



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Old Self – New Self

AUGUST 10, 2011

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The setting is a Roman prison (60-62 A.D.) and Paul is addressing the established Christian (mostly Gentile) church in Ephesus where he was a pastor for several years. In this letter, Paul counters the false teachings that had started to plague the church and additionally provides encouragement and instruction in sound doctrine. While the first three chapters deal with doctrine, the church and the spiritual blessings in Christ, in the last three chapters Paul describes responsibilities of the Christian life. In the fourth chapter of Ephesians, Paul begins to describe how a Christian should live. Paul shares that we lay aside our old selves, we become renewed in the spirit of our minds and we put on new selves. (Ephesians 4:17-24)

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. (4:17-19 NASB)

Believers are not to walk as they used to walk. While believers are in the world they are not of the world. Paul shares that believers are not to behave like they did before they believed. He provides several reasons why we used to behave differently; 1. Our minds were darkened due to a lack of understanding, not having heard the truth, and we were spiritually dead (4:18). 2. Our hearts were hard due to rejecting the truth (4:18b). 3. We became used to or callous to sin (4:19). While there is liberty in Christ, it is not a license to sin. Paul is restating a truth that he had mentioned earlier, *“And you were dead in your trespasses and sin, in which you formally walked according to the course of this world,..”* (2:1-2). While believers are in the world, they have a responsibility to be a witness and an example for Christ and not an example of worldly living.

But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.(4:20-24)

Knowing, accepting and believing God’s truth will result in a new way of living. Paul shares that if a believer has heard and believed the truth that is found in Jesus, they will ‘lay aside’ the old self which is corrupted by sin and deceit (4:20-22). Paul describes that a transition will take place and that the believer will be renewed in the spirit of their minds (4:23). We find earlier in Ephesians that the believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit (1:13) and the Holy Spirit begins to guide, direct, comfort and convict the believers in new walk. So with God, the believer becomes a new person and the believer is to put on that new self and behave in a manner that reflects the new life that we have in Christ, one that has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth (4:24).

For Your Consideration:

- Have you heard and believed the truth that is found in Jesus? *“For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (Jn. 3:16)*
- Does your behavior reflect the new self that you are in Christ?
- Do you encourage fellow believers in their new self behavior?

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: WEDNESDAYS (SESSION OR HEARING DAYS) AT 7:30AM, STATEHOUSE ROOM 44

STATE STAFF AND LOBBYIST: WEDNESDAYS AT 12:10PM, STATEHOUSE ROOM 44