

Ephesians 4:17–32 (NKJV)

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; ¹⁹ who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

²⁰ But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore, putting away lying, “*Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,*” for we are members of one another. ²⁶ “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷ nor give place to the devil. ²⁸ Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. ²⁹ Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. ³² And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. What does Paul identify as the cause of the Gentiles' ignorant lifestyle (vv. 17–18)?

2. What is it that verse 19 describes the Gentiles “giving themselves over” to pursue? Compare a few translations as you examine this verse.

3. Explain what it means to “learn Christ” (v. 20–21).

4. Paul gives a number of prohibitions in vv. 25–31. Explain how these prohibited actions would reflect our “former conduct” (v. 22).

5. Reflect on verses 26 and 27, and try to restate them in your own words.

6. Contrast “corrupt words” with words that are good for edification (v. 29).

7. How might a believer grieve the Holy Spirit (v. 30)?

8. Why should you forgive (v. 32)?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of Ephesians 4:17–32 for your own life today.*

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?
