

Ephesians Session 4

In the first three chapters, Paul has been unfolding the eternal purpose of God being worked out in history. Through Jesus Christ, God is creating something entirely new, not just a new life for individual believers but also a new society in which alienated humanity is being reconciled, a fractured humanity is being united, and a new humanity is being created.

With the word “then,” Paul now turns to the new standards. He turns from exposition (*what Christ has done*) to exhortation (*to what we must be and do*).

The Outline of Session 4 Passage

New Standards

Unity and Diversity in the Church (4:1-16)

A New Set of Clothes (4:17-5:4)

Incentives to Righteous Living (2:1-10)

Unity and Diversity in the Church – 4:1-16

The passionate plea of Paul (4:1)

With this plea, Paul moves from *credenda* to *agenda*.

We do not seek to live worthy to receive the call, but because we *have* received the call from God.

The essence of living worthy is to pursue unity. (4:3)

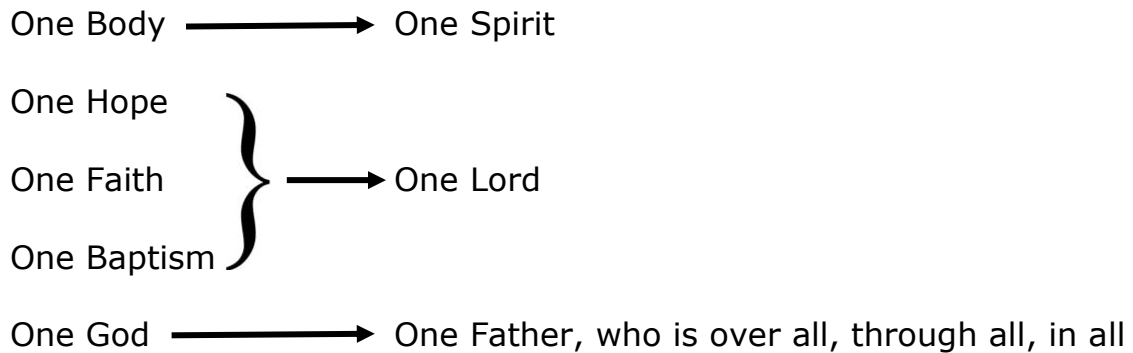
The virtues that pursuing unity will require (4:2)

1. Humility (*lowliness*)

2. Gentle (*meekness*)

3. Patience (*longsuffering, patience with people*)
4. Love (*self-sacrificing love*)

Unity flows from the unity of God. (4:4-6)



Unity is enriched by the diversity of our gifts of grace. (4:7-16)

Upon his ascension, Christ gave gifts to “each of us.” (4:7-10)

Unity does not mean uniformity.

“Grace” in this passage is not a reference to “saving grace,” but to “serving grace.” (See Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:4)

Every believer has been “gifted” by Christ with *charisma* (Greek—“gift of grace”).

1 Peter 4:10, Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

The servant-leadership gifts are given to foster the health and unity of the church. (4:11-16)

1. Apostle – The “Fathering Gift”
2. Prophet – The “Stirring Gift”
3. Evangelist – The “Reaching Gift”

4. Pastor/Teacher – The “Shepherding Gift”

A New Testament Picture of a healthy church in action (vv. 12-16)

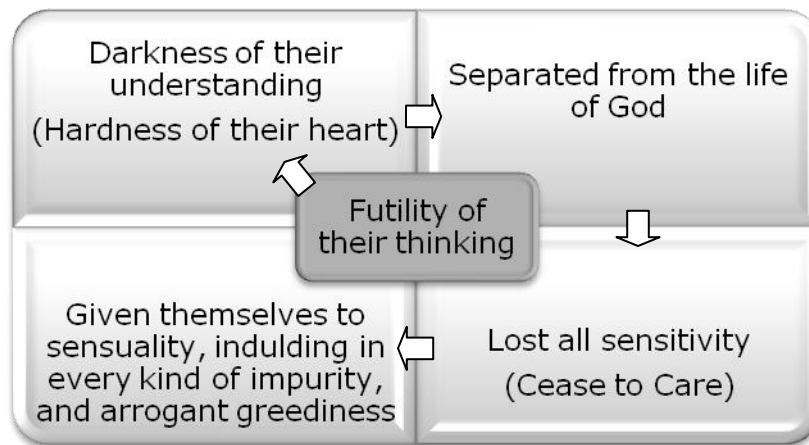
A New Set of Clothes - 4:17-5:4

Paul continues his call to a “worthy life” by transitioning from unity to purity. (4:17a)

The doctrinal basis of this plea (4:17-24)

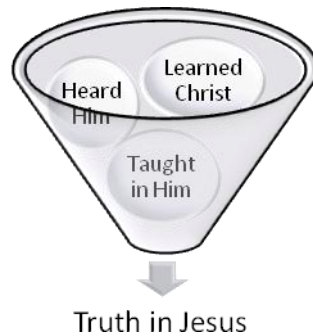
A Contrast between what they were before Christ and what they are now since Christ

The pagan life (4:17-19)



(See: Romans 1:18-32)

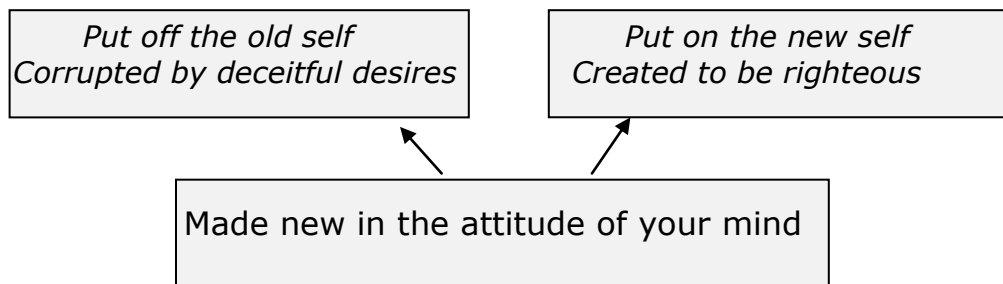
The Christian life (4:20-24)



Paul uses the image of a school. (*learned, heard, and were taught* the truth in *Jesus Christ*)

Jesus is the subject, object, and the environment of the instruction – all at the same time.

They had been taught that becoming a follower of Christ involves a radical change.



Six concrete examples of “putting off” and “putting on” (4:25-5:4)

1. *Don't tell lies – Speak truthfully*
2. *Control your temper – Make sure your anger is righteous*
3. *Don't steal – Work and give*
4. *Don't use your mouth for evil – Use your mouth for good*
5. *Don't be unkind and bitter – Be forgiving and loving*

*6. Don't talk or act lustfully or in greed – Be thankful
for God's gifts*

More incentives to Righteousness (5:5-5:16)

Because of God's Kingdom and God's wrath (5:5-7)

Because God has called us to live as "children of the Light" (5:8-14)

Because divine moments can be missed (5:15)

Questions for Table Conversation

1. Ephesians 4:2 reads, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." In what ways does life make these virtues difficult? How can we allow God to produce these virtues more richly in our lives?
2. Which imperatives in 4:25-32 do you find most difficult?
3. How does thanksgiving become an effective tool in replacing the negative behavior Paul mentions in 5:2-4?

Before our Next Session

1. Read Ephesians 5:17-6:20 several times – once a day would be great!
2. Use the following questions to assist you as you reflect on your reading:
 - Why does Paul contrast being drunk on wine with being filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18?
 - What is the key attitude that wives are to have toward their husbands ... and husbands toward their wives in Ephesians 5:22-33?
 - When Paul says "put on the whole armor of God" he obviously is speaking of some sort of action. In what way can we know we have "put on" God's armor? (Ephesians 6:11-18)

- What kind of praying is Paul encouraging in Ephesians 6:18?
- What was Paul's prayer request in Ephesians 6:19-20?