

**Critical Understandings**  
**September 2, 2012**  
**Part III**  
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Today we finish up with part three of our message of “Critical Understandings” from the book of Ephesians in Chapter Four.

By ‘critical understandings’ we mean that these are things that as a Christian you really must understand.

We know the Lord never sends us a message that is not important, however, some of them are issues of literal life and death; some are issues of self improvement, some are issues of corporate improvement as a Church; some are issues of improvement in our families; some are issues of the Lord’s glory; this series of messages from the Lord seems to be covering all of these in a very primary sense.

In Part I, God laid out for us our personal and our corporate responsibilities and His children.

In Part II the Lord reminded us of how we are constructed as spiritual beings and showed us how to go about placing our righteous, born again spirits in charge of the lives we live instead of allowing our corrupted flesh to guide our lives as before.

Today as we finalize this series, the Lord has set out to show us both sides of a crucial choice that He has laid before us.

At the conclusion of last week's message we were reminded that when the Lord Jesus saved us, He truly set us free.

Jesus calls it being "free indeed"; meaning that we now possess salvation to the uttermost!

We who are born again are in no danger whatsoever of going to hell.

Our salvation cannot be lost or taken from us: a man cannot lose it, the Devil cannot take it and God will not break His word!

If you are born again, your eternal life is unconditional no matter what you choose to do with your life here on Earth.

You can go live however you want, do whatever you want, go wherever you want and you will still go to heaven! (There are not many places you will ever hear a preacher say that!)

Yes, that's right: if you never give a dime, if you never serve a day, you will be just as saved as you are right now!

Now ask yourself this question; "Why did the Lord give us such an unconditional, "uttermost" salvation such as this?"

I am so glad you asked; after you have studied God's Word and served the Lord for two or three decades, the answer to this will start to become clear.

Oh, you want to know *now*, do you? Let's see where we might start:

Before folks get saved, they think they are free but in reality they are slaves to their own corrupted flesh and at the non-mercy of the Devil.

### **2Timothy 2:24-26**

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Being free in Christ allows you to choose a different road; a righteous road that you could not walk before because you could not choose.

Inside every born again believer is a supernatural desire to walk this new road of righteousness...and because of the presence of Christ in you, therein also lies the power to make it happen.

Jesus has set you free and now you can and you will choose what you will do with your life.

As we look at both sides of this choice that is laid before us, first we see:

## I. Our Warning.

### **Ephesians 4:17-19**

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

The Lord warns us that we no longer walk that old path we were on:

*A. Let's break these three verses down and see what is in them:*

1. **Ephesians 4:17** This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord...What you are about to hear, like all of the Word of God, is the Lord's opinion, not that of man.

2. **that ye henceforth**...this word means literally "no further"; not any more, from here on out. Ideally this should be from the day we trust Jesus to save us but certainly from today now

that you are hearing this directly from the Word of the Lord.

3. [walk not as other Gentiles walk](#),...is He talking about “upright on two legs?” What does he mean? He tells us exactly:

4. [walk not as other Gentiles walk](#),...you have two basic terms here:

“vanity”, which is Gr. *mataiotēs*

*mat-ah-yot'-ace*

From [G3152](#); *inutility*; figuratively *transientness*; **morally depravity**: - vanity.

And the other term is “mind” Gr. *nous*

*nooce*

Probably from the base of [G1097](#); **the intellect**, that is, *mind* (divine or human; in thought, feeling, or will); by implication *meaning*: - mind, understanding. Compare [G5590](#).

We are talking about their morally depraved human intellect.

5. The result of this morally depraved thinking is described by [Ephesians 4:18](#) [Having the understanding darkened](#),

6. Because of this darkness they are [alienated \[not a part of\] from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart](#):

7. The result of this is **Ephesians 4:19** Who being past feeling [conscience is seared] have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, [all manner of sin] to work all uncleanness with greediness.

*B. Once you know enough to become born again, you can never fit in with the lost world again.*

1. Sometimes Christians can be the biggest sissies in the world! “Oh, it is so hard to be a Christian...I don’t fit in with my friends anymore...I can’t enjoy myself like I used to.”

2. Well duh...the only way you can go where they go and do what they do now is to pretend to them and to yourself that you are still as stupid as they are; you will never fit in with the world ever again!

3. You need to cheer up and be thankful; God has given you a whole wonderful family of new believer friends; you need to quit hanging on to that old life and come be who you really are with your new family in the Lord!

#### 4. **2Corinthians 6:17-18**

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you.

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

*C. The Apostle Paul asks us a very pointed question:*

**1. Romans 6:1-2**

- 1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
- 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

2. I said earlier that there are some things you begin to see after you have served the Lord for a long time.

*D. One of those things is that in every Church family there seems to be three groups or categories of believers based on this choice God keeps challenging us to make:*

1. One group is those that just can't bring themselves to separate and they fall back into the world, out of Church and engulfed by worldliness.
2. Oh yes, these genuinely saved ones eventually come back, but often wounded and with a lot of deep scars on their souls.
3. The other extreme is the group that goes all out for the Lord; they choose Christ early, fall in love with Jesus, they fall in love with the Church and they go on to become champions of the faith; these are very easy to recognize; fools for Christ and all.

4. The other group, which sadly is almost always the largest group, is the ones who can't seem to get off the fence.

5. They come to Church but they still pine for all the "fun" stuff they used to do in the world. They dabble in it but it's just not fun like it was before. [Yeah, dummy; your righteous spirit won't put up with it anymore.]

6. Some of you have been in this group so long you can't imagine things any other way. You know you are not happy and you never will be until you get off the fence and become what God re-created to be.

The wrong side of this choice is easy to see; but what do we find on the right side of this choice the Lord is laying before us?

## **II. The Product of Biblical Instruction learned and then applied;**

A. Here is the picture and practice of a mature believer who is walking in the Spirit.

### **1. Ephesians 4:31-32**

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

2. In that middle group of believers who won't get off the fence, life can still be pretty miserable; families usually are still pretty dysfunctional.
3. Imagine this new picture in your home: no more bitter spirit, no more outbursts, no more anger, no more yelling, no more screaming, no more cursing, no more being told you are bad or stupid or a failure; no revenge, no getting even, no retribution.
4. Instead of all this dysfunction there is now peace and kindness; the feelings of others and the potential for hurt is almost always considered before words are spoken.
5. When we do mess up we apologize and forgive or we simply forgive whether there is an apology or not; why? Because of all that Christ has forgiven us...and is still forgiving us!

*B. B learning and applying plain old Biblical doctrine, we can now live a life where everything truly is new and different:*

1. At home there is now peace and joy; because we have now learned from the Lord how to maintain that peace and joy.
2. We go to a Church where we hear the truth from the Lord every time we go.
3. And even when those truths may be sometimes hard; because they are from a

Savior who loves us they always build us up  
and do not ever tear us down!

4. Imagine reaching a place in your life where peace and joy are the norm and anything else is a rare exception.

5. Imagine being changed inside so much that the greatest thrill in your life is when you come together with your brothers and sisters in Christ and together we worship the Lord who died for us and we experience His amazing presence in our very midst.

**In Conclusion: Isn't it time you got off the fence and quit pining for the world where you don't fit anymore?**

**What the Lord has for you is light years ahead of anything the world ever had to offer; but you must choose to embrace it.**

**Why did the Lord make our salvation so utterly the most?**

**He did it so that when we choose to give our lives to the Lord it will be just that; our choice.**

**Only when it is by our choice can it be out of real love; Jesus doesn't want it any other way!**

**Only the sacrifice and service that is motivated by love is acceptable to the Lord.**

**Even as believers we can do for the Lord with wrong motives; serving for things like recognition or for notoriety or even giving just for the obvious financial return that God promises and that does always actually come back.**

**The most basic of all New Testament commands is that we do whatever we do for the Lord out of love!**

**1Corinthians 13:13** And now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity [love].