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The New Self

Capitol Commission Bible Study

TUESDAYS @ 12 NOON in 328 CLOB (& ZOOM)
(IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)

Members' Bible Fellowship

WEDNESDAYS @ 7:00AM in 403 CAP
(IN-PERSON ONLY AND MEMBERS ONLY)

The Capitol Commission Bible Study is open to the entire Capitol community, and is held **weekly every Tuesday** during the legislative session. We have an in-person Bible study (with social distancing) in 328 CLOB (Senate Committee Room) *and* also use Zoom. The Members' Only Bible Fellowship is held every **Wednesday** (unless not a legislative day) from **7:00-7:50am in 403 CAP**.

I pray that this study will be edifying to you. The sole intent of the ministry of Capitol Commission is to serve you, as a resource for pastoral attention, counsel, and prayer. **The present Bible study is just one aspect of that desire to serve.**

– Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission Bible Study

is
Tuesday, 23 February 2021

Ephesians 4:17-32 – “The New Self”

Have you ever met your doppelgänger? A doppelgänger (from doppel, “double,” and gänger, “goer”) is a biologically unrelated person who could act as your double. The church is the body of Christ, which means He should be our doppelgänger, and that means becoming more like Him in action and thought.

A new standard of living for the believer means putting “on the new self” (4:24). The believer is saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus (2:7-8). Salvation is “the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (vv. 8-9). As God’s workmanship, those who are “created in Christ Jesus” are to pursue “good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (v. 10). For this reason, Ephesians 4:17 reads: “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.”

Verses 17-19 indicate the state and practice of the non-believer. Consequently, the believer in Christ is instructed not to live in such a manner. The reason is threefold: who believers once were (4:17-19); who believers now are (vv. 20-24); and, who believers are to become (vv. 25-32). The non-believer does not have the ability to understand spiritual truth (cf. 1 Cor 2:14) because they are alienated and separated from God and thus their hearts are not sensitive to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 7:14-25).

When a believer continually rejects obeying God’s Word (Scripture), he or she becomes calloused, and begins surrendering to sin, such as lust and greed (Eph 4:19). God revealed his Word – the Holy Bible – for the purpose of obedience as opposed to studying it without appropriating its truths. The words “therefore,” “so this,” “for this reason,” “so then,” and “so also” indicate this priority.

The problem is that believers “did not learn Christ in this way” (v. 20). Therefore, it is incumbent for God’s people to abandon the “former manner of life,” which is under the control of the “old self” (flesh), and “put on the new self,” which is characterized by a new life of “righteousness and holiness of the truth” (vv. 22, 24).

In verses 25-32, there are five particular sins that the believer is to “lay aside” — lying, angeriness, stealing, unwholesome speaking, and grieving the Holy Spirit — because we have been “renewed in the spirit” and “put on the new self” (2:23-24). Scripture exhorts believers to “lay aside” the sins that “grieve the Holy Spirit.” God’s people are “sealed for the day of redemption,” which is the pledge they will be entirely sanctified (glorified). The practices that grieve the Holy Spirit are to “be put away” (4:31), and replaced with those virtues that are qualities of being filled with the Spirit (v. 32).

THINKING LEADS TO LIVING

(Eph 4:17-24) Verses 17-19 describe the condition of the unsaved Gentiles. Their thinking is futile, their understanding is darkened; they are strangers to God’s manner of life; their heart is calloused to the truth; they do not have any sensitivity because they are given to sensuality; and, have greedily given themselves to every manner of impurity. *Hardness of heart is manifested by futility of mind*, which is the consequence of being “excluded from the life of God” and evidenced by “being darkened” in understanding. The consequence is that the unbeliever is “callous,” and given “to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness” (4:17-19; cf. Rom 1:18-32). The description in verses 17-19 is not only an accurate depiction of contemporary society in general, but also characterizes those vices that seek to ensnare leaders of all types.

The sins that are approved by the non-believer lead to futility. The loss of sensitivity by those given “to sensuality” (4:19), for example, is characteristic of sexual promiscuity. All should hold marriage in honor, and the marriage bed is undefiled (Heb 13:4; cf. Song 7:10-13). Those who become sated with licentiousness cease being able to appreciate or enjoy the blessing of marital intimacy. As



an expression of the hardness of the heart (cf. Jer 17:9), foolish decisions are made by people in the “futility of their mind,” darkened understanding, and “ignorance that is in them” (Eph 4:17-18). **Without the absolute standard of God’s Word and the sensibility within Scripture, humanity can do little more than act in confusion and thereby lack purpose in life.**

GOD’S DESIRE IS THAT HIS PEOPLE HAVE A NEW STANDARD OF LIVING....

The reason why Scripture outlines the characteristic lifestyle of the non-believer is so that those who are “alive together with Christ” (2:5) will be free from such actions. Note again the command of 4:17, which is to “walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk.” The lifestyle pleasing to God is contrasted with the non-believing multitude. **God’s desire is that his people have a new standard of living that is consistent with his calling.** Consequently, (as believers), our business policies, home life, and social contacts must be examined by the standard of God’s Word, so we are able to “put on the new self” in all aspects. *Thinking leads to living!* Therefore, it is critical to understand one’s identity in Christ (chs. 1–3) so as to live in a manner that is appropriate with the gracious calling of God (chs. 4–6).

Having described the lifestyle of the unbeliever, the Apostle Paul stated, “But you did not learn Christ in this way” (4:20). Christ’s truth will never be contrary to Scripture (v. 21). Therefore, if someone claims to be a Christian, yet walks “just as the [unsaved] also walk, one may legitimately ask, “Have you truly heard and believed the gospel of God’s grace in Christ?” For this reason, there is much emphasis upon learning (v. 20) and teaching (vv. 21-22). **Either failure to learn or to be taught the revelational truth of God’s Word will hinder the ability to “be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (v. 23).**

THE NEED TO HAVE ONE’S MIND RENEWED IS WHY IT IS CRUCIAL TO MAKE BIBLE STUDY A DISCIPLINE IN YOUR LIFE.

Habit is an inescapable aspect of life. Indeed, many of our actions are by habit (“second nature”). The manner of sinful thinking and behavior is habituated into us at birth; therefore, believers need to learn how to “lay aside the old self” (v. 22) and “be renewed” (v. 23) to “put on the new self, which in *the likeness* of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth” (v. 24). **The need to have one’s mind renewed is why it is crucial to make Bible study a discipline in your life.** In a sinful world, every blessing of God can be turned into a curse. Sinners learn how to quickly develop the capacity for all manner of habitual sinful responses. According to the truth that is in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (v. 22), the believer must “walk no longer” in accord with the sinful habits of the “old self.”

THINKING LEADS TO CHANGE

(Eph 4:25-32) The fundamental dynamic of the Christian life is to “lay aside the old self” and “put on the new self.” The idea is not to become cynical; rather, *regard it as worthwhile to “put on the new self” for Christ’s sake.* If pleasing the Lord and Savior is not one’s ambition, it is only natural that no effort will be made in that regard. Our attitudes must be renewed to replace the corrupting “lusts of deceit.” The “therefore” of 4:25 is strategic to indicate how thinking for Christ’s sake leads to change.

When is a liar no longer a liar? When he or she lays “aside falsehood,” which means the habitual action is replaced by the consistent standard of speaking truth (vv. 25-26). **Truthful communication is essential** because liars disturb any body of which they are a part (either the home, capitol, or church). To achieve such truthfulness we need to “put on the new self.”

There are times when anger is justified (for the sake of righteousness), yet one must guard against anger that leads to bitterness by letting “the sun go down on your anger” (v. 26), which gives “the devil an opportunity” (v. 27). A thief is no longer a thief when he or she is willing “to share with one who has need” (v. 28). Believers must “let no unwholesome word proceed” from their mouth. The command is not only against profane speech but also that which is condescending. God’s people are to speak words that are “good for edification according to the need of *the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear” (v. 29). **Speech that is pleasing to God is appropriate, edifying, and gracious.** Not to speak in such a manner is to “grieve the Holy Spirit” whose “seal” upon believers is indicative of his ownership and security (v. 30).

In summary, all sins of the “old self” must be laid aside (v. 31): “bitterness and wrath and anger” (cf. v. 26), “clamor” (bickering, brawling, disruptions), “slander” (blasphemy against God and/or others), and “all malice” (every sort of evil). Believers are not only to “lay aside” but also are to “put on” kindness (unselfish help), tenderheartedness (affectionate, compassionate, and sympathetic concern for others), and forgiveness (readiness to overlook offenses). **God does not ask anyone to do something in which He has not already set the perfect example.** The greatest example of forgiveness is God himself, who forgives sinners on the basis of his grace and one’s trust in the substitutionary work of Christ on the cross of Calvary.

Thank you for the privilege in providing you with the Capitol Commission Bible study. If we can serve you in any manner, please talk with us, or contact by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

Scripture calls the church to pray for the salvation of our leaders, resulting in them having knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:1-4). As churches are faithful in prayer and proclaiming the gospel of God’s grace, society and government *will be impacted.* Capitol Commission is committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ and promoting the mandate to pray for those in the capitol communities throughout the United States and the world. Our mission is to bring gospel hope and spiritual strength to those capitol communities.

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NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDY:
Tuesday, 2nd of March @ 12 Noon in 328 CLOB (& Zoom)