

## The New Normal Ephesians 4:17-24

[Eph 4:17-24 ESV] 17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!-- 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

### I. Intro

- A. The phrase “The New Normal” has been thrown around a lot over the past few years.
- B. It is an ever evolving concept, and I’m not sure will ever be normal.
- C. Watchman Nee wrote a book titled, “The Normal Christian Life” In which a supernatural life separated from the philosophy of the world is outlined.
- D. From scripture, we have an expectation of right living:
  1. This is only possible if we get the first step right, trust Jesus for Salvation.
  2. This should be understood in full context:
    - a) Holiness is from God
    - b) We struggle with the continued impact of fleshly desires
    - c) We maintain a life set apart from these desires,
    - d) But do so for a purpose and by the power of God.
- E. This is not a message of legalism, but spiritual expectation:
  1. When there's something in the Bible that churches don't like, they call it 'legalism.'  
Leonard Ravenhill
  2. Legalism is looking to something besides Jesus Christ in order to be acceptable and clean before God. Timothy Keller
  3. If you feel that you can follow a few little rules or some clever gimmicks to make you a mature Christian, then you have fallen into a subtle trap of legalism. J. Vernon McGee

### II. Text

- A. Verse 17: You are no longer alienated from GOD! You are no longer a Gentile!
- B. Verses 18-19: Characteristics of those alienated from God
- C. Verse 20: BUT! You have a NEW NORMAL
- D. Verse 21-23:
  1. You have heard
  2. You have been changed
  3. You have been renewed, and created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness!

### III. Points

- A. Warnings against wrong living
  1. The List:
    - a) Darkened understanding: not able to see the truth in light
    - b) Alienated by ignorance: not wanting to see the truth and remaining in ignorance
    - c) Hardness of heart: refusing to see the truth do to an anger or pain of the past
    - d) Callous in sensuality: a process of growing to accept that which should be rejected
    - e) Greedy in impurity: lusting after the things of the flesh
  2. This is not what you learned from Christ!
  3. We gain in Christ:
    - a) Understanding

- b) Soft hearts
    - c) Shocked by sensuality
    - d) Purity
  - 4. We have a NEW NORMAL: this is the life change in Christ
- B. Instruction regarding right living
  - 1. Base your life on that which is true!
    - a) The Love God shows us is in part Him telling us the truth
    - b) It is a message of Love that we cannot save ourselves.
  - 2. You have heard about Him
  - 3. You have been taught about him
  - 4. The Truth has been explained, and received: to put off the old self!
  - 5. What does it mean to put off the old self?
    - a) That which you were, is not who you are anymore
    - b) You are a new creation!
  - 6. [2Co 5:16-21 ESV] 16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- C. Empowerment to right living
  - 1. Listen to me in this...
    - a) YOU CAN DO IT!
    - b) But not how you think by default...
    - c) YOU CAN DO IT BY THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT THAT IS ALIVE IN THE BELIEVER!
  - 2. By the power of the SPIRIT:
    - a) You can overcome
    - b) You can make a difference
    - c) You can accomplish much
  - 3. How:
    - a) renewed in the spirit of your minds
    - b) put on the new self
    - c) created after the likeness of God
    - d) in true righteousness and holiness.
  - 4. Renewal does not happen without Christ, but when it does happen, it causes joy in the midst of change
    - a) Change does not naturally bring about the emotion of joy
    - b) Change does not naturally cause us to celebrate...
  - 5. This is all about change
  - 6. How to find joy in change:
    - a) See the change as an adventure
    - b) See the change as an opportunity to see God do something awesome!
  - 7. Embrace putting on the new self
  - 8. Embrace being created after the likeness of God
  - 9. Embrace the joy of true righteousness and holiness!
  - 10. Embrace and walk in the NEW NORMAL!
- IV. Close
  - A. Do you want a new normal? God put that desire there
  - B. Do you desire to see God work? God put that there.

C. Yield to HIM, submit to Him, live for Him!