

The Spirit-Led Believer Walks In The Light

By Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam

“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 understandings 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, 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” (Eph 4:17-24);

The Church at Ephesus was made up of Gentiles who were converted to Jesus Christ. So Paul wrote to exhort them not to walk as mere men who do not know God but to walk as children of God. Those who have received Christ have become children of God. Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, we are led by the Spirit of God. Therefore Paul takes time to tell us that now as part of God’s family, our walk ought to be different from those who do not know Him. We who are led by the Spirit of God ought, then, to walk in the light and not in darkness. How then should believers walk?

BELIEVERS ARE NOT TO WALK AS THE GENTILES (Eph 4:17-19)

Believers are neither Gentiles nor Jews. They are born-again by the grace of God, through Jesus Christ who is our Saviour and Lord. Therefore, we are new person, with a new life and a new beginning to life unto God and not after this world.

How do the Gentiles walk?

- They walk in the futility of their thinking (verse 17). The word “futility” means empty, senseless and worthless. Men who put God out of their lives have minds that are senseless, devoid of truth and morality and therefore without sound reasoning. In Romans 8:6, the apostle Paul tells us the state of minds of those who are led by God’s Spirit. “The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace”
- They are darkened in their understanding (verse 18). The “darkened” understanding of those who do not know God is also described in Psalm 82:5 and Proverbs 4:19, “They know nothing, they understanding nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.”
- They are separated from the life of God (verse 18). “Separated” means estranged, cut-off, detached. Those who do not know God are spiritually dead. They will be eternally condemned for their sins if they reject God. God is the source of life. He gives new life to those who come to Him. God can change the destiny of man. John says: “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life” (John 5:24)
- They have lost all sensitivity (verse 19). The world is filled with evil, shame and wickedness because it does not know God. People who are against God have no feelings toward God and His morality. There is hardness of heart because their hearts are hearts of stone. The Lord through the prophet Ezekiel said: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26)
- They indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more (verse 19). Those who do not know God have unbridled lusts and unrestrained evil thoughts and behaviour. There is a giving in to the brutish and lustful desires, a readiness for any sort of pleasure. This can be clearly seen in the diverse kinds of sensual pleasure in the world today. The Bible has this to say about them “For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only

Sovereign and Lord. In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire” (Jude 4:7). How then should believers walk?

BELIEVERS ARE TO WALK AFTER CHRIST (Eph 4:20-24)

When we receive Jesus as our Saviour, we become children of God, indwelt by His Spirit. We belong to God. Therefore our lifestyles should be different from those who do not know God. Our lifestyles should then be that of walking in Christ’s example. We need to be taught how to walk after Christ. Basically, it involves three actions:

1. PUTTING OFF THE OLD SELF (verse 22)

The old self speaks of the old Adamic nature that we were born with. The old self is recognised as being very much alive in us. It yields easily to the temptation to look, taste, feel, think and hear of pleasures of sin. We must put off this old self. The old self, from God’s perspective is condemned. Believers with the new life in God can reject the temptations that come their way. We can resist and refuse to cooperate with our sinful nature.

The old self dies day by day. Believers should realise that this world and all that is in it, including the old self, is in a constant process of dying because the evil desires of the nature are deceitful and so heads towards destruction. Such destruction deteriorates and corrupts. It eats away at life and the balance of things until everything becomes nothing but decayed matter. The apostle Paul recognises the sinfulness of the old self and exhorts us to submit the members of our bodies to righteousness.

“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. In the same way, count yourselves as dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life: and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness” (Romans 6:6, 11:3)

When we seek to walk after Christ, we have the power and the authority to resist temptation. As Paul said in Gal 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

We can therefore put off the old self as we walk after Christ daily and allow Him to renew our minds.

2. BE MADE NEW IN THE ATTITUDE OF OUR MINDS (verse 23)

The minds of believers need to be renewed. This means that our minds need to be made new and regenerated because they have been affected by sin. How can our minds be renewed? Here are five Biblical suggestions for you:

- “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matt 22:37)
- Believers are to love the Lord with all their minds. Minds that are focused on loving God and filled with the love for God are neither empty nor aimless. Therefore, godly minds have the capacity and power to change.
- Set your mind upon spiritual things. We need to be spiritually-minded. In Romans 8:5,6 Paul says that, “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires, but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set of what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.” Spiritually draws people. The

more we exemplify Christ, the more people will be able to see the reality of Christ in us and will believe in Him.

- Cast down imaginations and thoughts that set itself up against the knowledge of God. For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Cor 10:3-5)
- Walk humbly before God and men. "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even on a cross! (Phil 2:5-8). Jesus was a humble man. Likewise we should follow after Him and be humble in our attitudes too.
- Think upon that which is praiseworthy. "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things" (Phil 4:8). It is vital that we fill our minds with the things of God. It helps renew our minds.

3. PUT ON THE NEW SELF (verse 24)

We who have believed in the Lord must not walk like the Gentiles but instead walk after Christ. We must also put off the old self and put on the new self. What is this new self? This new self is...

- Always in fellowship with God. There is always a fresh and vibrant relationship with the Lord daily.
- Obedient to God's will. The new self seeks not only to obey God but also to do His will and allow God's plan and purposes to be accomplished.
- Devoted to God's service. The new self understands the will of God, depends on His gifts and knows his place in the kingdom of God. Therefore, every believer has a ministry and is able to bring honour and glory to God.

The challenge is, as believers who are led by the Spirit of God, to walk in the light and not in darkness. We are able to put off the old self which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires and put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.