

Walk Worthy

of the calling with which you were called.
Ephesians 4:1-5:21

PART TWO – WALK IN TRUTH – EPH. 4:17-32
LESSON 15 – THE FUTILITY OF THEIR MIND – EPH. 4:17
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Ephesians 4:17-19

- ▶ Ephesians 4:17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

The Mind of Christ

- ▶ We are studying Ephesians 4:17-32 as we continue to learn to walk in truth and in this study we have started with the fact that there is a difference between people who are saved and those who are not.
- ▶ The redeemed we are told in Scripture have the mind of Christ. They have the ability to meditate on the Word of God and have the Spirit by that use the Word to transform them and renew their minds. But the lost, those who do not know Jesus Christ, have minds that are futile, darkened, ignorant, and blind.

The Lost Man's Mind

- ▶ We have been admonished not to walk as the Gentiles walk. We are different. They do not know Christ, they have not believed, they have not repented, they have not been born again, redeemed, or converted. The Bible tells us in plain and clear terms what we need to know about the minds of fallen and lost men. Their minds are:

The Lost Man's Mind

- ▶ full of are darkness (Eph 5:8)
- ▶ enmity against God (Rom. 8:7)
- ▶ poisoned (Acts 14:2)
- ▶ debased (Rom. 1:28)
- ▶ set on the things of the flesh (Rom 8:5)
- ▶ blinded (2 Cor. 3:4; 4:4)
- ▶ vainly puffed up (Col. 2:18)
- ▶ corrupt (1 Tim. 6:5; 2 Tim. 3:8)
- ▶ defiled (Titus 1:15)
- ▶ unstable (James 1:8)
- ▶ futile (Eph 4:17)

Love God with All Your Mind

- ▶ We could spend a lot of time on these characteristics of the mind of a lost man, but suffice it to say that we should always be discerning and test what a lost person says against the truth of Scripture. Why do we turn to TV psychologists and talk show divas to learn how to live? What do they know of the Word of God? We often forget just how different we are from the lost.
- ▶ Because we are saved part of our highest duty to God is to love Him with all our mind (Luke 10:27). This can only be accomplished by a redeemed mind, a mind subject to the Spirit for the Spirit illuminates the Word of God so that we might understand and obey it. On our own, as lost men, we do not have the mental capability to truly understand or apply the Word of God to our lives. The work of the Spirit in illumination is absolutely necessary.

Spirit vs. Letter

- ▶ This by the way is one of the fallacies of the idea running amok within certain segments of Christianity that teaches that all we need to do to save our country is to get everyone to live by the Bible. Whether through legislation or other means there are those who honestly believe that if we all just do what the Bible says (regarding morality) then things will be much better than they are. I have heard of businesses and sports teams that have decided that things will be done in their organization based on what the Bible teaches.
- ▶ But here is what is being missed – if we do not have the Holy Spirit indwelling us, illuminating the Word to our minds, then we cannot understand or obey that very Word!

Romans 8:7-8

- ▶ The trouble is not that we need to get people to do what the Bible says – the trouble is that we need to get the lost saved!! Without regeneration there is no Biblical morality for without Christ there is no truly good motive or action. Those who believe that lost men can be blessed by doing what the Bible says – without faith and without repentance and without obedience to the gospel first – must be taken first to Romans 8:7-8, “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Futility

- ▶ Let us look then at this phrase from Ephesians 4:17: “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind.”
- ▶ A fallen mind is a futile mind. No matter the wonders it can behold or the “good” it can accomplish for the benefit of mankind, it is all utter futility in light of eternity. Only what is done for eternity will last. And only the things that Christ accomplishes in and through His people will have any lasting eternal value.

Futility

- ▶ The term futility means “failing to produce the desired results, never succeeding.” No matter what seems to happen, it is always futile, meaningless, and unsuccessful.
- ▶ Those who have a futile mind are described as those who see the things of God as foolishness. According to 1 Corinthians 2:14 the natural man (with his futile mind) cannot know or receive the things of God because in order to partake of those things we must have spiritual discernment.
- ▶ Likewise, Colossians 2:18 tells us that the futile mind of fallen men is vainly puffed up, full of falsehood, and deceptive. It is the fallen mind that tries to cheat us out of our eternal reward.

Good or Evil?

- ▶ Those who have a futile and defiled mind cannot do any good! Listen to this – this is important. We often think in terms of good and evil but we fail to see that some things that appear to be good are actually not good! What makes the difference?
- ▶ Titus 1:15 says, “To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.” If a person is lost, defiled, carnal, natural, dead in their sin then nothing is pure to them or from them. Even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Good or Evil?

- ▶ Sadly many lost men think that they have it all figured out. They can explain away the miracles of the Bible, the existence of God, and they can even confuse people into thinking that good is evil and evil good – or worse, that there is no distinction between good and evil at all because truth to them is all relative and situational.
- ▶ They do think that they have it all figured out, and contrary to the testimony of God Himself as it is recorded in His Word, they think that they are inherently good and pure. Proverbs 16:2 tells us though that when a man thinks he is pure it is ultimately God who weighs the spirit.

Illumination by the Holy Spirit

- ▶ A look at Ecclesiastes 1:2 also reveals to us that left on our own the only logical and right conclusion that we can make about life without God is that such a life is nothing but vanity. Futile. Meaningless.
- ▶ This shows us then the need for illumination in the conversion of sinners! Unless the Holy Spirit illumines our mind with truth, we cannot escape the folly and futility of our depraved minds. There is no figuring the truth out, there is no understanding, there is no wisdom, there is no good without Christ. Without Him, without having the mind of Christ, without being transformed by His Word and renewed by His Spirit, our minds are futile.
- ▶ This proves for us then that there is nothing truly and really good outside of Christ. For the man without Christ walks in the futility of his mind. And why on earth would we want to walk like that?

Next Week

- ▶ Lesson 16 – Darkened Understanding – Eph. 4:18