

- **Legislator Only Bible Study** meets Wednesdays at 7:30 AM in the LOB Room 414. Contact Kathy Voss at Sandersonla@ncleg.net
- **June 5th and June 19th Legislators**, you are invited to a relaxing dinner at our home at 7 PM. We have limited seating, so please RSVP at info@capitolcom.org.
- **June 21st is the Legislators and Staff Prayer Breakfast** hosted by Capitol Commission at 7:30 AM in the Legislators Cafeteria.

Ephesians 4:1-17(ESV) *"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called . . . 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 . . . Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds."*

*I love it when my children
grow up! - God*

It is undeniable the Lord desires for His children to grow up. The red highlighted text above states, **"that we may no longer be children."** The Greek word for "children" is *nepios* and literally means "that which does not talk." It would mean "infant." It is the opposite of *telios*, which means "mature."

When my children were younger, marks were placed on the edge of a closet door in our home. Smiles and beaming eyes looked at the old mark in anticipation of the present measurement. Do you remember checking your growth as a child?

Indeed, Paul saw a height mark on the proverbial door. All true believers are growing gradually until they reach spiritual maturity, *"the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."* **Ephesians 4:13**

The growth from infant to maturity in **Ephesians** chapter four is a measured growth. The measurement of growth is the walk of the believer. In the red highlighted passages above, the Greek word for "walk" is *peripateō*, meaning "to

walk about" thus, "to conduct one's self, to order one's behavior."¹ Behavior is the outward measurement of inner growth.

1. Why grow up?

Growth, spiritually in Christ, is focused on protection against the deception and lies of the world. It is God's plan and desire to give people the greatest life imaginable.

But this passage will clearly point out those who are missing this life of God.

Real life can only be found in a personal daily walk with the True Shepherd of your soul, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the champion, the hero and the Captain of faith. Following Christ for the believer is a daily personal walk with a victorious, overcoming, awesome God.

Often, people view Christianity in terms of what a person cannot do, but Christianity is not about the "loss." Christianity is about the "gain." The gain is *zoe*.

Zoe is the Greek word for "life." Paul uses it in **Ephesians 4:18** describing life of God. It is life, supernaturally characterized by healthiness, happiness, exuberance, energy and vitality.

2. Why Paul said - be suspect of the culture!

Ephesians 4:17 *"...no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of your mind."*

"Gentiles" is used by Paul referring to those who are not yet believers in God... although they may be believers in another god, an idol. An interesting observation regarding the Greek word *ethnos*, from which we get our word "ethnic",

Though in a number of instances τὰ ἔθνη, (*ethnos*) may be rendered as 'those who do not believe in God,' it is often more appropriate to render τὰ ἔθνη (*ethnos*) in terms of belief in other gods or in false gods.²

¹ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 4, p. 93). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 126). New York: United Bible Societies.

This fits the culture of Ephesus. Note the statement by a silversmith of Ephesus named Demetrius, “...in Ephesus [and] almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods.” **Acts 19:26**

Idolatry is a god created by human hands and choice. It is a god made up, a god that is understandable and a god the worshipper controls to gain comfort, good crops, fertility and wealth. This is the initial attractiveness of a god made up. But the reality is, before long, the worshipper becomes enslaved to the false god. What promised life is now taking away life. What promised freedom is now bringing subjugation.

3. Do not walk this way!

Paul calls believers to not conduct their thinking and lives like those who do not know the Lord. He uses two phrases to describe the “Gentile” and explain why a believer should not pattern their lifestyle after them.

1. “*futility of their mind*” – thinking that does not and cannot grasp the true purpose of life. The result is life seems empty and there is a constant search for worth.
2. “*darkened understanding*” – to be incapable of perceiving, to not be able to understand as you evaluate what you see around you.³

What caused this thought pattern?

Ephesians 4:18(ESV) “*They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.*”

Paul is pointing out that there is mental stubbornness in the unbeliever. The unbeliever is ignorant because spiritually he is blinded to the good news. The enemy of God seeks to keep him blind (**2 Corinthians 4:4**); one way is to filter out his observation of life events and facts through a false belief system.

The facts interpreted through the false belief system bring a distortion to perception. If one cannot correctly interpret the observations of life and facts, he misses both life purpose and grasp of the life of God. In The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, author John Frame puts it this way, “The further away from observable data, the more likely

interpretive distortion occurs because it is there that faith commitments/convictions enter in.”

4. Don't settle for less than real life.

The result of this ongoing ignorance is:

Ephesians 4:19(ESV) “*They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.*”

“Callous” means to lose a feeling of shame. This is the result of great separation from God. It blinds the unbeliever to the healthy prosperous life God gives. It allows the not-yet-believer to settle for much less, trying to fill the emptiness.

The use of the phrase “have given themselves up” in that culture referred to handing someone over to an authority. In this case, the authority is the immediate sensual experience.

In the confused struggle with worth, a person gives himself over to “sensuality”. The word as used here means sensual pleasure that is unrestrained by convention or morality.

This abandonment to extreme immorality is coupled with a continual desire for more and more.

C.S. Lewis in The Weight of Glory stated, “It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

God is calling you to abundant life. Have you considered the claims of His Son?

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father, but by me.”

Why settle for less than God?

³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 385). New York: United Bible Societies.