-11 Paul wrote, “**But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.**”

Put off the old man and put on the new man, put on Christ let Him fill your life and overflow your life to touch the lives of others by what we do and what we say!

And I think we all understand that, from a physical standpoint, what we put into our bodies affects the health of the body.

But what about our spiritual health, how is that affected?

We are told in Proverbs 23:7, “**For as he thinks in his heart, so is he . . .**”

And Jesus said in Matthew 12:34, “**. . . For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**”

Yes, physically you are what you eat, but spiritually you are what you think!

So, Paul told us to put off the old man and put on the new man, put on Christ and he is going to begin with the transformation of our mind. Instead of focusing on the things of this world, we are to be focused on the things of God.

When we give our lives to Jesus Christ, we received a new mind. We received a completely new spiritual and moral capability. But this is a process also, that we continually renew our minds daily that we may gain the mind of Christ, (Philippians 2:5), and be more like Him.

Paul's statement in I Corinthians chapter 2 explains this for us for in those passages Paul is simply saying that the reason we have godly wisdom and understanding is because the Holy Spirit has revealed them to us.

The natural man has a spirit, that is the worldly spirit that is in him and thus, he has worldly wisdom. And you can see how that plays out in the world today; it is empty for the most part!

But the Christian has the Holy Spirit indwelling him, which teaches us the “**deep things of God.**” Our wisdom comes from God.

Paul ends that section, (I Corinthians 2:9-16), by saying, “**... But we have the mind of Christ.**”

So, in principle, we have the mind of Christ for we have been transformed into a new creation in Christ. But in practice, it is a continual process of renewing our minds to the likeness of Christ, putting in good things so good comes out!

And in verse 24 Paul is telling us to put on an entirely new man. Not the old man cleaned up but a new man on the inside, which will overflow to the outside.

Now Paul says that this “**... new man which was created according to God ...**” is better translated from the Greek, “**according to what God is.**”

When we are born again into the family of God, we are not transformed into the image of man but into what God is. Our actions and attitudes should reflect those of God. We should hate sin and love that which is good.

Remember what John wrote in I John 3:2-3, **“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”**

That is what God is doing in our lives right now, making us more like Him and one day, when we see Him face to face, the work will be completed!

Now you may be thinking that you fall far short of those standards and that is very true, we all do.

But it is what we are working towards. We are new in Christ and our actions should reflect the attitudes of our heart.

Look at what Paul says here in Ephesians 4:24. He speaks of our actions and attitudes being **“righteous”** before God and before our fellow man. We are to have our actions reflect that of **“true holiness”** which speaks of a “sacred observance of all the duties to God.”

The life of a believer is one who is totally given over to God and because of that relationship with God the love of God will be manifested in their lives and touch those around them, their fellow man.

You see, if you love the Lord with your entire life then the way you treat your fellow man will be right!

As Paul concludes this chapter, he speaks on the conduct of the new man, how he is to walk, and, as we will see, he walks in purity!

VERSES 25-29

Here we see Paul start out by saying that our lives should be reflective of truth. Think about it, how can you have unity in a body of believers if you can't trust each other? You can't!

Deception, lying causes division, turmoil. It fractures the body of Christ and weakens it. Paul has said back in Ephesians 4:3 that we need to strive to keep the unity of the body of Christ and thus, it does take work.

We are told in Zechariah 8:16-17, **“These are the things you shall do: Speak each man the truth to his neighbor; Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace; Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; And do not love a false oath. For all these are things that I hate,’ Says the LORD.”**

As we read on, we see that the new man does not let his emotions deteriorate into sin, giving room for the Devil to work. It needs to be dealt with before it reaches that point!

The word that Paul did not use for **“angry”** in the Greek is PARORGISMOS, which is far more than just a momentary outburst of emotion. These are deep-seated emotions that are like a cancer and spread very quickly. This type of anger is like a shotgun, it may explode just once but the damage that is done is incredible.

Horace wrote, “Anger is momentary insanity.” I think he is right!

Paul says not to let the sun go down on your wrath. Settle your anger before it gets out of control. It doesn't matter if you are right or not, deal with it because if you don't you will give the Devil a chance to cause division and fractures in the body of Christ. If there is someone you are angry with, deal with it before you leave tonight or when you get home, but just deal with it!

Paul used the Greek word for **“angry”** here that is ORGIZO, (or-gid'-zo) and it speaks of becoming exasperated, to provoke, aggravated.



I think Paul's main point is more of a righteous indignation, anger towards evil, something that goes against God or His people.

In Psalm 69:9 we are told, **"Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me."**

It is the words that Jesus also spoke as He saw the moneychangers ripping the people off who came to worship God.

But this anger too needs to be dealt with or it can lead to sin.

God will deal with things, we are to love people and not destroy them, or be angry with them that then leads to sin.

When Jesus turned over the tables of the moneychangers it was righteous indignation, not because what was done to Him, but to His Father in Heaven.

For the most part, our anger is never like that, it is mostly self-centered! Be careful.

Let me give you an example of what I mean. It is perfectly righteous, as you drive by an abortion clinic, to get angry. But it is unrighteous and sinful to go in and harm those who work there. I hope you see the difference!

Solomon put it this way in Proverbs 15:1-2, **"A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness."**

Don't let your anger grow and grow until you blow. Deal with it, settle it in your own heart, let it go before your wrath is seen and you sin.

You see, anger that is a sin is self-centered, self-focused and it does need to be dealt with! If not, you are giving the Devil room to operate in your life, and it will be ugly!

Then, in Ephesians 4:28 Paul tells us that the new man is to walk in purity, and they are not to steal.

Paul uses the Greek word KLEPTO, (klep'-to).

From this word we get our English word kleptomaniac from.

I have seen over the years far too many Christians that are just plain lazy and don't want to work. The thing is, if you can work and you don't work, then you are, in a sense, stealing from those that are working.

Paul said in II Thessalonians 3:10, **“For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.”**

Here in Ephesians Paul turns the tables and tells the Ephesians that they should **“labor”** which speaks of, literally, “to exert himself to the point of exhaustion.”

The idea here is not only so we can provide for ourselves, our own families but that we can also help those who are in need; build up the kingdom of God.

Paul said in I Timothy 5:8, **“But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”**

You see, you are a new creation in Christ, live that way, don't steal but labor for the Lord! Be an example to others.

And then in Ephesians 4:29 Paul speaks of the words we say. He says that the new man is not to have any **“corrupt”** words proceed from his mouth and he uses the Greek word SAPROS, (sap-ros') which is worthless, rotten foul.

God does not want that kind of garbage flowing from our mouths. Our speech should build up not tear down!

In speaking of the Lord, Isaiah tells us, **“The Lord GOD has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak A word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.”** Isaiah 50:4.

Now, as His representative, we too should speak forth with words that comfort and not destroy those around us. Paul in Colossians 4:6 tells us, **“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”**

I like the way Ray Stedman sums this up. He wrote, “It is not enough to put off evil. We go a step further and put on the good. It is not enough to put away falsehood. We must aggressively speak the truth. It is not enough to simply avoid sinful anger. We must use righteous anger to motivate us to seek justice. It is not enough to simply stop stealing. We must live productive lives and give generously out of our productivity to improve the lives of others. It is not enough to simply stop ‘cussing’ or spreading vile rumors. We have to use our power of speech to build others up and benefit those around us.”

As we read on, we will see that these actions, these works of the flesh will hinder what the Holy Spirit wants to do in our lives!

### VERSE 30

First of all, this word, **“grieve”** in the Greek means, “to cause pain or to make sorrowful.”

If you think about it, you could paraphrase this verse like this, ***“And don’t break the Holy Spirit’s heart...”***

How can we grieve the Holy Spirit?

There are many ways, but the main idea is that we are not walking as God has called us to walk. You see, Paul is saying that we can grieve the Holy Spirit by our unloving, impure conduct towards others.

We can grieve God by our conduct, the things we do.

That does not mean God loves us less, but it does mean He is not pleased with our actions.

And for those who don't believe in eternal security, that once we are saved, we cannot lose that gift that God has given to us, listen again to what Paul is saying here. **“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”**

Keep in mind that a seal speaks of ownership and security. He is the seal that guarantees our preservation until Christ returns for us and our salvation is complete.

That is exactly what Paul was saying in Ephesians 1:13-14, **“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”**

We are eternally secure in Christ and that work that God has begun in us, our salvation, He will complete as He takes us home to glory, which He has reserved for us!

Thus, we should not sin because God has saved us and that love He has shown us we should show Him! That is a strong argument against sinning!

Also, the fact that He can be grieved shows that the Holy Spirit is a Person, not a mere influence. It also means He loves us, because only a person who loves can be grieved.

Spurgeon summed this up like this for us. He wrote, “He is grieved with us mainly for our own sakes, for he knows what misery sin will cost us; he reads our sorrows in our sins. . . . He grieves over us because he sees how much chastisement we incur, and how much communion we lose.”

Thus, “**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**” Ephesians 4:30.

### VERSES 31-32

Paul now concludes this chapter by comparing what should be removed from our lives and what it should be replaced with. In other words, put off the old man and put on Christ!

Look at this list that we are to put off.

First of all, Paul talks about ***BITTERNESS***.

As Paul starts out with bitterness, he uses the Greek word PIKRIA, (pik-ree’-ah) and it speaks of a smoldering resentment. The kind that just keeps building and building inside of you making you sour and unloving.

From there he speaks of ***WRATH***.

And when Paul speaks of wrath or THUMOS, (thoo-mos’) in the Greek, it is like a wild rage. A good illustration of this is straw that catches on fire, it burns very quickly and before you know it its out, but in its path, there is much destruction. I am sure you have seen this before in people.

Then Paul speaks of ***ANGER***.

And when Paul speaks of anger or ORGE, (or-gay') in the Greek, he is talking about more of an internal feeling and reflects a long-standing continual anger, something you just can't let go and it builds inside of you.

From there he speaks of **CLAMOR**.

And clamor is a loss of control that results in a public outburst of emotions. The word in the Greek is KRAUGE, (krow-gay') and gives us the idea of letting everyone know how or what your grievance is.

Next is **BLASPHEMY OR EVIL SPEAKING**.

This word that Paul uses here in the Greek is BLASPHEMIA, (blas-fay-me'-ah) which we translate blasphemy or evil speaking. And this is an ongoing bitterness that rises in the heart and has defamed another person.

And lastly, he speaks of **MALICE**.

And as Paul ends with malice or KAKIA, (kak-ee'-ah) in the Greek he is speaking of evil, all kinds. It is just a vicious character that is produced from the above fruits or really, works of the flesh!

Each of these, Paul tells us, must be put away or removed from our lives. We must decide to do it for if we refuse, we can and will grieve the Holy Spirit.

A child of God should not have these as fruits or works in his life.

And did you notice how they are all linked together.

You start with a resentful spirit (**bitterness**) which leads to a quick burst of emotion (**wrath**) which leads to a long standing continual feeling of anger that grows inside of you (**anger**) that results in a public outburst of what you feel (**clamor**) then into the tearing down of another person (**evil speaking**) and ends with a continual hateful disposition (**malice**).

Don't hold onto this garbage, but let it go!

And then Paul tells us three points that we are to put on, that should be manifested in our lives.

He starts out by saying we are to ***“be kind to one another.”***

And the idea here is that of an unselfish concern for the welfare of others, and a desire to be helpful even at great personal sacrifice.

Then Paul tells us that we are to be ***“tenderhearted”*** to one another.

The idea here with this word is that of a sympathetic, affectionate, and compassionate interest in others, and a willingness to bear their burden. It is not going up to someone and saying to the person who is going through a tough time, “Suck it up!” That is not being tenderhearted!

And lastly, Paul tells us to be ***“forgiving to one another.”***

And this is not an easy one for it speaks of a readiness to pardon offenses, to overlook personal wrongs against oneself, and to harbor no desire for retaliation.

Now, you may be wondering, “Why do I have to forgive that person? Why do I have to be nice to that person? They don't deserve it!”

That may be true but when Paul tells us the reason, it should put to silence any excuse we can come up with.

The reason we should do these things is this, **“just as God in Christ also forgave us.”**

How many of your sins has God forgiven you?

All of them!

How can He do that?

Because He has forgiven us these sins **“in Christ.”** Jesus has paid them in full and thus, as God has forgiven all we have done against Him, may we forgive others.

Spurgeon put it like this, “If anyone here who is a Christian finds a difficulty in forgiveness, I am going to give him three words which will help him wonderfully. I would put them into the good man’s mouth. I gave them to you just now, and prayed you to get the sweetness of them; here they are again! ‘For Christ’s sake.’ Cannot you forgive an offender on that ground?”

And here is the thrust of all this. Instead of having a life that is characterized by being unkind, hardhearted, unforgiving and unloving, we should be the exact opposite. We should be kind to each other, and this is not a passive sort of response. It is love in action; it is reflected in what we do to each other.

It is not a show we put on for people to make them think we love them, we really do!

We are to be tenderhearted, have compassion on each other. To try to understand where the other person is coming from and meet his or her needs. And Paul links this all to forgiveness.

Why?

Because of what God did for us, in that He forgave us so why can’t we forgive others?

Let me share this with you on forgiveness. We are told,

A definition for forgiveness could be - giving up my right to hurt you, for hurting me. It is impossible to live on this fallen planet without getting hurt, offended, misunderstood, lied to, and rejected. Learning how to respond properly is one of the basics of the Christian life.

The word “forgive” means to wipe the slate clean, to pardon, to cancel a debt. When we wrong someone, we seek his or her forgiveness in order for the relationship to be restored. It is important to remember that forgiveness is not granted because a person deserves to be forgiven. Instead, it is an act of love, mercy, and grace.



How we act toward that person may change. It doesn't mean we will put ourselves back into a harmful situation or that we suddenly accept or approve of the person's continued wrong behavior. It simply means we release them from the wrong they committed against us. We forgive them because God forgave us . . .

There are times we don't feel like forgiving those who have wronged us. It is easier to act our way into feeling than to feel our way into acting. Having a nature of not forgiving others brings about bitterness, and bitterness has been linked to stress-related illnesses by some medical researchers. By forgiving others, we free ourselves spiritually and emotionally. Forgiveness is an act of our own personal will in obedience and submission to God's will, trusting God to bring emotional healing.

- <http://bit.ly/2jWNCEX>

And here is the main point. We can forgive if we want. The problem is that many times we refuse to listen to what God is saying, we refuse to forgive, and, in the end, we are grieving the Holy Spirit!

But, if we treat others as God treats us, we will fulfill everything that Paul tells us to do in this chapter!

Now, take a close look at how you lived your life before you were saved and try to understand that God forgave you of all those sins.

The new life is tough but as God said, “... ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’” I Peter 1:16.

As I close this evening I would like to end with the words of Paul as he spoke to the Philippians. He said, **“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”** Philippians 4:8-9.

Keep in mind that this section on our *WALK IN PURITY* will continue through Ephesians 5:18, and we will finish this section up next time.

But as I close, may we *WALK IN PURITY* as God has called us to do!