

Book	Ephesian – Study 13
Topic	How We Are To Live
Reference	Ephesians 4:17-34
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In this section we will focus on how we are to live. How does all that knowledge transform to practical living, because we still got to live in the ground today. So we are going to talk about the change of lifestyle. So we are going to look at moral excellence. Are they only for the very spiritual people of the various religions. When we talk about this, most people get kind of fuzzy, they don't like this sort of thing. How do we actually change or behavior? The passage that he gives us, as you have read just now resources to change.

How do we actually change?

We change by making a decision, changing it from inside, transforming our thinking and being captivated by him. These are the four steps which will be useful for us to understand. So you got to make a decision, it is going to change you from inside, not outside and you got to transform your thinking, because unless your thinking is transformed you will not be able to change. If you are having to do something because you have to do it, but your mind is not convinced that you need to do it then you won't do it. It is like coming to Gamma. Why would you give up one evening or the week to come to Gamma unless there is something from your transformed thinking. You are thinking that it is going to benefit you, you are thinking that you are captivated by his love, something is going to happen and then you understand its value.

So it is going to be changing from inside, transformed thinking and then captivated by your love for him. It starts off with a conscious decision. We all have to make up our minds to put off your old self, which belongs to formal matter of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires and you be renewed in the spirit of your minds and you put in a new self-created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. So there is a process where you take off something and you put on something. So this is the metaphor which Paul uses. So you take off your old clothes and put on your new cloak. So it is a decision. You got to still do it, it doesn't happen magically.

THE REASON BEHIND THE DECISION

Why would you make that decision?

That decision is made the moment you became a Christian

Ephesians 4:17-25 (ESV) 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. 18 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. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

There is a fundamental change in our nature, so we cannot continue and there is a new personality.

24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

So when you become a Christian, most young Christians will ask me the question:

- Will I have to give up sleeping with my girlfriend?
- Will I have to stop lying on my sales pitch?
- Will I have to resolve my differences with my enemies?
- Will I have to give up my lawsuit?

These are practical questions, but these are the wrong questions. Faith is actually not doing something; it is actually being. You may have to answer all these questions ultimately in their affirmative, you have to do all that, but that's ultimate, but it is a process of which you get there by being you, putting off your old self and putting on the new self. There is a process in which we keep on putting off your old self and putting on new self where all these questions will automatically be answered. If you look at how other religions do it, whether you have the Buddhist, a secular person or an Islamic person, they do it not from the inside out, they do it from the outside in.

BUDDHIST: So if you are talking about the Buddhist, it is through karma, you got good works, you will be rewarded bad works, you will come back as an insect. There are rituals, there are meditations, we learn to be nonattached to things of life. This is a middle path, it is neither too extreme or too benign, it is in the middle, moderation, right thinking and right action. That's what you do and you actually practice it. You actually practice your meditation, you actually self-discipline yourself. It is doing it from the outside.

ISLAM: The other one is you look at Islam, it is obedience, duty, good works to please God, those who believe will do good works. In the end, your good works will outweigh your bad works and then that is how you get salvation. They tell the truth as a sign of duty, submission to Allah as it were. Jihadists below themselves up for reward, 70 virgins in heaven.

SECULARITY: If you are a secular person, it is a personal morality, which you actually hold. There are certain things you will do, certain things you won't do, you do out of fear of punishment, has got benefits to self or society and you got a pride of being a moral person. There are a lot of people who are not religious, western people especially, who are secular. They put themselves into this category, I am a moral person and I won't do that but this I will do.

All these are basically doing. It is an external thing. It is from outside, a fear of punishment.

CHRISTIANITY: In our faith it is a bit different, you change it from inside. There are three things that will change:

- our identity
- our motives
- our thinking

OLD IDENTITY

Ephesians 4:17-19 (ESV) that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.

The futility of their minds means something that is frustrated. There is something, which you build up, many of people will build up their lives, chasing money, power and sex or whatever but the end as they get older and older and they have got all the things that they have got, they found that it really brings no satisfaction. So it is futile waste of time, think about the number of things that you use to embark on when you were younger and now you realize and say I have wasted time, I wish I didn't do that. That's exactly what happened is, they are doing in futility of minds

18 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.

Because if you are away from God, everything else is a lie, because the first lie that you tell is that there is no God and if you live a life without God and you think living a life without God will make you bring happiness and you actually find it doesn't, it makes you darkened inside, your ignorance and in the end they have hardness of heart.

19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

If that person makes me happy, to hell with everybody else I am going to do that to please myself. Greedy to every practice or every kind of impurity. So this is a kind of life which we all lived before and some of us are still struggling in it, because whenever we are confronted with a situation we go back to our old selves and we are wondering what is in it for me.

NEW IDENTITY

Ephesians 4:23-24 (ESV) and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

So there is a new self, we are created with new creation in Christ, we are like God, morally like God, in right relationship and in holiness. So therefore if we are thinking of wanting to change, the first thing we will think about is our identity, who are you, you are a Christian, you are no longer living as a pagan. There is an old identity where our center of our lives is our own treasure, our self-esteem is based on achievement, you have got the baggage of all your family, personal background, emotional trauma, all your failures, everything you carry around. That's a terrible thing about being a non-Christian because you carry around with you your self-esteem and your self-esteem is based on your achievements.

A Christian's self-esteem is no longer based on his or her achievement. You may have come from a bad situation, but in Christ it no longer matters anymore. There is a new center in Christ, all your debts are forgiven, you are loved by God, nobody can ever get at your identity because your identity is now hidden in Christ. That is something that you have to remember all the time. Our old motives like fear of punishment, fear of loss of face, fear of failure, pride of personal values, seek glory in achievement, these are what actually drives your behavior in those days, these are old

motives. But now the new motives; I tell the truth because I have gratitude for what Jesus done, love for him and I actually don't look down on other people. And then the new thinking, renewed in the spirit of your mind. There has to be a renewal in the way you think. This is very crucial. Unless you think differently, you will not behave differently. So no point trying to behave differently. Unless the thinking changes, you will not be able to change. If you are secure in Christ, then the way you talk to your friends, the way you shake their hands, you can talk about all the things that matter to you, while they are boosting about everything else, which actually doesn't really matter. In fact, you kind of look at them and you feel kind of sad for them, because it is the futility of mind, you have been there before.

So old thinking is worldly, popular culture, morality being nice, but new thinking is having your mind change with the truth and the truth comes with the word of God.

25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

We are going to look at falsehood today, it is how you would change. So we will talk about the first thing. The dual aspect of integrity, this is not lying and speaking the truth. Why, because we are members of one another.

Falsehood can come in many ways. You can witness a robbery, but you can see that be silent. Even you saw and you didn't say anything, that is a lie. We are supposed to love truth at all levels, as God is truth. If you love your father or your mother, then you love everything your father or mother stands for. So therefore you have to love truth at all levels, you need to be transparent, unbiased. All these are aspects of lying. Biasness is part of lying. Transparency is important. When you live a lie you actually are going to spook the environment.

Ephesians 4:22 (ESV) to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,

It is your deceitful desires that is actually the root of all your falsehood, the things that you want. The lies are symptoms of actual falsehood.

Our new identity is a new self, the likeness of God in righteousness and holiness. God is truth and the absolute truth of God is shown on the cross because God doesn't close an eye to sin and the cross shows you that he is absolutely a 150% committed to truth, because he put his son on the cross to die for your sin. So therefore God doesn't have double standards. It shows absolute truth of good, he is totally consistent, no lapses, totally righteous, no compromise and his character is what that should drive us. You put away falsehood, each of you speak truth with one another because we are members of one another.

The reason why we are speaking the truth, it is not only because we belong to a God of truth, but is also because we are members of one another. We speak the truth.

Put away falsehood, let each of you speak the truth. This phrase is actually taken from Zechariah and in the context says,

*Zechariah 8:3 (ESV) Thus says the Lord: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the **faithful city**, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain.*

So God is going to come and his new Jerusalem will be a city of truth.

Zechariah 8:11-12 (ESV) But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, declares the Lord of hosts. 12 For there shall be a sowing of peace. The vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its produce, and the heavens shall give their dew. And I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.

So this is restoration

Zechariah 8:16-17 (ESV) These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; 17 do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the Lord.”

So truthfulness will characterize God’s new people, his new Jerusalem which is a symbol of heaven will be a city of truth. Truth will be the number one feature.

We have to tell the truth because we are members of one another. The Bible says that you cannot lie to each other because your future depends on correct information transmission. If your brain tells you the wrong thing, your actual body will suffer.

Leprosy patients’ hands are atrophic, they get gangrenous and they fall off and the reason is that they have lost sensation to their hands. Paul Brand was a surgeon who operated on leprosy patients in India and he actually was one of first few peoples who discovered the pathology of leprosy. When he saw a young boy twist open a door with a key, the key was stuck. Paul Brand couldn’t open it, so the boy goes there and he twisted it open, the key opened the door and his two fingers fell on the floor. The boy twisted it so hard. Why, because the members of his fingers were telling him the wrong thing. There is no feeling at all. They were lying to him. That’s how he lost his fingers. So therefore if one member lies to you, you wind up like that. So when your members lie to each other, the whole body is actually jeopardized. So that’s the theory behind what Paul is saying.

CHANGE OF MOTIVES

*Ephesians 4:30 (ESV) And do **not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

The motive is that by telling lies, you actually grieve the Holy Spirit. We grieving and God grieving is a different thing. For example, you have a girlfriend and you buy her a ring from your savings. After that you saw her with another guy in the market. You will grieve because you lost something, she betrayed you. The use of the word here is analogous use. God grieves because he loves you and you are hurting yourself. When you lie the body suffers in the end and you suffer in the end, there will come a reckoning. So when God sees that you are suffering and He anticipates a suffering 5-10 years from now, he grieves because he loves you, because God feels. He doesn’t

grieve because he feels betrayed. There is a new motive, you do not lie not because of anything other than your relationship with God and you don't really want to disappoint him. If you have the old motive, you do, he doesn't see I can escape. So there is a completely different idea.

NEW THINKING:

Satan is the one who first tells the lie. If you look in Genesis

Genesis 3:4-5 (ESV) But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

So he actually controls the woman because of falsehood. He tells us straight up lie and the lie is when you eat of this you will not die. Now she believes that falsehood. It is because of the belief in that falsehood that actually controls her behavior. The moment you believe a falsehood, it actually controls her behavior and that's why she sinned.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 (ESV) The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? 10 "I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."

All of us, the most deceitful part of our bodies is basically our hearts. We lie to ourselves every single time. If we don't lie we are perfect. We don't have perfect hearts. Our hearts lie to us all the time.

If you are brought up with a lie, ego generates a lie to justify anger. Gene Roddenberry writes,

We must question the story logic of having an all-knowing and all powerful God, who creates faulty humans and then blames them for his own mistakes.

So he creates man, man sins, it is his fault in the end. He creates his own lies. So if there is a situation in your life, you wanted something, you wanted to buy that BMW, so you create a lie in your heart, God if you actually love me you will get me my BMW or if my wife is sick, God if you really love me, you really love my wife then you must heal her.

You are creating a lie for you to believe in, you create your own lie and we do that all the time. God if you love you, you wouldn't let me suffer like this. These are self-generated lies, but didn't God loved Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ suffered. But you generate your own lie, because these are narrative that you create and you put on somebody else. So it can't be wrong if it feels so right, so many young people say that. Bitterness, I can't see my own debts to God, I am so angry at God because I can't see how my own sins affect my relationship. Why are you so anxious? Because God doesn't know what he is doing. You become anxious when you think that God doesn't know what he is doing.

The other one is God will go easy on me. Instead of spending my money to give to poor, I spend on myself but think that God will go easy on me, he likes me. Or you think God will approve of whatever I am doing. Henry VIII use to have a wife called Catherine of Aragon and she couldn't give him a male heir and one of her ladies in waiting was Anne Boleyn and he fell in love with her, head over heels, but Anne Boleyn would not have sex with him. That was the English mind in those days,

you must marry me. So therefore he has to divorce Catherine of Aragon. So he writes to the pope, that he wants to give divorce to Catherine. The pope refused as the church don't allow divorce. It goes back to Henry and he gets really upset and he says, "I believe that God's will is for me to marry Anne Boleyn." So his mind creates a lie. Since God is with me, Satan is in the pope. So he creates another lie. He thought God wants me to marry, I must be right, pope must be wrong, so the pope must be listening to Satan and based on that the entire English church becomes protestant, which was actually a good thing in the end. This is how God makes good thing happen from the bad.

Anne Boleyn becomes his wife, she steals King Henry VIII, because in three years' time where she got no male heir, Anne Boleyn's head was chopped. Then he went to the next woman and then next and then next. So we create lies.

How do we actually practically live the truth?

We need to be honest with ourselves, with God and with others. We need to saturate our hearts and minds with the truth. This is what gospel repentance is. You look at sin, we can either hide here and hide from God or you look at sin the way God looks at it, which means what you do is move your position this side and you look at sin the same way as God looks at it. That's the trick. Some of us are so invested in our sin, when we sin we quickly hide, God is there and our sin is here and we are grabbing our sin. But if we actually change sides and join God's side and say God, actually I did a bad thing, my old self did bad thing and you join God because you love God and you hate sin and you acknowledge that you did sin and you hate your own sin. This happens during confession.

Now 1 John says, *He who says he doesn't have any sin lies.*

It says that we have to confess your sin all the time. You can't be embarrassed by your sin in a sense that you are a sinner. So therefore every time the sin happens, your default mode is sinning anyway, so you might run across to the other side and say, Lord I have sinned and as you hate sin, I also hate the same sin and I hate the fact that I actually let you down. That's how you actually move your behavior and God allows you to repent and you could have repented with the same sin many-many times. So basically what happens is that, you hate falsehood and you learn to love the truth as it were.

So I don't have to be afraid of truth, because God has dealt with the truth. The truth is you are a horrible sinner. If you stand up and say, because I am preaching in a church for 30 years, I am actually a little bit better than you are telling a lie. If you accept the truth that you are a horrible little sinner whether you have been in a church for 30 to 50 years, in fact the biggest hypocrites are the Christians who are longer in the business. If you accept the fact that I don't have to be afraid of truth because Jesus has dealt with it on the cross. Once you cross that threshold, your thinking change already. Yeah I did that and I was wrong, it is okay because I am joining God on this side.

So therefore I am far more evil than I thought, I am far more loved than I can imagine, because Jesus Christ died on the cross. If you confront someone with a truth in church, there are only two responses, whether you are extraverted or introverted. If you are extraverted you will say, I become defensive or angry or retaliate then after that you stop serving, you become offensive. The

other way is the more introverted response. So people have two kinds of way they respond but actually they are both the same. They are both exactly the same, immature.

A matured response would be to be careful, to discern the truth. You told me the truth of my sin, I got plenty of sin anyway, I need to apologize, I use a critique in order to help me grow, becomes a ladder rather than a hammer. A hammer will destroy me and a ladder will help me climb up.

So that actually helps because you are moving to a matured response. So if you love someone, you actually have to talk about the hard stuff. Honesty is the means to an end--To reflect God who is the truth. So the whole idea is honesty. We don't have to tell the truth. We aim to get the truth into a person, perhaps it is prejudice against you. May be if you are telling me the truth, will make me upset then you ask somebody else whom he knows, who he thinks he has got his best interest. The whole idea is to get the truth into the person. That is the end game to reflect God who is the truth.

Rahab was a prostitute who actually told a lie to help the two spies escape when the authorities of Canaanites came to raid. They say where are the spies, we know there are spies. She say, they went the other way. So she send the authorities wrong way because of her lie.

James 2:24-25 (ESV) You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25 And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

She is justified by faith because she lied. She absolutely lied. So lying is actually justified if the other person is evil and means evil. Some people have forfeited the right to the truth. The person who is wicked and out to kill is forfeited the right to the truth.

Corrie Ten Boom lived many years ago in Nazi Germany. She lived in a house with her father and the Germans were going to hunt down all Jews. During a period of time, she helped 800 Jews escape. One day one of the people whom she saved informed on Corrie Ten Boom. They came and they took the whole family into jail. Now did Corrie Ten Boom lied? She lied but the Nazis are evil and they did an evil thing. So they have forfeited the right to the truth. If they persecuted us in this country, simply because evil people have forfeited the right to the truth.

So truth has that kind of aspect. If you are having someone who basically forfeited the right and truth, they don't deserve the truth.

Proverbs 26:4-5 (ESV) Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. 5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

So you have got a fool, in one instance you answer the burglar, in one instance you don't answer the burglar, it looks like the Bible is crazy. It means telling the truth. Sometimes you have to answer a fool according to his folly. For example, people in Corinthians who were boasting about their spiritual gifts and all that and what Paul did

2 Corinthians 11:21-25 (ESV) But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they

offspring of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. 24 Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods.

He is actually answering a fool according to their folly, where is the other one you don't dignify. So there are certain circumstances in which you answer and certain questions when you don't answer. It is using wisdom.

Some people will be pushed further away. Jesus said

Matthew 7:6 (ESV) Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

There are some people who are just not wanting to hear the gospel, you tell the gospel of Jesus Christ they slap in your face, they take the pearls that you give them and they trample under the foot like dogs. So with these people who are never going to appreciate the truth, may be it is wiser not to give them the truth and just pray for them and may be one day the gospel will become clearer and when they are more ready to accept it.

KEEPING PROMISES

The only way I can keep the past from controlling me is learning to forgive. If you don't forgive then the past will always control you. Every time you want to move forward, you cannot because you are thinking about what the fellow did to me, but the other opposite is, the only way I can keep the future from controlling me is to keep my promises.

Integrity is keeping your promises; it is very-very difficult. I can promise you something now but I will change my mind if something else happens in the future, which means the future controls you. it means I am undependable. That's the problem. So part of integrity is keeping our promises. That is very difficult. Today people don't get married anymore because they cannot keep their promises. They refuse to let the future control them. It means I don't know what is going to happens 10 years from now, maybe I don't like anymore, maybe you grow old and fat. So that's the issue here. Integrity is also keeping your promises, because you need to act like God.