

Take Off The Graveclothes! – Ephesians 4:17-32

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Introduction

1. The Bible was written to be obeyed, and not simply studied, and this is why the words “therefore” are repeated so often in the second half of Ephesians (4:1, 17, 25; 5:1, 7, 14, 17, 24). Paul is telling us, “Here is what Christ has done for you. Now, in light of this, here is what we ought to do for Christ.” – James 1:22
2. We are made new in Christ and therefore we need to take off the old man and put on the new man...

I. The Admonition (4:17-19)

a. Walk Not As Other Gentiles Walk

- i. We are to not meant to imitate the lives of unsaved people for they are dead in their trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1).
- ii. The Christian cannot pattern himself after the unsaved person, because the Christian has experienced a miracle of being raised from the dead. His life is not futile, but purposeful. His mind is filled with the light of God’s Word, and his heart with the fullness of God’s life.

II. The Argument (4:20-24)

a. Put On Newness of Life

- i. To “learn Christ” means to have a personal relationship to Christ so that you get to know Him better each day. The emphasis is again on the mind or outlook of the believer.
- ii. The better I understand the Word of God, the better I know the Son of God, for the whole Bible is a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).
- iii. This was Paul’s argument—you no longer belong to the old corruption of sin; you belong to the new creation in Christ. Take off the graveclothes! How do we do this? “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Eph. 4:23).

III. The Application (4:25-32)

a. Lying (v25)

- i. Note the reason Paul gave for telling the truth: We belong to each other in Christ. He urged us to build the body in love (Eph. 4:16) and he urged us to build the body in truth.

b. Anger (v26-27)

- i. The fire of anger, if not quenched by loving forgiveness, will spread and defile and destroy the work of God. According to Jesus, anger is the first step toward murder (Matt. 5:21–26), because anger gives the devil a foothold in our lives, and Satan is a murderer (John 8:44).

c. Stealing (v28)

- i. Just as Satan is a liar and a murderer, he is also a thief. “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy” (John 10:10).

d. Corrupt Speech (v29)

- i. The mouth and heart are connected. “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh” (Matt. 12:34). The remedy is to make sure the heart is full of blessing. So, fill the heart with the love of Christ so that only truth and purity can come out of the mouth.

e. Bitterness (v30-32)

- i. Bitterness refers to a settled hostility that poisons the whole inner man. Bitterness leads to wrath, which is the explosion on the outside of the feelings on the inside.
- ii. Why should we avoid bitterness?
 1. It grieves the Holy Spirit.
 2. It grieves the God the Son, who died for us.
 3. It grieves God the Father who forgave us when we trusted & obeyed Christ.
- iii. God has forgiven us, and we should forgive others. We do not forgive for our sake (though we do get a blessing from it) or even for their sake, but for Jesus’ sake.