

"WALKING LIKE CHRIST"

Ephesians 4:17-24

11/23/03

INTRODUCTION: V. 17a

4:1 - *"Walkl worthy of the vocation"*
4:17 - "*"Walk not as others"*
5:2 - *"Walk in love"*
5:8 - *"Walk as children of light"*
5:15 - *"Walk circumspectly*" (carefully)

*** Don't walk like the world, but like Christ!**

I. The Way the World Walks (v. 17b-19)

The world's walk is:

Characterized by:

A. **Aimlessness** (v. 17b)

Caused by:

B. **Spiritual Darkness & Alienation** (v. 18a)

Caused by:

C. **Willful Ignorance & Callousness of Heart** (v. 18b)

Expressed by:

D. **Unrestrained Living** (v. 19)

II. The Way of the Christlike Walk (v. 20-24)

This new way of walking involves:

A. A <u>Relationship</u> (v. 20-24)

B. A <u>Removal</u> (v. 22)

C. A <u>Renewal</u> (v. 23)

D. A <u>Replacement</u> (v. 24)



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INTRODUCTION:

By what do we measure our lives?

*** God's blueprint for our lives is Christlikeness!**

To Christians who were struggling with Judaizers and their cultic Legalism the Apostle Paul said: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again **until Christ be formed in you**" - Galatians 4:19

1. What is Christlikeness?

A. Christlikeness is modeling (copying) the transferable attitudes and actions of Jesus Christ

Galatians 1:16 To reveal his Son in me

B. Christlikeness is being molded by God into His Son's Image

*Ro 8:29 - For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to **be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

C. Christlikeness is possible for every single believer

*Col 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present **every man perfect in Christ Jesus**:*

D. Christlikeness is the evidence of Full Maturity

*Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto **a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**:*

2. How can I be more Christlike?

A. Christlikeness is a work of God only possible for those who are in Christ

Galatians 2:20 - I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Cp.I Cor.15:10)

1 Cor. 1:30 - But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

B. Christlikeness happens when we Follow Close to Jesus Christ

*1Pe 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an **example**, that **ye should follow his steps***

C. Christlikeness grows through the Changing Process of God's Spirit

*Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth **the Spirit of his Son** into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

*2 Cor. 3:18 - But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are **changed into the same image** from glory to glory, even as **by the Spirit of the Lord**.*

D. Christlikeness happens through the Renewing of our Minds by the Instrument of God's Word

*Ephesians 4:23 And be **renewed in the spirit of your mind**;*
*Colossians 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is **renewed in knowledge** after the image of him that created him" Romans 12:2 "…be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"*

E. Christlikeness is produced in large part through the ministry of a local church (Eph.4:11-13)

*Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto **a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**:*

F. Christlikeness can grow with age in the Lord

*2 Corinthians 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the **inward man is renewed day by day**.*

G. Christlikeness grows through Trials & Tribulations (James 1:2-4)

***James 1:4** – "But let patience have her perfect work, **that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing**."*

H. One day in Heaven, we shall be perfectly like Him (1 John 3:2)

1 John 3:2 - Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Ephesians 4:17a

"Therefore" - For the reason that God desires His children to grow up (mature; be edified), He now exhorts us to separate from practices that will hinder our growth.

"Testify in the Lord" - What Paul is about to say is not mere theory or precept, but it is a life-changing reality that he has experienced since he has been *"in the Lord"* (saved) and now he can testify or bear witness to the importance of Christians living differently than the world.

"Henceforth" - no longer; regardless of your past you can decide from this point on to live a new life or walk a new walk by God's grace.

"Walk" - means to "conduct your life"

The believer's "walk" is a major theme of Ephes. 4 & 5.

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"Walk not" - In order to learn how to walk, it is important to learn how not to walk. One way to learn about what something is, is to learn what something is not. God is about to show us how we should not walk.
"Gentiles" - lit. nations ("ethna" from which we derive "ethnic")

God is telling us not to be like the rest of the world. Though all nations march in unity and step to the same beat, God calls upon His children to march to a different tune!

*** Don't walk like the world, but like Christ!**

I. The Way the World Walks (v. 17b-19)

The world's walk is:

Characterized by:

A. Aimlessness (v. 17b)

Vanity" - aimlessness; futility; purposelessness.

Before salvation we were aimless. Our minds lacked a worthy purpose. Our thinking facility was corrupt in terms of eternal purpose; our thought processes led to futility.

Life was a series of dead-end streets, vicious cycles. Everyone today is in a hurry to go nowhere.

Believers, however, have a grand purpose, we have a noble goal--namely, to glorify the One who saved us by His grace.

Caused by:

B. Spiritual Darkness & Alienation (v. 18a)

"Understanding darkened" - the lights of man's spiritual intelligence have been turned off. Unregenerate man's ability to "think through" ("dianoia) things (such as the existence of God;' the origin of the universe; the purpose of mankind, etc.) has been darkened.

NOTE: the word *"darkened"* is <u>passive</u>, meaning that something has eclipsed or blackened his perception. He does not think straight because of some hideous cause.

"*Being <u>alienated"</u>* - again, this word is passive, pointing to some culprit responsible for such separation (aloofness) from the life which God gives.

Caused by:

C. Willful Ignorance & Callousness of Heart (v. 18b)

What is the cause for people being in darkness and alienation? It's not God's fault!

It is through ("dia") their ignorance ("agnoian" - cp. agnostic) which is through ("dia") the blindness (lit. hardness) of their heart.

The reason why the lost world walks aimlessly is because they have been darkened and alienated due to willful ignorance.

A love for sin (John 3:19-21)
A refusal to acknowledge
God, to whom you are
responsible

Willful Ignorance

Darkened understanding
& Alienation from God's Life

An aimless walk

The unsaved remain unenlightened and disconnected from God's life because they want it this way. It's not that they can't believe; it's that they won't believe! They don't want to! So they, like Pharaoh, harden their hearts.

Such hardness of heart results in unrestrained living (v. 18).

Expressed by:

D. Unrestrained Living (v. 19)

"Who (the Gentiles - nations, v. 17) ***being past feeling"*** - because of willful prolonged ignorance, people become calloused or insensitive to moral restraint. They no longer feel grief or pain over sin and moral defection.

"Have given themselves over" - they have willingly chosen heir master; they have surrendered not to God but to their own lusts (appetites).

"Lasciviousness" - unrestrained living; like an unbridled horse or an uncaged vicious animal or a river flowing over its bank, the lost wants to be free from God, free from *"thou shalt nots,"* free from restriction, free from self-control, free from discipline. They don't want to say "No" to themselves.

NOTE: Are you really "free" when you have no boundaries, no restraints?

Answer: NO! You are actually a slave to your appetites. You are in bondage to the flesh. When it cries out for satisfaction, you have not the freedom to tell it "NO". You must be do its bidding.

You will see that you are not free when pay day comes for "sowing your wild oats."

You are not free when the doctor says you have AIDS. You are not free when you have lost your marriage, your kids, your respect, etc.

Life is out of control; evil passions run wild; like a roller coaster off its track, or a carnivorous animal out of its cage.

"To work (practice) *all* (every from of) *uncleanness* (impurity) *with greediness* (an insatiable craving or covetousness to have more")

Uncleanness" - to be without purity. This word would refer to unrestrained sexual defilement

--fornication
--adultery
--pornography
--homosexuality

"Greediness" - to lust for more and more

--An insatiable craving for pleasure
--An insatiable craving for power
--An insatiable craving for materialism

This greed results in a life dominated by:

--self-centeredness
--discontentment
--inconsideration for others
*stealing
*stepping on others to climb the corporate ladder

II. The Way of the Christlike Walk (v. 20-24)

This new way of walking involves:

A. A Relationship (v. 20-21)

"But ye have not so learned Christ" - Such despicable, selfish, vain unrestrained living is not learned from biblical Christianity, nor is it acquired from a personal relationship with Christ. When one is in Christ, he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (who revives the calloused conscience - things that didn't seem so bad now suddenly seem abhorrent).

He becomes the prized possession of a new Master. He owns us. We have been bought with a price (I Cor. 6:19-20)

"Heard him" - His sheep hear his voice (Jn. 10:27). He speaks via His Word, the Bible.

You are either listening to His voice or to the world, flesh or devil's voice.

"Taught by Him" - When one is "in Christ," He does not leave us without instruction
Matthew 11:28-30

"The truth is in Jesus" - *"He is the way, the truth and the life"* (Jn. 14:6)
Pilate, living in a world where truth was as elusive as the wind asked *"What is truth?"* as he stood in front of the one who was truth incarnate.
When someone finds Jesus they find the truth (all other roads, "messiah's",

"gurus" are lies)

B. A <u>Removal</u> (v. 22)

"Put off" the imagery is that of stripping off a defiled, dirtied, stinking garment

In verses 22-24, Paul teaches a basic truth that is in Jesus - namely, the "put off/put on" principle.

"put off" teaches the principle of <u>removal</u> (v. 22)

"Put on" teaches the principle of <u>replacement</u> (v. 24)

"<u>Ye</u> put off" - Putting off the old man requires <u>personal effort</u>

It is not automatic; it is not merely done for us; rather, it is done by God through us (Phil. 2:12-13)

You don't suddenly wake up some morning and find your old nature missing!

"The former conversation" -

"Former" - the earlier, previous

EX: the hymn - "The things I used to do, don't do them any more
The places I used to go, don't go there anymore
The things I used to say, don't say them any more
There's been a great change since I've been born again

"Conversation" - the old 1611 English word meant "manner of living" or "conduct"

"The old man" - the old you, your old nature which previously dominated your thoughts, words, actions, habits, goals, outlook, motivation, etc.

Our "old man" refers to our sin nature (Rom. 7:17-18)

"Which is corrupt" - (pres. pass. participle) lit. which is being corrupted. The older one gets, the more corrupt their old man becomes. The older one gets, the more set in their ways they become (more stubborn and calloused).

C. A <u>Renewal</u> (v. 23)

"Be renewed" - passive, it is only God who can make us new again

"In the spirit of your mind" - in our mind resides our spirit. As our mind gets renewed, so does our spirit. Christianity is not a mindless religion.

Our minds need to be made new again!

Because what you think is what you are!

SEE Romans 12:1 - **<u>2</u>** -

How can our minds be renewed? By being <u>brain washed</u>!

"By the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26)

The Holy Spirit does its renewing (Titus 3:5)

D. A <u>Replacement</u> (v. 24)

"Put on" - Christianity is not just a list of "don't" For ever <u>negative</u> prohibition, there is a <u>positive</u> admonition. Positive replacement is just as important as the negative removal.

No one strips off old clothes without putting on new (or else you will be naked - Don't be a spiritual naked Christian [Rev. 16:15]

EX: How Jesus described a man who swept his house and removed the demons, yet didn't fill the empty house with something new.

Facts about the "new man"

1)It's a work of <u>God</u>
2)It's a <u>miraculous creative</u> act of God
3)It's character is:
--righteousness
--true holiness

Your new nature will never lead you to do anything that isn't <u>right</u> or genuinely <u>pure</u>

CONCLUSION:

Your two natures are in conflict one with another

Gal. 5:16-17

Feed the new man!

Starve the old!

ILLUS: the saved Indian with 2 dogs inside of him

Ephesians 4:17-19

A love for sin
(John 3:19-21)
A refusal to acknowledge God, to whom you are responsible

Willful Ignorance

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