

# Walk New

## Blueprint: God's Design for the Church

**Ephesians 4:17-24**

Good morning, it's good to see you guys. You know, this summer I got to do something kind of fun. I got to go up in the attic and pull out one of my old race jerseys. And if you were here during Vacation Bible School, you probably saw, I got to actually ride a motorcycle into the sanctuary. And it was a really kind of cool thing to do. And so I'm putting on a jersey and pants and boots and a helmet. And for a little bit it felt, like, just normal, because for a good portion of my teenage years I would put on that stuff every single day. I would gear up, go to a different track and ride and train and practice, because that's really who I was. I was a motocross racer. That's what I did, that was part of my identity. And here I was this summer putting all this stuff back on, and it felt somewhat normal, but it also felt very weird. It was very strange because here I am, 34, putting on all this race gear. My kids are saying, "Dad, what are you doing? Why are you wearing those pants? Why are you loading a motorcycle up in the truck? What are you doing?" I remember coming to the church and as I got done with the little skit that we did, kids asking me, "Why do you have that, why are you wearing that?" There was a sense of to me it felt a little bit normal, but also it felt a little awkward, a little strange, and a little weird. Just imagine if the next day, like that Monday, I just decided to wear my racing gear to the office. It would probably be a little strange, or if I wore it around town. Now what used to be something very normal would be very strange now because I no longer have a bike, I have a Bible. I no longer go to a track; I go to an office. Like, my life has been different now, and what this jersey represented was a part of me that was no more. The part of me that had indeed, in a lot of ways, have been put to death; something that used to be who I was, but no longer was part of my story anymore, so putting on a race jersey and pants and helmet, it was out of place. It wasn't what I normally did nowadays.

And I think what Paul is going to try to tell us in the Scripture we are going to read this morning, if you have your bibles go to Ephesians chapter 4, is what happens sometimes as believers is we can forget that we are no longer who we used to be. We can actually get in to old thinking and start putting on clothes, start wearing jerseys, that belong to a past life. We can start getting in behaviors and do things that no longer are part of who we are, but it's actually part of us that is dead and gone. So what Paul is dealing with is a group of believers, who even though they've been made new in Jesus, they are tempted sometimes to walk like the world, to walk like all of the unbelievers around them, forgetting that that's not who you used to be; that if you wear the old jersey, it should be awkward because that's no longer who you are. You have a new life, you have new desires, new nature. There should be a new you that is living now. So Paul is going to try to get us as believers to understand something has happened to us. we've been changed, we've been made new, so stop wearing the old jersey, stop doing the practices of your old life, and start leaning into and acting like who you really are, which is a brand new creation in Christ. And you should have a new walk. So if you have your bibles, or if you don't, the words are going to be on the screen. But if you would stand out just of reverence for the Word of God, we are going to read the Scripture this morning.

I want to read verse 1 of chapter 4, it's not on the screen, but I just want to read it to remind us of what Paul has said in the past in our series through Ephesians. He says this, "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called." So there he says, I urge you to walk worthy of this calling that Jesus has called you to. So now, he's going to give the negative response. So we are supposed to walk worthy, now he's going to give the negative of that. Here is what he says in verse 17.

### **Scripture**

***"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. 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.”***

(Prayer)

Father God, we pray right now for Your Spirit to work in our hearts and in our minds. I pray that You would help us to see that we shouldn't walk how we used to walk. We shouldn't walk like the world around us because something has happened. We've put off that old man; we've put on a new self, that's created in Your likeness, that loves righteousness and holiness. So let us walk new because we truly are new. We pray this in Jesus good name, amen.

So here is Paul and he's trying to work out to a group of believers in the first century, who have come to know Jesus, but they are living in a city that is filled with people who don't know Jesus, who don't love Jesus. It's a city filled with idols. It's a city that tells you whatever desire you have, whatever pleasure you have, seek it out; find happiness with immediate things. And so Paul is dealing with a group of believers who are tempted to walk in those old patterns, to fill those desires the way they used to fill them. So he is going to come in and he first gives a command. And here is the command he gives, "Now this I say to you and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles walk." So it is this command; don't walk like the Gentiles. Don't walk like you used to walk. Now, he brings up this term, Gentile, and maybe you're new to the faith, maybe you're new to the church, and you think ok, what exactly is a Gentile, why does Paul tell us not to walk like Gentiles. Well, if you look at the Old Testament, God shows Israel to be a set apart people. He made a covenant with them. So Israel began to see all of the other nations as Gentiles, those who didn't have a covenant relationship with God. So the Jews had a relationship with God and the Gentiles did not. So we see in the New Testament what the

writers of the New Testament do, is they lump Gentile as someone who doesn't know God, unbelievers, someone who is disconnected from God. So Paul's actually writing this letter to people who would be Gentiles, but he's saying stop acting like a Gentile. In other words, that's who you used to be. You used to be disconnected from God; that is no longer true anymore. So as we, today, read this and we're no longer using a lot of Gentile terminology, you can use a synonym, which is just unbeliever, so no long walk as an unbeliever, no longer walk as someone who doesn't know God. Why would he tell us not to walk like that? Because if you are a Christian, then you're no longer an unbeliever. You are no longer separated from God. You are connected to Him, you are one of God's people, so your identity should change the way you walk. It should change the way you live. You should walk worthy rather than walking like an unbeliever. So it's what he's going to try to get this church to understand and truly live out.

So in order to get them to see this difference between their new life and all of the people around them who are doing all sorts of things that God would forbid, he's going to remind them of who the Gentiles are and what they do; so their life and their lifestyle. In doing this, he is trying to remind them of who they used to be. This used to be their life. This used to be their lifestyle. And he's talking to all of us as well. So as we read about the description of the Gentiles, non-believers, he wants us to enter into that conversation and remember this is who I used to be.

### **Descriptions of Non-believers**

So all these descriptions that we're going to read, they were once true of you before you knew Jesus. Or if you don't know Jesus, they are true of you, even in this very moment. So Paul is taking us back to how we thought and how we acted before we knew Jesus, so let's just read the descriptions that he gives. He says this when he says don't walk how the Gentiles do, because here is the Gentiles, "they have futility in their minds." So don't walk in the futility of their minds. So the first description he gives of the Gentiles is they have futile thinking, this empty thinking, or vain thinking. They're not thinking through the lens of Christ. They don't have a biblical worldview, so their thoughts they are futile. They're not purposeful. They're not thinking about the new kingdom. They're not thinking about

the long term. They're thinking about right now, in this moment, what feels good, what's going to make me happy. It's usually very self-centered. That's the thinking because it's futile, it's vain; it's empty. That's the first description he gives of non-believers, that their thinking is futile.

Not only that, but he goes on and says, "They are darkened in their understanding." So not only do they have empty thinking, but their empty thinking is because they have a darkened understanding. They don't know what you know. They don't know creation, fall, redemption, and new creation. They don't have that lens to interpret the world. They don't see things through the lens of Christ. They don't understand their fallen-ness and the rescue that Jesus has brought. They don't see the world with the lights turned on. Their understanding is darkened. I don't know if you've ever tried to walk into a room with the lights off and tried to navigate it, actually, before turning the lights on. I do this several times, sometimes several times a week, in this sanctuary here. I'll go in this door and I'm trying to make it to the back door, and I'm like, "I don't need to turn the lights on. I know how to get through this." And then the door shuts and it's dark. And I'm like I kind of know where the aisles are, and I'll try to find it. and I don't even want to pull my phone out and get the flash, I'm like I'm good, and before I know it, I'm running into a row of chairs. Like, it happens over and over again because I think I know where the obstacles are, I know where the paths are, I know where to go, but in the dark, everything changes because I can't see it clearly. And you've experienced that when you've been in the dark, maybe it was the woods, or in a house, or a dark room. You're trying to find things, but you can't see properly, so you run into things instead of going the way you should. That's what Paul is trying to describe about people who don't know the Lord, people who are unbelievers. They don't have the lights turned on in their understanding so they can't see the paths. They are always running into obstacles. They are always stumbling and running into things that God would say to steer clear of because they don't have proper understanding. And what does Jesus come? He comes as light. He says, "I am the light of the world." So here, unbelievers don't have light. They don't have Jesus, so they don't see and understand things, and how they should see.

So they have empty thinking, the lights are turned off in their understanding; they are darkened. Then what does it say? It says they are "alienated from the life of God." They are alienated from the life of God. One of the saddest descriptions you can have for anyone, alienated from the life of God, separated. Think about the life of God. God breathed into Adam the breath of life. He was supposed to have life from God and live forever with God, but then because of sin, there is a disconnect from the life of God. And we, born after Adam, all experience from our first birth, life disconnected from God. This explains a lot of our behavior and a lot of our non-believing friends around us because they were made for a Creator. They were made for ultimate joy and pleasure only found in God. They were made for a good, good Father. They were made to experience worship, love, and joy, but they don't have God. So what happens? We find a culture that is groping for all sorts of idols, all sorts of things to satisfy a heart that only God can truly satisfy. And we remember that's who we used to be. We used to go down all sorts of paths, whether it was relationship, or work, or family, or whatever. Maybe it was a really, really good path, but we sought ultimate satisfaction from it and it ultimately let us down. That thing that we pursued, that thing that we chased, it didn't satisfy us completely. Why? Because we're made for God. Only God can satisfy our hearts, but unbelievers, their problem is they are alienated from the life of God. They're not connected to Him. They don't have a relationship with Him, so this explains so much of this longing and this searching and this pursuing, yet never truly finding. It's because they're alienated from the life of God.

And this is because of "the ignorance that is in them." I don't think this means that non-believers are not smart. There are a lot of non-believers that are way smarter than I am, P.H.D., doctors, and very educated people. So what does Paul mean when he said this ignorance that is in them? He means they don't have the Lord Jesus. What does Jesus say, "I am the truth." So apart from Me, you can't know the Truth about the whole world. You can know a lot of little truth, but you can't know the big Truth. You can't know how the world truly is and how you truly are. If you don't know Jesus, you can't really know yourself or your surroundings. So there is this ignorance that is in them. Why? Because they don't have

Jesus who is the Truth, the One who came to set us free by knowing the Truth. So here's this ignorance that is in them because they don't know Jesus, and it explains all sorts of behaviors because they don't have the Truth, the enlightenment that we have as believers. But guess what; that's who we used to be. We used to be ignorant in our thinking because we didn't have Jesus, who is the Truth.

And then, the last description says this, "...due to their hardness of heart." So I think this is kind of that root cause. When it comes to unbelievers, yes, their minds are futile, are empty, they have darkened understanding, they have all of these things that are going on. They are alienated from the life of God and they are ignorant in their understanding, but what's the root cause? They have a hard heart. They have a heart of stone, as the Old Testament puts it. The Old Testament tells us a lot about the human heart. In fact, when you have the flood that happened in Noah's day, God says I'm going to send a flood because human hearts are wicked, even from their youth. Then God sends this flood, this judgment, because all people are running away from God. Then after the flood, you kind of think everything's been cured now, everything's good. We must have good hearts now, but we see even after the flood when God makes a covenant to Noah, He said I'm no longer going to flood the earth, even though the hearts of men are wicked, even from their youth. So the flood didn't cure our hearts. In fact, if you go through more of Old Testament Scripture, what we see in Jeremiah 17:9 is that the heart is deceitful above all things. Who can understand it? We see in Ezekiel 36 that what salvation is; it is God taking out our heart of stone, what Paul would say is a hard heart, and He actually replaces it with a heart of flesh, a heart that knows God and can respond to God. I mean, think about a stone verses flesh. If you take a hammer and you beat on a rock, the rock is not going to make a sound. The rock doesn't have feeling. The rock doesn't have stimuli. If you take a hammer and you start beating your buddy with it, there is going to be some pain, there is going to be some yelling, right, because that is flesh, there is stimuli. It can respond. So what God is saying is when it comes to non-believers, they have a heart of stone. You used to have a heart of stone. You couldn't respond to God. You couldn't love Him the way you should. You couldn't respond to what he was doing around you

because you didn't have the stimuli. But what God did in the gospel is He gave you a new heart. He gave you a heart of flesh that could feel Him, love Him, know Him, and respond to Him, could be sensitive to His Word and the sin around you. So it's just Old Testament is a bleak picture of the human heart. It is wicked, it is stone, and from that hard heart, we see all of these issues, darkened understanding, darkened thinking, alienation from God. And in the New Testament, Paul seems to say it's still that way in the first century, people still have hard hearts, which leads to all sorts of trouble.

But here we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and we've kind of moved past that. I mean, now we've got education and we've got modernization, and our hearts now must be better. Now as a society, we must have got to a place where our hearts are a little better. I think sometimes we think yeah, we as a people today, we're not like the Old Testament, we don't all have wicked hearts in Adam. Now everybody is pretty much good. We're all sort of good, even before Christ. I saw a book, I was scrolling through Twitter and a guy that I follow; he was talking about this book that he read. I'll give you the title; here is the title, "Everybody Lies." Here is the sub-title, "Big Data, new data, and what the internet can tell us about who we really are." I thought, now that's an interesting book, so I clicked it, bought it, and I began reading it. I'm about one hundred pages in, and it's one of those books that you read and you're like, wow. It's almost this scary book as you're looking at it. So what this guy does is for the past ten years, he's been looking at big data. What that is, it's whenever you search Google, whenever you go to a website and search something, especially that little box called, Google, it's anonymous, but it's also tracked. So someone is keeping up with all of the things that you're searching for and all of the things that all of us are searching for. Now there is this big data where people are combing through all of this big data to try to figure out patterns of human behavior, how we can be marketed to. I mean, there are all sorts of things that have been used for big data, but he's looking at it more of what does big data tell us about who we are as human beings. And what it turns out is that little rectangle called, Google, is like truth serum for the human condition. That little square is actually a window into our hearts. Because see, what you will post on Facebook or Instagram; it is public. You



know somebody's going to see it, so you're filtering what you'll say, and what you'll ask, and what you'll desire. But there's this little rectangle called, Google, which you assume there is no one watching, no one sees it. It's in secret, it's in the dark, and the things that we plug into that rectangle will absolutely horrify you. The things that you have put in there might horrify us. And even trolls through adult websites, and what adult websites, people that visit adult websites, will put in, and request for things they want and desire, and it is absolutely horrific. So what that little rectangle, Google, tells us is Old Testament was right, Paul is right; we have wicked hearts. That little box that we might not tell our friends what we want, we will request it by Google. We will try to figure it out and inquire about some of the most evil and vile things.

Why? Because that is the state of the human heart in Adam. In Adam, our heart is wicked, and it wants wicked things. So big data really reveals exactly what Paul is trying to say. So why is Paul telling us this? Because he wants you to know if you're a believer, that is no longer true about you. You don't have a wicked heart anymore. You don't have defiled understanding anymore. You're not dark, you're not ignorant; you know the truth and you have a heart that is recreated in the image of Jesus. So therefore, stop doing what the world does because you're not the world anymore. You've been made new; you've been made different, so start walking in that new life. That's what Paul is trying to get us to see. This is who you were, this is how you used to behave; it's not you anymore, so stop walking like a Gentile.

So he first goes in their mind, then their heart, but then he goes to their lifestyle, what they're actually doing in a practical day-to-day enterprise. And here is what he says, "They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity." So here's what's happened. Because of their darkened understanding, because of their hard heart that desires things that it shouldn't desire, that desires wickedness, there's a callousing that has taken place for unbelievers. This Christmas, I convinced my grandparents to get me a guitar for Christmas. I love the idea of a guitar, I love the idea of playing the guitar, I love the idea of being a rock star, and so I thought hey, I'm going to get a guitar.

This will be awesome, so my grandparents got me a guitar, and I was absolutely thrilled about it. So here I am, I get this guitar and it's a few days before Christmas, they give it to me a little bit early and I'm just holding this thing; like, it's just glory in my hand. I'm beginning to try to look up how do you play notes, what does a C look like, what does a D look like, what does a G look like; I'm trying to figure out how to play a guitar. If you've learned how to play a guitar, you know there's a process of learning how to play a guitar. So day one, I'm trying to get my fingers to hold these strings, which are made of metal and about the size of dental floss. So I'm trying to put my fingers and hold pressure on metal dental floss against a board, and trying to strum and make it sound pretty. And it's not sounding pretty at all, but I'm trying to go, over and over again, to make this noise sound something like music. That was day one. So day two, I know I'm going to have to have some practice so I get the guitar and do the same thing. As soon as my fingers land on the strings, there was a little yell that came out because it hurt really badly. I looked down at my fingers and I noticed they were red from yesterday. They were tender. My fingers weren't used to holding metal dental floss at a high velocity against board. So I'm holding this and it is hurting, intense pain is coming out, but I'm trying my hardest to hold a D and make it sound like a D. Then comes the next day, the pain was actually worse. It hurts a little bit more, yet I know everybody does this so it can't hurt that bad. So I'm trying to hold, trying to get these notes, trying to figure this out, and I keep practicing, for the fourth day and the fifth day, and it just keeps hurting worse and worse. I have to take a day off and then I get back another day, and I just keep going with this pain and agony. Then after about a week to a week and a half, I get up and time to tinker with the guitar, so I grab and I put my fingers on the string and I don't feel any pain. I don't feel anything. It's completely numb. I'm like, yes! This is good. I look at my fingers and I begin to run my thumb over my fingers, and I realize that they feel a lot different than these fingers. They're hard, they have skin that has grown over, they are peeling, and I realize something has happened. My fingers have developed a callous. You see, my fingers were trying to tell me all week, stop doing what you're doing! Then my fingers, at some point said, this guy's not going to stop doing what he's

doing, so we're going to have to take matters into our own hands. We're going to start growing extra skin to layer over this skin, so that we stop hurting, so the pain is desensitized. Now, after a couple of months of playing guitar on a regular basis, man, my fingers are completely numb. They have callouses over the tops of them. I can't even feel the strings. There's no pain whatsoever.

This is what Paul says happens to unbelievers. See, we all have a conscience from God; it tells us what's right and wrong. But if we're not connected by God, we also have these desires to do what's wrong. If we do what's wrong, we feel guilt and shame. We felt that when we were little kids. When we lied, we felt bad about it when our mom caught us. But the more lies we tell, the less they feel bad. The more we lie, the more we become callous to it, until all of a sudden, we feel nothing when we tell a lie. It's with all sorts of wrongs in rebellion against God, whatever it is, whether it's sexuality, or impurity, whatever we go after, it feels so wrong at first, but the more we do it the less it feels wrong because we get callous to it. When those callouses form, we no longer feel guilt and shame, we feel fine. We justify whatever lifestyle we want because the more we do it, what Paul says is they become callous. In becoming callous, they give themselves up. It's this releasing of feeling guilt and remorse. They give themselves to sin. They enjoy sensuality. They're actually greedy to practice immorality. They're excited about it. They want more and more sin, deeper and deeper experiences of sin, because why? They have a hard heart that leads to thinking that is warped, and then that leads to calloused lives that love sin and feel no remorse for doing what's wrong.

Paul says that's exactly who you used to be. That was you before you met Jesus. You could sin and love it and enjoy it because you were callous to the truth that God was trying to tell you. You were desensitized to it. For some of you, that might be right now, that you're here at church thinking I must be ok because I'm at church, but you would be horrified if we knew what went on last night. You would be horrified if we actually walked with you through this week, if we saw what you put in that little search engine called, Google, in the privacy of your home or your car, on your smartphone. You think I'm ok; everything's good because there is this

callousing that is taking place. You have a callous towards your own sin and your own rebellion; you don't even realize it, but you have a hard heart. You have thinking that has been warped because of your own sinful desires and now, you can come to church and hum the tunes and sing the songs and then go out and do whatever you want, apart from God this week and you feel nothing by doing it. You assume that's because everything's ok with you and God. What Paul is trying to say is no, it might be because you're callous, because you're doing things that should horrify you but there's so much layers of skin over it that you don't even feel it anymore. You're desensitized to it.

So what I'm praying is this morning through God's Word and God's Spirit that He begins to cut off those callouses around your heart so that you can see the gravity of your own sin problem so it will lead you to a Savior who doesn't just make you better, but He actually makes you new. He gives you new life, new hearts, new spirit, new nature; He makes you new so you no longer love the things of the world, but you love righteousness and holiness. That's what God does through the gospel. So he's trying to explain to a church here's why your neighbor and your co-workers are doing the things they do. They don't know any better. They're disconnected from God. They have a hard heart, and they're callous to the things of God. They're desensitized. That's why they are going the places they're going.

See, Paul is dealing with a church that's in the city of Ephesus, and so he's dealing with Christian guys who are walking to their Sunday morning Bible study. And they're walking past the temple to Artemis, this goddess of sexuality. And this whole temple that was built with all these girls lined up so that when you went in there, you could do whatever you want and feel every pleasure you've ever had, as an act of worship, as an act of duty. So here, you've got these guys who are walking to go and worship their risen Savior, and they are seeing their co-workers, their buddies, veer off and go to a temple to do whatever they want to do and have all the pleasure right now, in this moment. So Paul is saying I get the temptation to veer off. I get the temptation to go where you used to go and feel your pleasures how you used to feel your pleasures, but I just want you to know you

cannot do that anymore because that is not who you used to be. There's a reason why guys and girls are going in to those places. There's a reason why people are seeking pleasure in any way they can get it apart from the laws of God, and it's because they have a hard heart. They're disconnect from God. They're darkened in their understanding, and they're calloused to their own sin problem. That's why they are going in those places. That's why they are doing those things. That's why they're pursuing a self-centered life. That's why they're gratifying their own desires any way they can, and making excuses to all the people who say they shouldn't. There's a reason why they're doing that, because they are non-believers, they don't know God. So he's building this case, this is why they're going to those places, and I'm telling you, you should not go there anymore.

Now why would Paul tell them to not go there anymore? Because he says this, "But that is not the way you learned Christ!" That's not the way you learned Christ. That's not the school that you went to. You have been schooled by the Lord Jesus Christ, and here's what He has told you; "-- assuming that you heard about Him and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus." So you see, the reason that you shouldn't be walking like an unbeliever, the reason you shouldn't be telling and enjoying the same jokes that your co-workers are, the reason you shouldn't be gossiping about the same things your friends are gossiping about, or putting the same things on social media that everyone else is putting on social media is because you're not like that anymore. That's the old you. You used to not know any better, but now you've learned Christ. And notice he doesn't put Christ here as just a teacher who's teaching you a better morality. You did learn about Christ, you didn't learn about Christ's ways, you learned Christ. You learned Him, the risen Lord and Savior. You learned the person of Jesus; you came into a relationship with Him. He became your Lord and Savior, and now you know the truth because the truth is in your Lord and Savior. But you've learned the reality of the world that Jesus died and rose again to defeat your sin so that you could have something better, and that is Him. You know the truth, so you don't have to go to the same places, or do the same things you used to do because you know better now, you know Christ.

So what did we learn? What did Jesus actually teach us in the gospel? Here's what he taught us. Paul goes on in verse 22, "...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." See, here's what you learned in Christ if you're a believer; that when you came to the Lord Jesus, you got to repent. That what you found out in the gospel is that in Adam you're disconnected from God. In Adam, you have wicked heart. In Adam, your thinking is darkened. In Adam, you're calloused to your own sin and your own wickedness. That's you in Adam, but when Jesus came, you got an opportunity to repent, to turn away from a life in Adam. That's what he says, 'putting off.' Here's what you learned, to put off your old self that you inherited from Adam. You get to put that off. And what do you get to do? Turn to the Lord Jesus, and you get to put on the new self, created after the image of God and true righteousness and holiness. That's what took place at salvation. That's why when you come to faith in Christ we baptize you. Why? Because it's the picture that the old you has been buried, gone, dead, and a new you is coming out of the grave to walk in a new life. That's what Paul is trying to get us to see. Remember, this is how the Gentiles walk; this is how you used to walk; that's not you anymore. You've put that man off and you've put on a new self that is created after the image of Christ.

Now it's a little confusing in the text when you read it to ask the question of putting on and putting off. Is this something we do right now, or is this something we have done in the past? Because it's a little hard when you just read it; it says to put off and put on and be renewed. If you look in the original language, what you'll find is that put off and put on is actually past tense action. It's an aorist verb. It's something that took place in the past. But just reading this text in the English, you can't really see definitively if it's a past action or if it's something we're supposed to do today. So I want to go to a parallel passage that Paul talks this exact same thing, and that's in Colossians. If you want to go there, you can; Colossians chapter 3. I just want to read this because it makes it a little more clear about when the putting off and putting on has taken place. Here's what he says in verse 5 of chapter 3, "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual

immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them." So that's past tense, "But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator." So, a lot more clear in Colossians that putting off your old self, your old nature, the old man, was a past tense action. It's something you did in the past, and putting on the new man, putting on Jesus Christ, it's something you also did in the past. He says you have done this. When did that take place? When you put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus. See, here's what happened, you repented of being in Adam, and you put your faith and trust in Christ. What happened in that moment, you were taken out of Adam, and you were actually putting in Jesus Christ. So the old you is dead, gone, it's been put off. There is a new you that is in Jesus that is being renewed day by day, more and more into the image of Christ. So now what do we do? We don't put off our old nature; it's already been put off. Now we put off the old practices that come along with that old nature.

See, because what we can still do is we can have temptations to want to go to the places we used to go, to please ourselves with the things we used to be pleased with. So the putting off now is those behaviors that went along with who we used to be. See, it's real tempting for us now to go grab our old jersey and put it on and wear it around, and to try to act like somebody we used to be. Paul is saying you can't do that anymore because you have put that person off. He's dead, she's dead; they're gone. So when you see co-workers and friends doing things that you used to do and experience so much joy, Paul is saying don't go there; don't do that. Why? Because that's not you anymore! They don't know God; you do. You learned Christ. You've experienced the gospel. You're new, so now walk new. You've put on Jesus, and now you have a new life.

So in this text that Paul's giving us, the putting on, and the putting off, it's a past tense thing you did at salvation. But there's one present tense verb in here, there's one ongoing thing that we're supposed to be doing, and

that is to be renewed, to be renewed in the spirit of your mind. This is what Paul intends for that church to keep doing constantly. Since you've put off, since you've put on, since you're new, since you have a new nature, new identity, new spirit, since you're in Christ not Adam, here's what you have to do every day, renew your mind. Constantly remind yourself of two things, who you're not and who you are. That's really important as believers. That in the renewing of our mind, we have to remind ourselves of who we are not. I'm not the person I used to be. I'm not wearing this same jersey. I'm not wearing the same clothes. I'm not going to the same places. I am different. I have been made new. I'm not an unbeliever anymore. I'm not going to walk in that same lifestyle. That's not me anymore. But you're going to feel the temptation to go back to those old places, so what do you do in those moments? You are going to remind yourself, that's not me. That's an old me. That's an old lifestyle, and its end was only death and shame. That's not me anymore. There's a new creation. I have been made new, and I am going to live out my new nature in Christ. I'm going to put on the things that belong to the newness that God has made me to be. So this renewing is something that we are to be doing over and over again.

So how do we practically renew our minds? So he's trying to deal with the church that is tempted to go to the old places they used to go, to fulfil the old desires they used to have because it just feels right and feels good. And Paul is saying no, no, no; you can't walk there anymore. You can't live that lifestyle anymore because that's not you. That you has died. There is a new you that is living, so what you need to do right now is remind yourself who you're not, who you are, and live in that truth. That happens by renewing your mind, by constantly remembering that, and walking in that.

I think some of the best way so renew your mind is number one, to actually get into God's Word. In order for you to have a renewed mind, to remember your new identity, to remember who you are in Christ, you have to get into God's Word. You have to spend time with Him. So, just the really easy practical step number one for renewing your minds is to read your Bible. Just read the Scriptures. Get up in the morning, and go to the Word and read the Scriptures. Start connecting to God through His Word,



and that will begin that process of renewing your mind. You're hearing truth amidst all the lies that you're going to hear today. You're hearing truth from God about who you are and what He has done, and how you should walk and live today. So read the Bible. Read the Word of God.

Secondly, I think a way to renew your mind is to pray the Word of God. So my favorite thing to do is just read a verse and then pray it right back to God. Just read it and then pray it. What you're saying is God let this be true in my life. Maybe it's something that you just learned about Jesus. Praise Him for that. Maybe it's a sin you need to avoid. Well, pray to God about that. Maybe it's something that you need to walk in. Pray to God, give me strength to be generous, give me strength to help out, give me strength to not be a gossip. But just go to God and pray His Word back to Him and it's that connection between you and God as you renew your mind.

I think a third step that is really beneficial is to memorize God's Word. You can start really small, maybe one verse a week. Write it down, put it where your car is, put it right there on your dashboard where you can see it every day, and just look at it. Think about it; memorize it. What are you doing? You're getting God's Word in your mind. You're renewing your mind through the Word.

Then the fourth thing is to live out God's Word. So read it, pray it, memorize it, and actually live it out. You can't just read and memorize, and then forget what you heard. That's like James; he's looking in a mirror and then forgetting who you are and just going and doing the opposite. No, we live out what God has said about us because this is truer than how we feel.

See, often, we live our lives by how we feel. Well, I want that, I must be this. I desire this, so this must be who I am. No, what the Bible says, no you are more than your desires. You are who God says you are. The old person is dead. There's a new you, so what's the application? Walk new. Walk in a new life. So this week as friends, co-workers, family members, even your own mind, desires things that you know are against God, what would Paul say to you? Don't go there. Don't do that. Why? Because you're not a Gentile anymore. You're not a non-believer anymore. You have been

made new. You've put off that old self. You've put on a new self. So now, daily be renewed in your mind, remembering who you're not and who you are, and live out who you are. You're not a sinner; you are a saint of God who has been raised with Christ to desire righteousness and holiness. If your heart tells you different, you start preaching to yourself and say no, this is who I am because this is who God says I am.

Maybe this is not true of you. Maybe you realize that you don't know God. You're not connected to God. The reason you always walk in that way is because you are a non-believer. This morning you've been on the understanding of maybe I don't know Christ. What should you do? Repent and believe. Turn from your lifestyle of sin, turn from trusting yourself, and turn to the Lord Jesus in faith that He died for you, He rose for you and that in His name you can be made new. You can have salvation this morning that your heart can be made from stone to flesh by believing in the Lord Jesus. So, I don't know what you need to do this morning, whether you need to repent and believe, or whether you need to claim more in the truth that you are new so now I'm going to live new, but I pray that God's Word would truly encourage us to do what we need to do because Paul would say stop living like you used to do.

If you were here this summer and you remember the jersey I put on; it didn't work too good for me and Chris. Chris got pretty rattled and I got a broken arm. It was my pride, I think, that was hurt a lot worse than my bone actually breaking, because when I went to an old lifestyle that wasn't part of me anymore, there was only hurt that came from it. here's what Paul is trying to say; if you try to live that old lifestyle, if you go down those old roads and those old paths that you used to be so happy with, it will only be misery. It will only be pain because that's not who you used to be. These people who are walking in a temple to Artemis to fill all of their immediate gratification; that's not you anymore because your ultimate pleasure has been filled in a risen Lord, and His name is Jesus Christ, so you have become a new temple. You are to live in Him and for Him. So church, Paul would say don't walk like you used to walk. Walk worthy of your calling, because know who you're not, and know who you are. You've been made new, therefore, live new.

