

Ephesians 4:17-32

The New Life

**What are the
differences between
your life before and
after you became a
Christian?**



Ephesians 4:17-24

BEFORE

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:25-32

AFTER

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin".. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord,

This is not optional

It is vital

Paul has authority to speak this way.



that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do,
in the futility of their thinking.

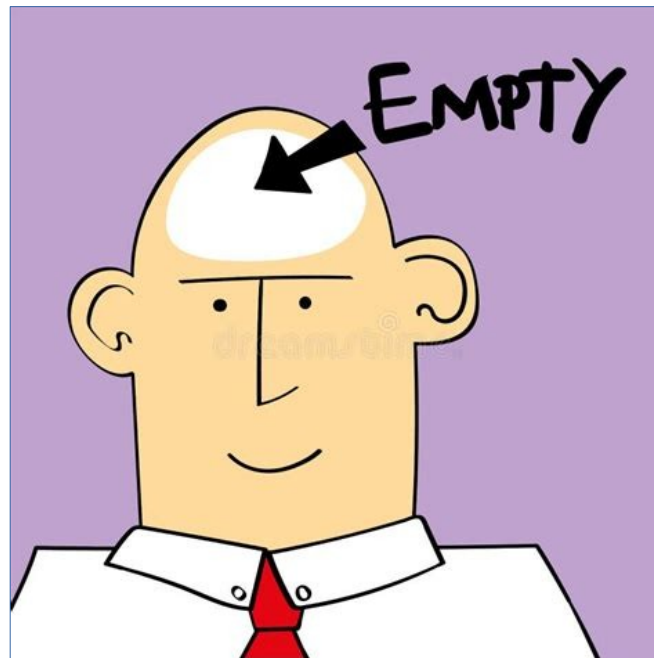
Abandon the old way of living and thinking

They are connected.

No longer the 'gentile' type part of the nations

Empty kind of thinking. They may be very clever but ...

It excludes God, the eternal, the true spiritual



They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

Darkened understanding – they don't 'get it'

The gospel is considered 'foolish'. Cf. Acts 17:32 in Athens

The result is separation from real living (dead – lost)



They are darkened in their understanding and **separated** from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

Caused by ignorance – people need to know the truth

Caused by hardening their hearts – burned by the world

A destructive process

A heart hardened against God and his word is a terrible state to be in. [Colossians 3:10](#) [Psalm 9:34](#)



Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

Insensitive to God's ways for living
Chasing fantasies – the pursuit of 'pleasure' which for them is really impurity and they are never satisfied, always wanting more.

The ungodly are being 'driven along'.



You, however, did not come to know Christ that way.

Something very different happened to you. You came to know Christ, personally as your Saviour from all of this. There should be a profound contrast to before and after.



Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.

You're learning to live as Jesus wants you to – the way of truth – in God's reality.

Jesus is the truth and the source of truth. John 14:6



You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;

Here are some of the important basics for your new life:
The old 'self' had to go – personal lifestyle/mindset
It's a complete 'clothes' change but more on the inside than the outside.

There are important negatives to the Christian life.
Good and bad cannot peacefully co-exist in you.
Some things have to go. It is your decision. You 'put them off' with God's help.



You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;

The old 'self' has to go

It's no good anyway – the self gets worse as time goes on (being corrupted) by the destructive godless desires.

They are deceptive in making big promises of success but not delivering. Don't believe the lies.



to be made new in the attitude of your minds;

The transformation in putting on the new self works in the 'spirit of your mind'.

How we think about and 'see' things is to be different now. Different values, a new understanding of ourselves, our destiny and our view of other people.



and to put on the new self, created to be like God
in true righteousness and holiness.

We do this in co-operation with God.

This new self is God's creation and gift to us

So it bears the marks of its creator – righteous in actions
and holy is its nature.

This is what we are made to be as believers in Jesus.



Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body.

If that is true, then there are consequences that should show in this new-self life. Therefore!!!

Truth – no room for the world's lying ways

Deal with others honestly esp. members of your spiritual family – if one gets hurt we all suffer to some degree.

But this also applies to the wider society – Can our word be trusted by others?



"In your anger do not sin".. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

So much of human history is a record of angry people. Anger has a place (the righteous kind – where people are being exploited and God's ways perverted – eg. The OT prophets often confronted these evils) eg. Isaiah 1:2



"In your anger do not sin".. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

One way of dealing with anger is not to let it go 'cold' overnight- it turns to something worse – bitterness.

Try to sort things out quickly.

Note Proverbs 26:24-5. Do not answer a fool ...

Answer a fool ...



"In your anger do not sin".. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

The danger of 'bad' anger or even 'good' anger going on is that the devil is ready to take advantage to do damage in your life. He will try to use any way he can to gain his evil influence in your life, poison your mind, and so damage your witness. 1 Peter 5:8

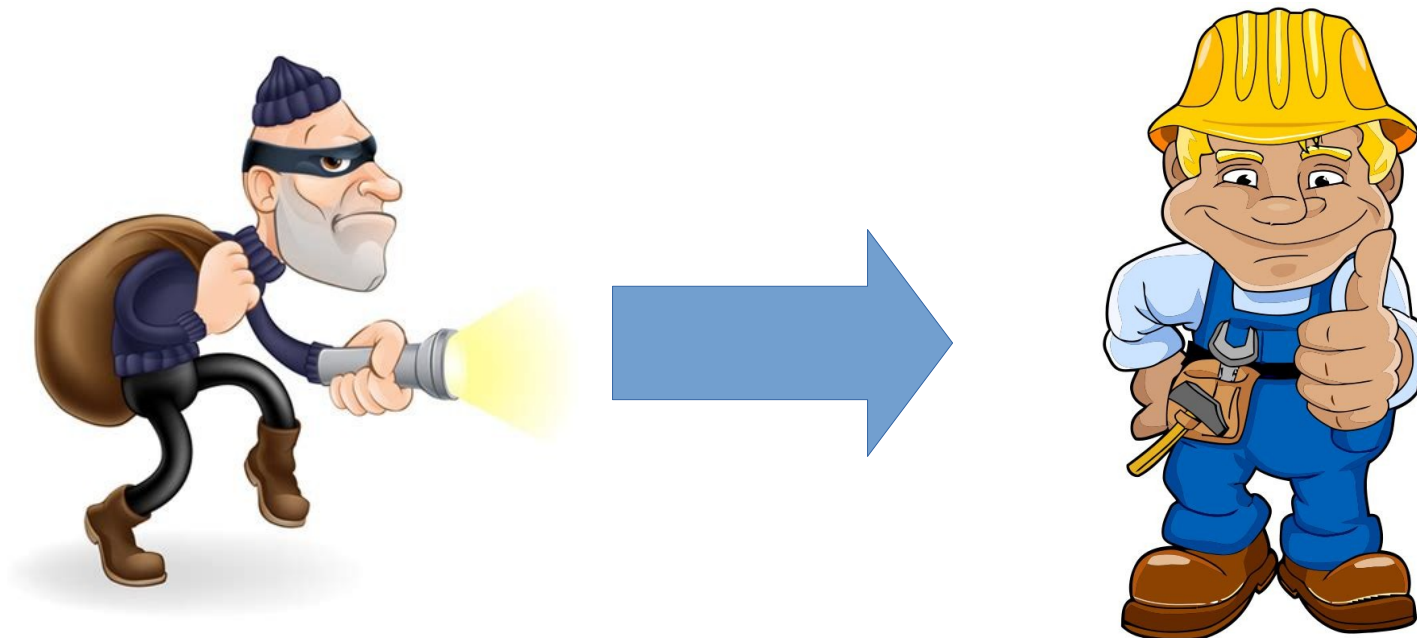


He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work,

Work has to change too. No longer exploiting and cheating on others. This is how the 'old-self' life really is a SELF life.

Others now figure in our actions to do them good, not harm. The commandment still applies! Stealing is a form of idolatry.

Instead.. productive work! It is a good thing.



doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

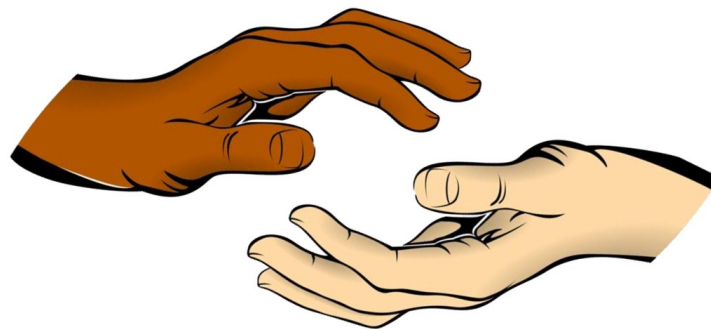
Paul talks of 'manual' labour – hands

Different kinds of work – mental/physical all have a place.

Something useful covers a wide range of options.

The objective is to provide not only for oneself, but to have enough to share where possible.

Note the generous hospitality of some people. Cf Tabitha in Acts 10:39



Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

In the same way as our 'hands' are to work for good purposes, so also our tongues are to be used rightly.

Unwholesome talk covers much of the world's kind of conversation – mockery, criticism, complaining, vulgar and coarse language.



Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Our talk is meant to help and encourage others
Being sensitive to their needs, with appropriate advice etc.



And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,
with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

It isn't that the Holy Spirit is hyper-sensitive and easily gets upset.

His influence and help can be hindered by wrong attitudes and behaviours. WE really do need his continual help.

The Holy Spirit is the 3rd PERSON of the Godhead

Refusing to respond and obey his directions will grieve Him. Woe betide us if He leaves us to our own devices!

He was the one who marked us with God's seal of ownership.

Promising to keep us until Christ's return when redemption's work is completed in us.



Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

These are some of the wrong attitudes that will grieve the Holy Spirit – sinful human behaviour.

Bitterness is anger gone ‘cold’ – it is acidic.

And it often results in uncontrolled rage

As well as anger that turns to violent reaction (physically in brawling and verbally in slander),

The malevolent mindset that wants to harm others has to die.

No believer is perfect in this world, and therefore the process of becoming the kind of person God desires us to be will take a lifetime of effort and reliance on God’s help through his word, fellowship and trials.



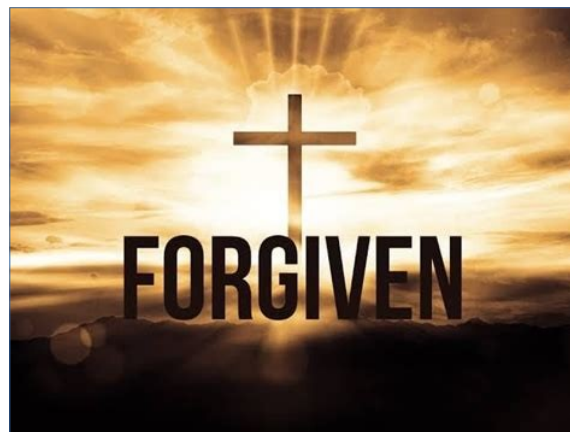
Be kind and compassionate to one another,
forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

This is the programme that is set before us. Treating others in a gracious way (firstly among the fellowship of believers).

While we live among imperfect people (just like us) there will be occasions when we need to forgive – it is not just an option – it is necessary for our spiritual well-being.

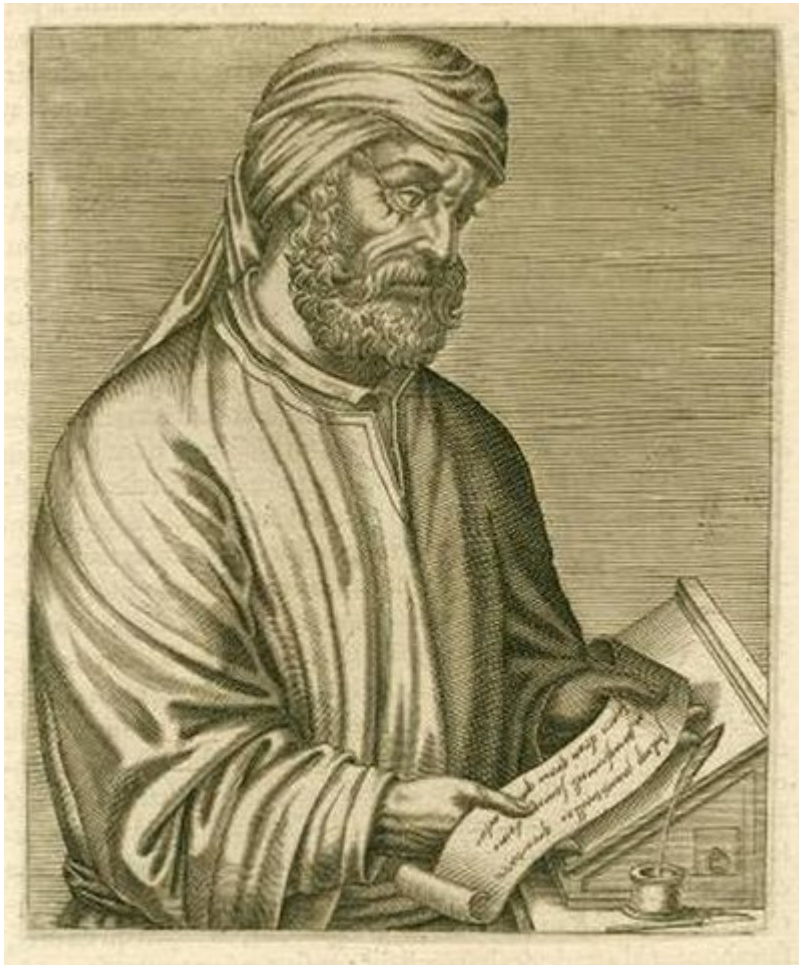
The great motive for all this is that we have received this wonderful treatment from God through Jesus.

Forgiven so much –so let it flow out to others.



This is a completely revolutionary way of living.

It was commented about the early Christians who tried by God's grace to live this way, Tertullian said, "See how these Christians love one another!"



The first great North African theologian was Tertullian (c160-220 AD). He was brought up as a pagan and was well educated, becoming a lawyer. Later he embraced Christianity and was ordained a priest in Carthage. He is thought of as the 'Father of Latin Theology' and wrote extensively to defend Christian beliefs. He liked to think of pagans as looking at Christians and saying "Look how they love one another; and how they are ready to die for each other.'