

(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. 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. 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! --- assuming that you have heard about Him and were taught in Him --- as the truth is in Jesus --- to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires --- and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Think on these things:

- 1) There is a major difference to the opening phrase between the NIV and ESV for v.17. The NIV says, “So I tell you this --- and insist on it --- in the Lord...” Whether it is Paul’s testimony or his insistence, what are Christians no longer to do? (Notice that one is about actions and the other is about what goes on inside our heads.)

We are no longer to walk (or live) as the Gentiles do.

We are no longer to think as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.

- 2) What term does Paul use to describe people who don’t understand God? **Darkened minds**
- 3) What reason is given for their state of being “alienated from the life of God,” and what is the cause for that reason? (This cause can happen to Christians; see Mark 6:47-52 for an example.)

Reason for alienation? **Their understanding has become darkened.**

Cause for the reason? **This happens because of their own ignorance.**

- 4) Describing such people is a work and gardening term. Consult Romans 1:16-25. What term in Ephesians 4:19 is used to describe the darkened hearts of people who suppress God’s truth and exchange it for men’s lies? It means to “lose sensitivity” from repeated actions.

Callous

- 5) From v.19, what result is expressed for people who lose sensitivity to God? See Romans 1:26-32.

In Romans, God gives people over to “debased minds.” Here, people give themselves over to self-gratification in sensuality (sexual behaviors) and eagerness to practice any sexual impurity.

- 6) Similarly, Christians can have a like experience of “lost sensitivity” when attending church services and Bible studies on well-known passages (e.g., The Christmas Story). How can we prevent this from happening to us? Consider 1 Corinthians 2:10-13 and 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

Be “in the Spirit” and let God’s Word teach, reprove, correct and train us.

- 7) Based on vs.20-21, what is your belief about Jesus and truth? There are many in this life who might disagree with you....

Hopefully you'll hear: Jesus is God the Son, Savior of all mankind for those who believe in and commit to Him.

- 8) Now review these verses: Proverbs 23:23 states, "Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding." And from the book of John, read 1:14, 14:6 and 18:37. How do these verses support or change your understanding of "what is really true" in life?

Jesus' glory is "full of grace and truth." Jesus is the truth (in life). No one comes to God except by Him. Jesus bears witness to the truth of life. Understanding "life" requires one to learn about Jesus, His teachings, and His life.

- 9) Assuming you have heard about truth in Jesus (v.21), what 3 things are you told to do as a believer:

v.22 – **Put off my old self (set aside my former, unsaved life and thinking patterns).**

v.23 – **Let God renew (change) my desires (what I want and crave).**

v.24 – **Put on the God-created new "me" (life committed to righteousness and holiness).**

- 10) Do you think changing how you live is as easy as "changing" your clothes, taking off one garment (old self) and putting on another (new self)? How is our "old" (unsaved) life described? How is living our "new self" with renewed mind & thinking, described (Romans 12:1-2)?

No, not as easy as that practice, but yes in terms of understanding what I need to do!

Old self – **Corrupted by my desires (what I want and crave).**

New self – **Renewed in mind (thinking) to live in the image of God.**

- 11) What makes personal change possible? See John 3:3 and 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; and 2 Peter 1:3. If you remain an "unchanged" believer, do you think you will be saved...? (See 1 Corinthians 3:11-17)

John – Being born again by the Holy Spirit. Jesus came to bring us an abundant, full life!

2 Cor. – A new creation; the old is gone!

Gal. – How I live today is by Christ in me, by faith.

2 Pet. – God's power is all I need (to change and live right).

Becoming a Christian "requires" a change in me. 1 Cor. – I MUST change, and my Christian work will be judged on its everlasting value.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: