

## **Ephesians 4 (17-32) – This is How to be Different**

Intro: Standing out in the crowd, part of the crowd of fans as well (Gator example)

In Ephesians 4:17-24, Paul tells Christians that they must not act like they used to, being guided by the dictates of the old, hard heart and unregenerate mind that unsaved people have. They have a new nature in them, a new heart that can be renewed in its mindset and follow after God in truth. Paul says that as we learn of Christ we should act in accordance with that. Paul talks of the ways and the means of being different, of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. He describes the means as a process, as putting off the old man and putting on the new. Then in vs.25-32 he gives us five specific, practical ways that God tells Christians to be different.

**The Problem** (vs.17-19) – Don't let this be you!

- They walk the wrong way because their minds are messed up
- They miss out on God because their hearts are hard
- They are calloused and so they increase in impurity, insensitivity to God

**The Person** (vs.20-21) – be like Jesus, learn and live Him!

- All about Christ and living out the gospel
- We learn Christ, we increase, we renew our new minds, our hearts soften, we act right

**The Plan** (vs.22-24) – Put on / Put off (parallel Romans 12:1-2, all 3 points before service)

- It has power, we are born again in His image, we have a new nature, and when we continue to renew our minds through the Bible we can be changed.
- But we must continue in it; when we retreat backward we go “out of our minds”
- When I speak of Christ and these things, do I sound like a fool, or a sage, this tells you where your mind and your heart is right now: are you out of your mind?

**The Process** (vs.25-32) – It is a process, a progression, we advance in learning

- *Truth* (vs.25) – not just stop lying but also avoiding deceitfulness
- *Temperament* (vs.26-27) – righteous anger not rage – love filled, grieving anger over sin against God – Mark 3:1-5 / Isaiah 1:17 – wrong wrath gives a place to the devil
- *Talent* (vs.28) – ascending nature – from stealing from others to supporting others
- *Tongue* (vs.29-30) – corrupting talk grieves God, not just stop that, but start edifying instead of lying (match with verse 25)
- *Tenderness* (vs.31-32) – forgiven people become forgiving people

**The Place**

A new community – We become disciples, training, under discipline, and we do that in the context of the local church. These plurals and “one another’s” point to the fact that the local church is where we learn and practice, it is where this starts, where it steps up, and where it strays from (we stay away from church, we slide back into the old ways)

The plea, the prayer – The Lord / The Bible / The Local Church – I am thankful – The best way to show thanks is by using what we have, by learning Christ and living for Christ (bicycles for Christmas example) – are you going to be different or are you out of your mind?