

Ephesians: Living in Sync with Reality

Part 9: Putting on the New Life

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By Pastor David Fields

Ephesians 4:17-24

I. The Downward Spiral

“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.” – **Ephesians 4:18**

When humanity rejects God as God in Genesis 3, that affects every part of us – including our minds. Our ability to see the world rightly, with God’s wisdom, is now distorted.

Apart from God, our hearts are hardened. And we chose to “follow” these hard hearts with our distorted vision of life. Eugene Peterson paraphrases well:

“They’ve refused for so long to deal with God that they’ve lost touch not only with God but with reality itself.” – **Ephesians 4:18** *The Message*

Ignorance in v.18 does not mean we “lack intelligence.”

Paul is not saying that humans are stupid apart from God, but that our brilliant minds can be used in such awful, demeaning, distorted and distorting ways.

II. Learning Christ

We “learn Christ” by living inside a living relationship with him. We learn Christ by listening to him, and then obeying him.

We come to live in sync with reality when we let the “truth of Jesus” get inside us, as we get inside this living relationship.

III. Being Renewed

To “be made new” or “to be renewed” – this is in the *passive voice*. Passive suggests that we are not the active agent. This change comes from outside of ourselves.

This is not mere self-help. No. This is God-help. God’s plan is to renew our ability to think about life with a God-soaked, God-oriented way of seeing. And then to live that out – in true “righteousness and holiness” – with means to live in sync with God and God’s ways.

Life Group Discussion and Reflection

Open Up

Our clothing can be used to “say” things about us. Did you ever have a phase of wearing clothes that you now look back on and cringe a bit? What made you decide to change your style?

Dig In

Read Ephesians 4:17-24.

1. How does Paul speak of how the mind, heart, and conscience of a non-believer influence their actions?
2. How are Christians to deal with these realities?
3. What is one way you have seen the contrast of the “old” and the “new” in your life?
4. What piece of “old clothes” is skin-tight, and is hard to remove now?
5. What are the positive and/or negative motivations which prompt you to live the new life?

Pray

Take some time to give thanks to God for his work of “renewing” our minds and “creating” a new person, that is made to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Pray for those areas that remain a challenge and turn those over to God’s work in you.