



The Grand Theater in Ephesus
(ephesusbreeze.com)

Learning Christ

Ephesians 4:17-32

Learning Christ Introduction

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- The first half of the letter is heavy on doctrine.
- Paul wants us to first know Christ and who we are in him.
- This second half is focused on action.
- He wants our lives to reflect our deepest identity.

Learning Christ Introduction

James 2:17-18 (ESV)

¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Learning Christ Introduction

Soundbite:

A transformed mind and a transformed heart
lead to a transformed life. This is what
it means to learn Christ.

Learning Christ Outline

1. The Old Mind 4:17-19
2. The New Mind 4:20-24
3. Visible Changes 4:25-32

1. The Old Mind 4:17-19

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- Paul begins with the mind.
- How we think and what we believe at the deepest level is going to reveal itself in our behavior.
- The Ephesian believers were immersed in a culture with the values of the ancient Greeks.

1. The Old Mind 4:17-19

- The Jewish opinion of Greek values was not positive. An article in the *Jewish Virtual Library* says,

... the Jews bitterly resented the Greeks. They were more foreign than any group they had ever seen ... the gods of the Greeks seemed wildly offensive. In a society rigidly opposed to the exposure of the body, the Greek practice of wrestling in the nude and deliberately dressing light must have been appalling! In a religion that specifically singles out homosexuality as a crime against Yahweh, the Greek attitude and even preference for homosexuality must have been incomprehensible.

1. The Old Mind 4:17-19

- Paul is coming from a Jewish-Christian perspective.
- Of course not every pagan in the Greco-Roman world lived a life as decadent as Paul indicates.
- When they did, however, they fit in comfortably with their own local customs and beliefs.

1. The Old Mind 4:17-19

- The same is true in our culture today.
- Not everyone lives a life utterly given over to sensuality.
- Those who do will not normally stand for any criticism of their standards.

1. The Old Mind 4:17-19

- Some level of conflict between our culture and our Bible is simply going to be there.
- We can live with that.
- What matters is that our own hearts and minds are changed by God's Word.
- We need a mind that thinks more like the Bible.

1. The Old Mind 4:17-19

- 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 (ESV)

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

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2. The New Mind 4:20-24

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- Three questions from 4:20-21:
- Have we learned him?
- Have we heard ~~about~~ him?
- Have we been taught in him?

2. The New Mind 4:20-24

- As we receive our instruction from the Bible, the Living Word is speaking to us through the Written Word.
- We hear **him** – that is, **Jesus**.
- The result will be that our lives will look a lot like his.

2. The New Mind 4:20-24

- Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

2. The New Mind 4:20-24

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1. Paul does not point to the law as law in this context.
2. He did not criticize the pagans for not keeping the commandments but for being alienated from God.
3. For Christians, he is not preaching the keeping of commandments, but a changed heart and mind.
4. The new life in Christ is consistent with Old Testament standards, but being lived from the heart.

2. The New Mind 4:20-24

- There is a parallel passage in **Colossians**.
- This letter was written by Paul to another church in the same region as Ephesus.

2. The New Mind 4:20-24

- Colossians 3:5-10 (ESV)

⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

2. The New Mind 4:20-24

- **Self**, in this case, is *anthrōpos* = “man” or “human”
- Paul is asking us to willingly put off the **old humanity** and put on God’s **new humanity**.
- Our **new self**, as part of God’s **new humanity**, is now the **true self** we have to embrace.

2. The New Mind 4:20-24

- The key is in the “put off” and the “put on.”
- And here is where we have to be honest with ourselves.
- Our old self is sometimes a little harder to put off than we want it to be.

2. The New Mind 4:20-24

- Old behaviors and values have to be replaced with new ones.
- Our old identity is now exchanged for a new one.
- Paul will now give us some examples.

3. Visible Changes 4:25-32

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A transformed mind and a transformed heart lead to a transformed life. This is what it means to learn Christ.

3. Visible Changes 4:25-32

Paul gives us **five solid examples** (and more in following chapters):

1. Truth instead of falsehood
2. Anger kept under control
3. Honest labor instead of stealing
4. Encouraging speech instead of foul language
5. Kindness and forgiveness instead of being mean

3. Visible Changes 4:25-32

- 4:25 Paul starts with truth instead of falsehood.
- Who hasn't been tempted to lie in some area related to money, work or business?
- People who know us should be able to vouch for our integrity.

3. Visible Changes 4:25-32

- 4:26-27 The next issue is anger kept under control.
- Be angry and do not sin
- Some, maybe most, of our anger is sinful.
- Sometimes we are angry for the wrong reasons.
- Sometimes we express our anger in the wrong way.
- It is possible, after all that, to be angry only at sin and keep our temper under control.

3. Visible Changes 4:25-32

- 4:26-27 Do not let the sun go down on your anger.
- Ginger and I had a practice early on in our marriage – at those extremely rare times we had arguments.
- We were committed to staying up at night until we could come to some level of agreement.
- That way we would not go to bed resenting one another.

3. Visible Changes 4:25-32

- 4:26-27 and give no opportunity to the devil
- Because the devil loves to use our anger.
- James 1:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

3. Visible Changes 4:25-32

- 4:28 Honest labor instead of stealing
- When the thief becomes generous, we know that transformation has happened.
- Remember the story of Zacchaeus?
- He was a wee little man and a wee little man was he.
- And Jesus invited himself to Z's house for dinner.

3. Visible Changes 4:25-32

- Luke 19:7-9 (ESV)

⁷ And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” ⁸ And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” ⁹ And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.”

3. Visible Changes 4:25-32

- 4:29 Encouraging speech instead of foul language

- Proverbs 25:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ A word fitly spoken

is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.

¹² Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold

is a wise reprover to a listening ear.

3. Visible Changes 4:25-32

- 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- The first part of this chapter dealt with unity.
- He continues that theme now adding purity and truth.
- The Holy Spirit is a person and he can be grieved when there is discord, indecency, and dishonesty among us.

3. Visible Changes 4:25-32

- 4:31-32 Kindness and forgiveness instead of being mean
- We really need to emphasize this in our culture.
- We can also use more of it in our church.

3. Visible Changes 4:25-32



- On 15 June 2018, @drtonyevans tweeted, *Love matters. Kindness matters. Patience matters. Think beyond yourself.*

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Conclusions

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- In our past life we may have thought and lived a certain way.
- Even now, we are immersed in a culture that will simply will distract us from Christ from time to time.
- We need to form new thought patterns and new habits.

Learning Christ Conclusions

- Our old mind needs to be renewed.
- Our old actions need to be replaced.
- We need to put off our old self and put on the new.
- We need to each play our position as part of God's new humanity.

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7. Add another

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