

Living as Children of Light Ephesians 4:17-5:2

The second half of the letter of Paul to the Ephesians, Paul focuses on more of persuading his audience through the influence of the Holy Spirit to walk in the light. Paul first brings the example of the Gentiles, who do not walk by the light. It's very interesting here that in the opening Paul seems to use broad language when discussing the Gentiles. God has taught me many things in this letter, and one of these things is *not to be afraid to confront people about their sin.*

In order for us to better understand Ephesians, we must learn to understand the life of Christ. Through verse 19, Paul is rebuking the Gentiles lifestyles. I can see why Paul had many enemies. In today's contemporary church, many wish to preach a *consumer friendly* gospel message, instead of the truth. Jesus preached the truth in love, which included rebuking some people, or a group of people. So, is Dr. John MacArthur and Hank Hanegraaf the Paul's of the contemporary age? In verses 20 through 31, Paul is commanding his audience to change, or be transformed by the message of Christ. A true believer will put off the sinful lifestyles of his old self. This does not mean that he will not sin again, but he will not live a lifestyle of sin. Verse 25 is a very important verse to me. It is very important to realize that we are all members of one body, and to speak truthfully about our neighbors. This indicates that we are to speak the truth, even if our neighbor does not want to hear it. It is not right to have division in the church, and that is one of the

main themes of all of Paul's letters. Yes we need to be open with one another. It will prevent many problems. Yes this means to tell someone the exact truth if they ask it, and this includes being open about sin. Foulkes says without openness and truth, there can only be disunity, disorder, and trouble in human community (Foulkes 166).

Verse 26 is another very important verse. As we have seen from the example of Christ, being angry is no sin. However, if you sin in your anger, then you sin. For example, when you are driving and someone stops in the middle of the road, you have the right to be angry, but do not cuss the person out, or cuss to yourself. Then in verse 32, Paul concludes that we need to be forgiving of each other, yes even if they sin against us. I think this is important for all of us to grasp. I myself have been the victim, and have been the one harming a victim. I should remember this verse, but I have not. It's just a part of our human nature, not to forgive each other. However, it's also interesting to note that forgiving someone is not enough. Liefeld says, forgiveness is not the only positive element that should replace the hostile attitudes just described. It stands third in the series (Liefeld 122). We cannot just say that we forgave someone, and not be kind and compassionate to them as well! For example, I once had a friend, whom I sinned against, and confessed my sins to this friend. This friend told me that he forgave me, but was not kind or compassionate to me. In other words, he said he forgave me, but his actions did not match up with his words. It was a shame, but oftentimes is reality in the church. In the first two verses of chapter 5, Paul commands his audience and all

Christians to imitate Christ, and for us to live a life full of love. This is a blessing to our lives when we live as the LORD did, and love everyone.

Study Questions

1. Should we rebuke a group of people, or a person the way Paul did in 4:17-19? **Why not let the false teachers and Spiritual Terrorists have it?**
2. When Paul talks about putting on a new, self in verses 23-24 of chapter 4, do you think that Paul was addressing this only to the Ephesians? Can we use a then and know hermeneutical principle in discovering the correct Exegesis for this passage?
3. In verse 28 when Paul commands the Ephesians not to steal, do you think this was only referring to stealing objects?