



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

“Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thoughts. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that’s in them & because of the hardness of their hearts. 19 They became callous & gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more & more. 20 But that’s not how you came to know Christ, 21 assuming you heard about him and were taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, 23 to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 & to put on the new self, the one created according to God’s likeness in righteousness & purity of the truth.” (Eph. 4:17-24 CSB)

- In Eph. 4:17-24 Paul describes two realms within the cosmos & two ways of life that correspond to them...The ‘old humanity’ & the ‘new humanity’ [are] *two realms that are up & running within the cosmos*. Some...render these...as the ‘old self & the ‘new self’ as if they were motivations within the individual. For Paul, however, these are *two different groups within humanity & two different ways of life*. The ‘old humanity’ belongs to the present evil age which is doomed to destruction. It is the realm over which Satan rules and is corrupted by the fallen powers and authorities. The ‘new humanity’ is that realm...made possible & sustained by the Spirit of God, & is made up of all those...‘in Christ.’ *This realm is the church*...over which Christ rules & embodies the very life of Jesus presently on earth. Paul...calls the church the ‘body of Christ’ (Eph. 5:30).” [Timothy G. Gombis, *Paul: A Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 37]

I. Identifying the Old Self & New Self (Eph. 4:22; Rom. 6:6; Eph. 2:15; 4:24)

A. The old self (man) or old humanity (Eph. 4:22; Rom. 6:6)

1. Humanity inherited from Adam

– “In Scripture, the ‘old self’ (‘old man’) represents *the corrupt sinful state we inherit from Adam. The sinful human desires* represent our tendency to sin...In Christ our ‘old self’ was *crucified*, but our *sinful human desires live on*.” [Bruce B. Livingstone, *Galatians*, p. 190]

– “‘Old man’...[‘old,’ Gk.] *palaios* is used consistently by Paul to denote the condition of life prior to conversion, explicitly life under the age prior to Christ...So, [‘the old man’] is man belonging to the age of Adam, dominated by sin & death... The ‘new man’ is Christ & those ‘in him’.” [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, p. 318]

– “Our old self [is]...our former self, ‘the man we once were’ (NEB), ‘our old humanity’ (REB), the person we used to be in Adam. So *what was crucified with Christ was not a part of us called our old nature, but the whole of us* as we were in our pre-conversion state. This should be clear because the phrase our old self was crucified (Rom. 6:6) is equivalent to ‘we died to sin’ (Rom. 6:2).” [John Stott, *Message of Romans*, p. 166]

2. Old/New Humanity, Not two ‘Natures’

– “The ‘old man’ & the ‘new man’...*do not refer to two competing natures within individual Christians*, but rather the contrasting dynamics of the decaying old creation & the new creation.” [Timothy Gombis, TB., Vol. 53.2, p. 265]

– “The definition of the *old self & the new self* is crucial to a proper understanding of Christian experience. Some... interpreters understand them as synonymous with an old nature & a new nature. Actually, there’s little in Scripture about the ‘natures’ of a Christian person...To equate the terms *old self/new self with natures goes beyond acceptable evidence*. The terms are never used psychologically at all. They are historical. The *old self & new self* are never described as coexisting in anyone. One replaces the other.” [R. R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, Vol. 32: p.]

B. The new self (man) or new humanity

- “*Christ himself together with all those united with him in his death & resurrection*” [J. Knox Chamblin, *Paul...& Self*, p. 88]

C. Baptism’s declaration (Rom. 6:3-5; 2 Cor. 5:17)

- “All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we’re buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. 5 For if we’ve been united with him in the likeness of his death, we’ll certainly also be in the likeness of his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be rendered powerless so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin.” (Rom. 6:3-6)
- “The means by which [the believers’] identification with Christ’s death was achieved was *baptism*...The event of baptism [was] the most effective meeting of divine grace & human faith.” [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, p. 329]
- “In the early church, baptism was probably by immersion...as a general rule... Therefore, baptism pictures a person being buried with Christ (submersion under water) & being raised to new life with Christ (emergence from water). This symbolizes the person’s union with, & incorporation into, Christ. [So,] they...have the power to live in newness of life.” [ESV]
- “The power of sin has been broken in those who believe, for their old self (lit., “old man,” meaning who they were in Adam) was crucified & put to death with Christ. They were born into the world as sinners, with the result that their bodies were ruled by sin. Body of sin refers to the

rule of sin. But...sin's rule...was broken when Christians died with Christ, & therefore they are no longer enslaved to sin. Paul does not argue that Christians do not sin at all (a view called sinless perfection); instead, the tyranny, domination, & rule of sin have been defeated for them." [ESV]

1. My old self /man died with Christ

– “Our old self [man] was crucified with [Christ] so that the body ruled by sin might be rendered powerless...” (Rom. 6:6)

– “The ‘old man’ (Rom. 6:6)—man in Adam (Rom. 5:12-21)—is crucified, so that persons may be joined to Christ (Rom. 6:4-11).” [J Knox Chamblin, *Paul & the Self*, p. 88]

2. My new self/man rose with Christ

3. I'm a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17)

– “If anyone is in Christ, he is *a new creation*; the *old has passed away*, & see, *the new has come!*” (2 Cor. 5:17)

– “Through union with Christ...those who trust in him...become a ‘new creation’ (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal 6:15) or a ‘new person [man]’ who is being remade to be like Christ (Eph 4:23-24; Rom 8:29). Yet, this transformation is not instantaneous, because believers exist in the overlap of ages, & they only experience the ‘first-fruits’ of their salvation (Rom 8:23-25). Christians are still in the process of attaining their hope, because Christ’s redemption of humanity from the old age has not [yet] been completed...The old age & the new age are intermingled in the life of the believer...[who] must continue to ‘put off the old self’ & ‘put on the new’ (Eph 4:22-24), they experience an ‘already/not-yet’ existence...marked by the struggle between the flesh & the Spirit.” [Matthew B. Vaden, *FALSE SELF & TRUE SELF*, pp. 47-48]

4. Now I have the power to choose to live a brand new life through Christ – no longer just a slave to sin

– “...so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin.” (Rom. 6:6b)

– “The very formulation...& the present tense implies that the possibility of the believer’s continuing to serve sin is very real...Identification with Christ in his death...provides the enabling to live under the lordship of grace but does not prevent the believer from succumbing again to sin at any particular point.” [James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, p. 320]

– “In Eph. 4:17–24, Paul describes the contrasting dynamics of the ‘old man’ & the ‘new man’. *These do not refer to two competing natures within individual Christians*, but rather the contrasting dynamics of the decaying old creation & the new creation, the church, which God has initiated & set within the old order...Unbelievers live according to ‘the futility of their minds’ (Eph. 4:17), & are darkened in their understanding (Eph. 4:18). Therefore ‘they are excluded from the life of God’ & have given themselves over to ‘sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness’ (Eph. 4:19). They live according to the dynamic of the old creation, which is ‘being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit’ (Eph. 4:22). In contrast to this is the life that is to characterize believers. They are to live according to the new creation dynamic, the ‘new humanity’, which ‘according to God has been created in righteousness & holiness of the truth’ (Eph. 4:24).” [Timothy G. Gombis “*Eph. 5:18 in its Epistolary Setting*,” *Tyndale Bulletin*, Vol. 53.2 (2002) pp. 265]

II. Not Living Our Old Lives (Eph. 4:17-19, 22)

A. A word from the Lord to you (“Thus says the LORD”)

B. “Gentiles” no longer (Eph. 4:17)

- “You should no longer walk as [‘they’–] the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thoughts.” (Eph. 4:17)
- “You know that *when you were Gentiles* you were often misled by [idols]...that can’t even speak.” (1 Cor. 12:2 CEB)
- “Paul’s language...shows that he no longer thinks of [the believers] as *ta ethne* [the Gentiles], no longer as ‘outsiders...He explicitly says in 1 Cor. 12:2, that they once were, but no longer are *ta ethne* [‘Gentiles.’ In] Eph 4:17 ...[the Gentiles] live in a certain futile way, but the [Ephesian] addressees are no longer *ta ethne* [‘Gentiles’], no longer ‘outsiders’ to the [Jesus] community, & so must not live in this way.” [Paul R. Trebilco, *Outsider Designations & Boundary Construction*, p. 159]

C. My old self – there was something wrong inside & it showed up in our living (callous, promiscuous & impure) – Ephesians are being warned not to slide back into their old lives

- Eph. 4:17-19 “offers a thumbnail sketch of the ‘Gentile life’ which believers should now avoid... in terms of ‘alienation from the life of God’, even...stubborn resistance to him (‘hardness of heart’ Eph. 4:18), & so of ‘ignorance’ & ‘futility of mind’, but also of socially alienating sin (callousness, greed, licentiousness, (sexual) ‘uncleanness’, etc...). Of course the account is one-sided (precisely...aspects of Gentile life to be avoided); there were plenty of Gentiles with noble, socially cohesive, ethics. But Paul still regards the life of the new humanity as one of one of great contrast with unbelieving Gentile life...” [Max Turner, “*Approaching ‘personhood’ in the NT*,” EQ, Vol. 77.3 (2005) pp. 225]

D. Ignoring my new self – I live the life I want to live and ignore what I read and hear about Christ

E. Living with one foot in 2 kingdoms – Christ as an ‘add-on’ to our former life – Don’t blend; you’re called to stand out!

III. Learn Christ (Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:9-10)

- “The process...in Eph. 4:20 [–“learning Christ”–]...takes people from being godless Gentiles to being fully functional members of...the temple/church/body...This how this new temple grows to fulfill the purpose of its builder.” [A. Mark Stirling, *TRANSFORMATION & GROWTH*, p. 162]
- “The key difference between believers & unbelievers is their identity:...Unbelie[ving] people define themselves apart from God & ground their identity in godlessness, but when people believe in Christ, they disown their godless identity ...Believers...have laid aside their ‘old self,’...their former identity...Paul [says] the old self was ‘crucified with Christ,’ ...through his death on the cross, Christ nullified the basis for an identity of unbelief (Rom 6:6). When Paul exhorts believers to ‘put off the old self’ (Eph 4:22)...he is...directing them....to stop understanding themselves apart from Christ. The [exhortation] is not ‘stop sinning like you used to,’ but ‘stop identifying yourself like you used to’... [It’s] a change in identity. [As]...believers

disown their former identity, they also adopt a new one...They adopt the new self.” [Matthew B. Vaden, *FALSE SELF & TRUE SELF: CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE*, pp. 82-83]

A. Put off the old self!! – Make a choice to live through Christ, for Christ

- “...You have put off the old self with its practices 10 & have put on the new self. You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator.” (Col. 3:9b-10)
- “When was the old put off? Judging from Gal. 3:27, it was at baptism, for then the baptized put on Christ, as the apostle states. This in turn should be linked to Rom. 6:6, where Paul explains that our ‘old man’ was crucified with Christ. Baptism proclaims death with Christ to sin and resurrection with Him to walk in newness of life. [So,] the reminder is given [they have put off the old self with its practices’ &] ‘have put on the new man’ (Col 3:9-10), [like] the fresh, clean clothing given to the baptized in place of their old garments.” [Everett F. Harrison, *Colossians*, p. 84]
- “*Put off your old self.* As Christians seek to do this, God makes it a reality (Col. 3:9-10). Paul’s ex-Gentile readers can be part of the new creation in Christ. (...“self” is the generic Greek for ‘man’ or ‘human’—perhaps an allusion to Adamic man apart from Christ.) Eph. 4:22 describes the negative side...while Eph. 4:23-24 point to the positive side. [ESV]

B. Be renewed (Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10; Rom. 12:2)

- “The ‘ethic’ that Paul advocates is...*transformation*, whereby the church engages a dynamic of ‘putting away’ practices of the ‘old humanity’ & ‘clothes’ itself with the practices of the ‘new humanity’ (Eph. 4:22-24) ...[This is] being taught the truth as it is in Jesus (Eph. 4:21).” [Timothy G. Gombis *Paul: A Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 37]
- “In conversion...(Col. 3:10), believers...put off (like soiled clothes) the ‘old man’, that is, the *Adamic* mode of humanity, & to have put on ‘the new (man)’, by which is meant the personhood of Christ (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27). There is also a present, & continuous dimension of this transformation, in so far as...the new man...is ‘being (constantly) renewed after the image of its creator’ (Col. 3:10). Together with 2 Cor. 3:18, this marks a strongly personal/relational understanding of being-in-God’s-image. As [2 Cor. 3:18] asserts, it is precisely as (= in so far as?) we behold/grasp the glory of the Lord (enabled so to do by the Spirit) that we are ourselves increasingly transformed into Christ’s image.” [Max Turner, “*Approaching ‘personhood’ in the NT*,” EQ, Vol. 77.3 (2005) pp. 219-220]

C. Put on the new self (Eph. 4:24)

- “To ‘put on’ the new man is to ‘clothe oneself’ with Christ himself. The ‘one new man’ (Eph. 2:15) is the corporate Christ — Christ himself together with all those united with him in his death & resurrection...[which] inaugurated...the new humanity (Eph. 4:14-17)...On that reality rests the ethical imperative ‘to take off your former way of life, the old self [man] that’s corrupted by deceitful desires, to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, & to put on the new self [man], ... created according to God’s likeness in righteousness & purity of the truth’ (4:22-24).” [J. Knox Chamblin, *Paul & the Self*, p. 88]

1. Initially learning Christ (Eph. 4:21; Rom. 10:17)

– “They have learned Christ (4:20) as the transformer of human life” [Michael Gorman, *Apostle of...Lord*, p. 599]

2. Continually learning Christ

D. Learning Christ in community (Eph 4:20)

- To “learn the Messiah’ (Eph 4:20)...[is] shorthand...for the process of becoming members of the Messiah’s people & ongoing participation in the transformative reality of the new humanity. The ‘leaders’...in Eph. 4:11...equip the members of the body of Christ [so]...that...transformative learning takes place, the result of which is...the [practices] of Eph 4:25-6:9.” [A. Mark Stirling, *TRANSFORMATION & GROWTH*, p. 171]