

Walk Worthy

of the calling with which you were called.
Ephesians 4:1-5:21

PART TWO – WALK IN TRUTH – EPH. 4:17-32

LESSON 16 – DARKENED UNDERSTANDING – EPH. 4:18

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Ephesians 4:17-19

- ▶ Ephesians 4:17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.
- ▶ We have seen that if we are to walk in truth then we must not walk as the Gentiles walk, that is, as men who are without Christ walk. We were, before Christ, also Gentiles. We were lost, children of wrath (Eph 2:1-3) who walked in the futility of our minds (Eph 4:17).

Darkness

- ▶ We see next in Ephesians 4:18 that these Gentiles, these people who are walking in the futility of their mind, also have a darkened understanding. They cannot discern. As we work through this verse today we will see that a futile mind combined with a darkened understanding leads to continued alienation from God, ignorance of the truth, and a hard heart. It is no wonder then that the natural man cannot receive the things of God.
- ▶ To say that the lost have a darkened understanding is to refer to their inability to grasp truth because they are void of the light. In fact, it is quite literally a continual condition of spiritual darkness. Beyond even the absence of Christ, who is the Light of the world, this is utter and absolute darkness. There is no divine spark, no ray of hope, no burst of sunshine from the innate goodness of human beings. No, left on our own without the intervention of Christ we are not just in the darkness – we are darkness!

Darkness

- ▶ Ephesians 5:8 makes it clear: For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.
- ▶ Men without Christ are the absence of light. They are unholy, depraved, dead in sin, bound to sin, slaves of sin, able only to sin and unable to not sin! They are deep and utter darkness, void of the light of truth.
- ▶ John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Darkness

- ▶ 1 John 1:5-6 tells us, “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.” God is light. We, before Christ, are darkness. We have no light in and of ourselves.
- ▶ The deeper truth here too is that if we claim to be His, if we claim to be in the light, but live like darkness, then we are at best liars and at worst self-deceived. We cannot claim to be light, or anywhere near the light, if our walk (thoughts, motives, words, and behavior) is full of darkness!

Alienation

- ▶ Romans 1:21 tells us that “because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” There again we see that those who do not glorify God, those who rebel against Him, become futile in their thoughts and their foolish hearts (understanding) are darkened.
- ▶ This darkened understanding then perpetuates being alienated from the life of God. God and His Word and Ways are strange to the lost. His wisdom is counted as foolishness. The command to be righteous and holy is not only impossible but does not even interest the natural man. He is an enemy of righteousness, and he is most unholy.

Ignorance

- ▶ What kind of life is this? It is the life of a tare among the wheat. It is the life of a withered branch, a fruit tree that bears no fruit and is cut down and thrown into the fire to be burned. It is the life of an enemy of God.
- ▶ Because their understanding is darkened and they are alienated from the life of God, they continue to be ignorant of the truth. What truth? The truth of the Bible, and even more importantly, the knowledge of Christ Himself who is the Truth. Indeed, to know the truth is to be set free! And these remain in bondage and walk without the truth, in ignorance.

Ignorance

- ▶ This ignorance is not just a lack of knowing the facts from Scripture about God and eternal life. No, it is more than that. This is an ignorance founded in not knowing Christ at all. Remember that we have studied that one can know about Christ and still not know Him. So here to be ignorant of the truth is to not know Christ or His Word.
- ▶ How does a person who is ignorant of the truth live? Like a Gentile!!
- ▶ We are not to live as if we do not know the truth. How ridiculous to think that we would know Christ and then live in such a way that it would appear that we did not know Him. That is a perfect definition of taking the Lord's name in vain. To claim Him as Lord and Savior and yet to live as if we did not know Him. To live as though we were our own god!

Hard Hearts

- ▶ We see then that the lost man walks in such a way that he has a futile mind and a darkened understanding which serve to alienate him from the life of God and keep him bound in ignorance. And all of this produces a hard heart.
- ▶ The term used here “blinded” means a hardened heart. The lost man has a blind, hard heart. It cannot see the light and is stumbling in the darkness. It is hardened to the truth and to reality. It is a heart that is insensitive to truth and the Word of God.
- ▶ We know from Scripture that God can harden hearts. What some fail to realize is that we can also harden our own hearts also. How? By walking in the futility of our own fallen minds.

Proverbs 3:5-6

- ▶ Proverbs 3:5-8 explains it this way: Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.
- ▶ When we lean on our own understanding and fail to walk by faith, we have begun to walk like the Gentiles walk and we will soon fall into darkness, ignorance, and sin. We must fight against hardening our hearts.

Why?

- ▶ The Word of God asks us, “Why do you harden your hearts?” And when we look at all that has been given to us in Christ we must echo the question, “Why indeed?”
- ▶ In closing today, we learn that this verse demonstrates for us the need for the Holy Spirit to convince us of our sin. He must enlighten our understanding to the truth of our sinfulness and depravity. For without His help, we would only ever be bound in darkened, alienating, heart hardening ignorance of the truth.
- ▶ Give Thanks this week for the Light of the World!

Next Lesson

- ▶ 17. Beyond Feeling – Eph. 4:19