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# The Winds of War

## Bible Study Text

**Ephesians 4:14-15** – *So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the Head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

characterizes the desire of the enemy in this passage to weaken the body of Christ, the church. But Scripture testifies that **all** of God’s institutions, marriage, family, church and government, are the target of God’s enemy, the devil.



### 1. Wake up! An evil storm is brewing!

Ephesians was written after Paul’s journey to Rome aboard a ship of Alexandria, **Acts 27:6**. The Holy Spirit carried along the Apostle Paul allowing him to write in his own style, yet it is precisely God’s specific word, **2 Peter 1:21**.

Paul, throughout this section, uses nautical language. Language that points directly to his horrifying experience of shipwreck from a Nor’easter storm on the Mediterranean, **Acts 27:13-44**. “Tossed to and fro,” is a nautical term used metaphorically, but in context it describes the work of evil winds that bring agitation mentally, like the waves.<sup>1</sup> Paul continues nautical references with “carried about,” the Greek word *periphero*, which means turned about in circles and *anemoi*, which means wind that blows so hard that you are out of control.

#### **Who is caught in these mental winds of war storm?**

The Greek word *nepios* means that which does not talk or literally infants. The context points to “babes” in Christ, **those young in the Lord or those content to not mature**, not learning the deep truths of Scripture, **Hebrews 5:11-14**.

Evil’s desire is to twist and manipulate both those who have made themselves vulnerable and those with innocent minds to live life upside down and spun around. This

Ephesians 4:14 uses three words to describe this attack. “Human cunning” is the word *kubeia* which means literally “playing at the dice.” In that culture, it had the meaning “trickery, sleight of hand or cheating.” *It is any type of misrepresentation used to take advantage of a person in any way.* The second word, “craftiness,” is more specific about the cunning action, it is *panourgia* and refers “to trickery involving evil cunning.” This word was used by the Holy Spirit to describe the Serpent deceiving Eve, **2 Corinthians 11:3**. What did the Serpent do? He quoted God’s word but removed God as authority. (*Read Genesis 2 and 3, see how “Lord God” is used throughout until the Serpent speaks. The Serpent made sin attractive and beneficial, but in the process, the cunning was the removal of God’s authority.*)

The third word, “deceitful schemes,” is *methodian*. Our word “methods” comes from this word. It is a way of doing something deceptive in a systematic way to lead the person to destruction.

This text focuses on evils’ strategy, “deceitful art which has for its result the false way of life that strays fatally from the truth.”<sup>2</sup> **HOW DO YOU SEE THIS WORKING TODAY?**

**Proverbs 4:14-19** is a wise father’s instruction to his son to avoid the false way of life brought about by the enemy. ***“Keep hold of instruction; do not let her go; guard her for she is your life. Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil. Avoid it; and do not go on it.***

<sup>1</sup> Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest’s word studies from the Greek New Testament*: (Vol. 4, p. 103). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. κλυδωνίζω (κλυδωνίζω), a nautical term, “tossed by the waves,” met. “to be agitated mentally,” like the waves.

<sup>2</sup> The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Volume 11: Ephesians 4:14; Frank E. Gaebelein, Everett F. Harrison, W. Harold Mare, Murray J. Harris, James Montgomery Boice.

**For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong; they are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble. For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day. The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.**"

Note two things from the red text above. First, the desire of those who are deceived is to deceive others. **The devil understands the power of discipleship!** This Proverbs passage presents the desire behind the three words, trickery, craftiness and deceitful schemes, in **Eph. 4:14**. Second, protection is found by holding onto God's wisdom and instruction and acting on it. This is exactly the point in the Ephesians text.

**How do you battle these evil winds of mental war?** Our American forefathers knew how. Fifty years after America became a nation, in an observation commonly attributed to Alexis de Tocqueville, the famous 19th century French statesman, historian and social philosopher, he explained the following regarding America.

*I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in their religion -- for who can search the human heart? But I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or a party, but it belongs to the whole nation and to every rank of society.*

*In the United States, the sovereign authority is religious...there is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America, and there can be no greater proof of its utility and of its conformity to human nature than that its influence is powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth.*

*In the United States, the influence of religion is not confined to the manners, but it extends to the intelligence of the people... Christianity, therefore, reigns without obstacle, by universal consent... I sought for the key to the greatness and genius of America in her harbors...; in her fertile fields and boundless forests; in her rich mines and vast world commerce; in her public school system and institutions of learning. I sought for it in her democratic Congress and in her matchless Constitution. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.*<sup>3</sup>

## 2. The Strategy to Battle the Winds of War

**A. Action:** Be under God's authority.

You were broken and in need of restoration when you came to know Christ. He gave gifts of people in authority, cf. **Eph. 4:11**. These men are focused on the work of "mending you for usefulness" for God's purpose. His purpose is "for the perfecting or equipping" (*katartismos*); this verb is used in **Matthew 4:21**. There the root word, *katartizō*, refers to mending the nets, another nautical term in this text. This same word, *katartizō*, is translated "restore" for proper use in **Gal. 6:1**.<sup>4</sup> It takes time and experience to identify your gifts and your specific proper work, **Eph. 4:18b**, building up others. This maturity and learning occur in the arena of a healthy local church. It is clear from the text that a healthy local church must be Christocentric, hold to Sola Scriptura, and be given over to Bible exposition. This equipping in a healthy local church will produce these outcomes:

**2 Corinthians 13:11**, "Finally, brothers rejoice, aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you."

**Hebrews 13:20-21**, "Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

**B. Action:** Be useful as you mature, speak truth in love.

God has given you a circle of influence. It has well been said that truth without love is brutality, but love without truth is hypocrisy. Little children do not know how to blend truth and love. They think that if you love someone, you must shield him from the truth if knowing the truth will hurt him. It is a mark of maturity when we are able to share the truth with our fellow Christians and do it in love. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." (**Prov. 27:6**)<sup>5</sup>

Today, more than ever, America needs men grounded in the Word of God. Men of peace, who with Jesus Christ as their Lord, will truth in love!

Paul's wake-up call is to **grow up** and persistently battle these winds of war by building convictions of truth and Christian worldview in the now and next generation!

<sup>3</sup> Sherwood Eddy, *The Kingdom of God and the American Dream*, 1941. \*In entirety this was quoted by President Eisenhower and attributed to Tocqueville. Portions by nearly every President since. Recent critics argue that this quote is spurious. Eric Metaxas, *If you can keep it*, quoted it stating ironic as it may seem, the quote best captures what Tocqueville actually argued, a "brilliant summation" of Democracy in America, because "we know from the rest of his book that he [Tocqueville] saw clearly that it was the 'goodness' of America's people that made America work. . . . For him it was inescapable: The secret to American freedom was American virtue." This virtue was the result of the gospel and the Word of God.

<sup>4</sup> Hoehner, H. W. (1985). Ephesians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 635). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>5</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 38). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

### About Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission state ministers are pastors-missionaries who in session teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. The Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the Capitol community. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through verse-by-verse Bible teaching. In the Bible, we see God's love for the world, especially those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry to you. The church is instructed to submit and to honor government leaders (Rom 13:1-7), and to pray for their eternal salvation (1 Tim 2:1-4). The desire of Capitol Commission is to witness God transform the hearts and lives of elected officials, lobbyists, and staff members. We apply this mandate to four primary areas of discipleship: (1) *evangelize* those who have not known saving faith in Jesus Christ; (2) *establish* those who desire to grow in their faith and knowledge of Scripture; (3) *equip* those called to spiritual leadership; and, (4) *encourage* churches to participate with us in ministry. Capitol Commission is a non-political and non-lobbying 501(c)(3).