

Ephesians 4b 4:17-32

17 Paul isn't insisting out of a desire to rule over people, but as a representative of Jesus, he is telling us what we must do. Don't live like the world in futile thinking! This is one thing God insists that we do! Our thought life must change. How does the world typically think? Why is that called futile? (see 2:1-3, Psalm 94:11, Acts 14:15 ) How are we to think? Phil 4:8

18 This explains why their thinking is futile. Their minds are darkened. They are separated from the life of God. And why is that? They are in ignorance because their hearts are hard. If they were to allow their hearts to soften toward God, the light that lights every man that comes into the world would flood into their soul and they would be changed. That light would illumine the futility of their thinking, that things of the Creator do not satisfy like the Creator. Can redeemed people allow their hearts to be hardened and their understanding darkened?

19 Once we harden our heart, we are in danger of losing all sensitivity. Once we turn toward things to satisfy, there is only the demand for more things. The satisfaction of things wears off so quickly that we find our appetite for things grows by leaps and bounds. Only an enlightened mind can see that this path is a dead end.

20 When we come to Christ, we find that our satisfaction, our fulfillment, is in laying our life at His feet. 2 Corinthians 5:14,15

21 We have His life's example and His words. We should know that finding life is to lay it down. Life is about Jesus, not His creation. He said for us to die is to live. He is truth. Truth is not intellect or doctrine or a pattern. It is a person.

22 What we learned about Christ was that we must put off our old self. Like an old soiled robe, it needs to be discarded. That futile way of thinking and seeing value must go. That old self is corrupted by deceitful desires. Those desires promise but don't deliver. They say they will bring fulfillment but end in emptiness. Remember, desires for things outside of Christ are deceitful.

23 We need a whole new mental attitude. Fulfillment is Christ Jesus. Life is Jesus. We are loved children of God with an awesome future beyond our imagination. We should have that Philippians 4:8 attitude. We should see life as an opportunity to know Christ and to let His life flow through us. Romans 8:6

24 Romans 13:14 – The new self is the LORD. We are to be clothed in Him. When we get to chapter 6 we will see that all the armor we put on is a characteristic of Christ. That is true righteousness. That is true holiness.

25 Now Paul begins to describe what this new self looks like as the life of Christ is expressed. He is truth, so we must walk in truth with one another, realizing our oneness in Christ.

26 Anger is a warning light that something is wrong. What we do when it comes on will determine if that anger will turn into sin or not. This verse is telling us that we must deal with what ever issue is raised before our head hits the pillow. Don't let anger turn into bitterness. Determine what the problem is and the appropriate way to deal with it. James 1:19-20

27 If you hang on to your anger, the devil has a foothold in your life. He can flip that switch, occupy your mind, and take you down a path that leads to death. There is a spiritual warning here. A Christian can open a door through compromise that gives the devil a foothold to work in your life. There is no such thing as a little disobedience, a little sin. Willingly disobeying God gives the Enemy of your soul permission to wreak havoc in your life through that compromise. Don't do it! 1Peter 5:8; vs 9 "resist him"

28 We work, not just for self, but also to help those in need. There is no room for slothfulness in the Kingdom. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

29 What should our words do? Edify – from edifice. They should help build the church through encouragement. Our words need to be wholesome and beneficial (Isaiah 50:4). Too often we speak so there won't be silence. Take note of the Trent Lott situation and consider what a storm can brew from words without thought. Colossians 4:6; 1Thessalonians 5:11

30 Don't grieve the Spirit! Consider the ways in which we grieve the Holy Spirit. Not speaking the truth when we are prompted to, not showing compassion when we could meet the need of another, or as some of the above has suggested, staying angry and becoming bitter, speaking words that are not wholesome, hurting a fellow Christian with your words. His presence in our life is the deposit that guarantees the fullness in the day when Christ returns. Don't grieve that wonderful presence in you. 1Thessalonians 5:19

31 Paul gives a list of things that must go with the old self. These are things that grieve the Spirit. He is focussing on our relationship with one another. James 3:14-15

32 To be compassionate and kind means to be like Christ has been to us. That ends in forgiveness in the same way that God has forgiven you. Since we are in Christ, we need to see one another's sins of offense covered in the blood just as we should see the need for our own to be covered. A tender heart forgives. Remember what the hard heart ends in? ( see verse 18)