

EPHESIANS – FACT SHEET 7



Ephesians – Its Message:

As the Apostle moves on into the more practical sections of his letter, we see him move from exposition to exhortation, from doctrine to duty, from ‘what God has done’ to ‘what we must do’.

In the second part of chapter 4 (verses 17-32) and in chapter 5 – Paul also moves from practical to *personal*. Up to now it has been a ‘corporate thing’, God’s ultimate purpose (Eph 1:10), the Church’s role in that (Eph 3:10), with the great pre-requisite for any church to have unity (Eph 4:1-16). Paul now moves from the corporate considerations to the individual part played by each member, as ‘each member does it’s work’ (Eph 4:16).

Chapter 4:17-5:21

Paul starts this chapter, a little like he started chapter 2 – referring back to the ‘old life’. As believers, their lives (and subsequently ours) are to be hallmarked by a step change in their character, attitude and actions. Rather like old, tatty clothes, they are to ‘put off’ the old self (4:22) and ‘put on’ the new (4:24) ‘..created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness’. A refusal to allow God to change us, clinging onto our old ‘clothes’, has the two-fold effect of giving the devil a foothold in our lives (4:27) whilst at the same time, grieving the very Spirit who has sealed us for eternity (4:30).

The believers standard is ‘not the gentiles’ (4:17) but God Himself (5:1), whom has given us a full and complete example in the form of Christ (5:2). As His ‘imitators’ therefore, we are to follow Christ’s example both in love (5:2) and holiness (5:3). The comparative list Paul provides throughout this section is a stark contrast between our ‘old and new set of clothes’. Such ‘garments’ as greed, hatred, deceit, unwholesome talk, used to be frequently found in our ‘wardrobes’ – whereas if we are now ‘in Christ’, our wardrobe has been transformed (by His Spirit – 5:18) to include truth, righteousness, humility, love, holiness, to name a few.

This seems a tall order for anyone; how is such a transformation possible? Well ultimately it is through the Spirit’s power (5:18), though in practical partnership we can ‘help ourselves’ in several ways:

- Watch the company we keep (5:6-7)
- Find out what pleases the Lord (5:10) through His Word
- Avoid evil (5:11)
- Be careful how you live (5:15)

Such lives will subsequently demonstrate all of the hallmarks of those who are members of God's household, of His 'new society'. They will be a people of praise (5:20) and humility (5:21).

Further Study:

Comparison of our old and new clothes!

From the Apostle Paul: 1 Cor 5, Gal 5, Titus 3, Phil 2:1-5, Col 3, 1 Thess 4

From other NT Apostles: James 4, 1 Peter 4



“Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your Word” Psalm 119:18