

**BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE**  
**Out With the Old -- In With the New**  
Ephesians 4:17-24  
1998

**Introduction**

The Christian is called to complete abandonment of the old way of living. And though the old life is gone, the believer is still surrounded by those who still live ("walk") in the darkness of their ungodliness.

What was our former life like? He's told us in Eph 2:1-3, 11-13  
Paul insists on what he about to tell us. Another translation says, "I urge it upon you"

**I. Don't Live Like Unbelievers - 1 Peter 4:3**

Paul begins to describe the life of an unbeliever through a series of devastating, descriptive terms that highlight the unbeliever's mental, spiritual and moral decadence.

- A. [Mentally] Lost in futile thinking - Rom 1:21-23; Eph 2:23; 1 Pet 1:18  
***Futility*** = "Good-for-nothing notions" that underlie irresponsible behavior

How does one's thinking become futile?

Rom 1:21-23 "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles."

It is the fruit of:

Following the ways of the world

1 Pet 1:18-19 "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."

Following the ways of the enemy

Eph 2:1-3 "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath."

1. Darkened in their understanding

a. Spiritually blind - 2 Cor 4:4; Rom 8:6-7

2 Cor 4:4 “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

Rom 8:6-8 “The mind of sinful man is death and is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.”

b. Various "isms" (Darwinism, humanism, relativism)

**Illustration:** Abstinence

The world pushes condoms, safe sex, abortion without parental consent – rates explode

The church advocates abstinence – rates plummet

2. [Spiritually] Separated from the life of God - Eph 2:12

Eph 2:12 “remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.”

a. The result of ignorance

Though ignorance is the condition we are born in, it is not irreversible. Ignorance of God is correctable, but people steel their hearts to the truth and eventually can become impervious to its impact.

Where does this kind of ignorance come from?

b. The result of hardened hearts

**Hardness** = petrification, to become hard or insensitive. It is used medically to refer to the callus formed when a bone has been fractured and reset. Such a callus is even harder than the bone itself.

**Illustration** = Petrified forests

It takes time, pressure and the right environment. But if all three exist, even the softest heart can become hard as stone. What once was soft and pliable, now requires explosives to penetrate.

And now, having ceased to have any appreciation of the truth of God or any feeling of shame in the face of evil. They have become morally unresponsive due to persistent disobedience. They have deadened their conscience and no longer feel its sting.

The believer can avoid this condition through mutual encouragement

Heb 3:13 “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.”

B. [Morally] Devoid of moral sensitivity

1. Immersed in sensuality - 1 Pet 4:3-4

**Sensuality** = licentiousness or wanton violence. Means outrageous and shameless conduct of any kind sexual and otherwise -- a life without person standards or social sanctions.

a. Indulging in every kind of impurity - Col 3:5

**Indulging** = The determination to gratify self-interest at all costs, regardless of the rights and susceptibilities of others.

Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

b. Continually lusting for more

Many have made indulging in sexual and moral perversity their vocation and life's pursuit – an all-consuming and total preoccupation.

1 Pet 4:3-5 “For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do-- living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”

2. A dual confirmation of their callous hearts

a. They gave themselves over - Eph 4:19

Eph 4:19 “Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality ...”

b. God gave them over - Rom 1:24, 26, 28; Ps 81:11-12

Rom 1:21-32 “For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. **Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts** to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-- who is forever praised. Amen. **Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts.** Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, **he gave them over to a depraved mind**, to do what ought not to be done.”

How is it possible that someone could get so far that God would give them over?

Ps 81:11-12 "But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices.”

## II Live As Children Of God

Now there are those that mistakenly think that they can continue indulging in this kind of lifestyle and still consider themselves Christians. However, Jesus' life and teaching forever preclude the idea of uniting Christian faith and immorality.

### A. Transition into new life in Christ

1. We came to know Christ
  - a. Through hearing His teaching and Word
  - b. Through receiving His teaching and Word

More than learning solid theology about God, although that is included. It is to learn in such a way as to become a disciple or follower of Christ. The authentic Christian who truly knows Christ will:

### B. Put off the old self - Jam 1:21; Rom 6:6; Col 3:5, 8, 9; 1 Pet 2:1; Rom 13:12; Heb 12:1

**Put off**= In the Greek past tense, meaning a single, once and for all act

1. Get rid of it - James 1:21

James 1:21 “Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.”
2. Put it aside Rom 13:12

Rom 13:12 “The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.”
3. Throw it off - Heb 12:1

Heb 12:1 “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”
4. Put it to death – Col 3:5-7

Col 3:5-7 “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.”

**WHY?!?! Because it is corrupted by deceitful desires**  
They are corrupted because they are self-centered and belong to the old life.

They are deceitful because they hold promise of joy and gain but in the end lead to death.

C. Be made new in the attitude of our minds - Col 3:10; Rom 12:2; Col 3:1-2

**Be made new** = present tense; a continuous ongoing renewal.

Because our alienation from God was initiated by the futile thinking of our minds, the reversal of the process must begin with the renewal of the mind. This can only take place under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor 2:16 "But we have the mind of Christ."

Col 3:10 "... and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

Rom 12:2 "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Col 3:1-2 "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

1. Fruitful thinking Vs. Futile thinking, darkened understanding, separated from God

D. Put on the new self - Rom 13:14; Col 3:10

**Put on;** Greek past tense = a decisive, once and for all act

Rom 13:14 "Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature."

Col 3:10 "and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

1. Created to be like God - Gen 1:27; Rom 8:29

As man was designed to be from the beginning.

Gen 1:27 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

However, as you know, sin corrupted our image-bearing nature and we were reduced to a distorted reflection of God's true character and nature. BUT ...

Rom 8:29 "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

The divine image is described simply as true righteousness and holiness.

a. In true righteousness and holiness - Rom 6:19; 1 Cor 1:30

**Righteousness** = It is the love of what is right. Fulfilling of one's duties to man.

**Holiness** = It is the hatred of sin. Fulfilling of one's duties to God.

1 Cor 1:30 “It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God -- that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.”

Rom 6:19 “Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.”

## Conclusion

Paul lays out these two citizenships and exhorts us to live lives worthy of the calling we've received. Sometimes we want God's abundance but we live in a dual citizenship and wonder why God isn't blessing us. God's responsibility is to elect, empower and to give us all the resources we need to live this new life in Christ. Our responsibility is to embrace Christ fully. By the power and grace of God, surrender yourselves once and for all to God. Every day that we choose to embrace Christ, renew our minds through His Word and apply it to our lives, we live as citizens of Heaven.

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