



In this issue:

The New Man p. 1

Reflections of the
Psalms: Psalm 5 p. 5

Made To Do Hard
Things p. 7

The New Man

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, 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; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with

greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. 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. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:17-32

*Put on your new
nature, created to be
like God—truly
righteous and holy.*

EPHESIANS 4:24 NLT

Put Off the Old Man

Being in Christ means to be a New Creation. We are to put off the Old Man and put on the New Man. Paul describes the character of both men in this passage.

Paul has been talking all through this book about the Jews and the Gentiles. Previously these groups of people were opposed to one another in their religion and lifestyle. However, now there would no longer be Jew and Gentile. The gospel is creating a new name for the believers: Christian. As Paul wrote to the Galatians, "there is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for all are one in Christ Jesus."

As Paul wrote in Ephesians chapter 2, the middle wall of partition was taken away and now all Christians are one and “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets” with “Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” They are to no longer walk in the futility of their mind.

The Greek word *mataiotés* used in Ephesians 4:17 means vanity or emptiness and is translated variously as vanity, emptiness, unreality, purposelessness, ineffectiveness, instability, frailty, and false religion. (*Strong's 3153*)

Thayer's Greek Lexicon states that this is a purely Biblical and ecclesiastical word. It can mean that

There is a designated lifestyle to which we are called in Christ.

which is devoid of the truth and appropriateness. As used in Ephesians 4:17 it indicates perverseness and depravation.

Paul describes the kind of lifestyle of the pagan world in Rom. 1:18-25:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged

the truth of God for the lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

There is little doubt about the kind of life in which Paul says they should no longer walk. This “futility” led them to have their understanding darkened. They were alienated from the life of God because (1) of the ignorance in them; (2) of the blindness of their heart. They were past feeling; their consciences were seared over and unresponsive. They were totally given over to lewdness – “unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence and uncleanness” – “in a moral sense, the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living” (*Thayer's*).

Paul admonishes them to leave this way of life. This is not in keeping with the teaching of Christ and Christian doctrine. They are to put off the Old Man, which has the heart and mind of the flesh. When they were in this condition, they were alienated from God, but now they are to be united with God and with one another by putting on the New Man.

Put On the New Man

We do not learn from Christ to act like the Old Man with his pagan values. We learn that from the Devil and all the agents that he em-

There may be all kinds of “unity” movements, but they may not all reflect the unity of the Spirit.

ploy to deceive us and lead us astray. When we come to Christ, we learn a new way of walking as we are renewed in the spirit of our mind. This is not man's doing at all, but it is the work of God in our hearts.

Very simply stated it means to put on Christ. Christians put on Christ in baptism (Galatians 3:26-27). They put on the name of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20). They put on (or receive inwardly) the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5). They put on "the body of Christ" in the sense of belonging to his spiritual body, the church. They put on the manner of daily living that Christ exhibited. They put on Christ in the sense of being "in Christ."

Harper points out that Paul made the application in practical living concerning what he meant by putting off the old man and putting on the new man. From this verse through Ephesians 5:20, the contrast between the two is dramatically presented:

falsehood vs. truth (Ephesians 4:25)

resentment vs. self-control (Ephesians 4:26,27)

stealing vs. generosity (Ephesians 4:28)

evil speech vs. edification (Ephesians 4:29,30)

malice vs. love (Ephesians 4:31-5:2)

impurity vs. chastity (Ephesians 5:3-14)

imprudence vs wisdom (Ephesians 5:15-17)

debauchery vs. joy (Ephesians 5:18-20)

In Ephesians 4:30 Paul admonishes us not to grieve the Holy Spirit. The Greek word used in this text is *lupeo* (*Strong's 3076*) and it means to distress, to grieve, or to pain. *Thayer's* states that it means to make sorrowful; to affect with sadness, cause grief; to throw into sorrow.

What parent has not at times been "grieved" by something a child has done. It is important to remember that God loves us as our Father. When we go down the wrong path in life, it makes him sad.

In addition to "grieving" the Holy Spirit, mentioned here, the New Testament reveals a number of other ways in which people may sin against the Holy Spirit:

They may lust against him (Galatians 5:16).

They may resist him (Acts 7:51).

They may lie to him (Acts 5:3).

They may try him (Acts 5:9).

They may insult him (do despite unto; Hebrews 10:24).

They may blaspheme against him (Mark 3:29).

They may "quench" him (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The one baptism is the one Jesus commissioned the apostles to teach in all the world.

The day of redemption Paul speaks of here means the day of judgment when our redemption will be completed. Coffman says: "Such conditions of the inward life as that indicated by the prohibitions listed here are the bane of earthly existence. What incredible waste and loss of all that is precious flow out of the undisciplined lives of unregenerated people; and, tragic as that is, it must be held even more deplorable that many Christians have never learned to live above the behavior Paul proscribed in this powerful verse. We are indebted to Hendriksen for excellent definitions of the sins here enumerated: **Bitterness ...** is the settled disposition of one who is resentful. **Anger ...** is strong, sudden antagonism, explosive, potential murder. **Wrath ...** is like a roaring furnace, settled indignation. **Clamor ...** is yelling at others. **Railing ...** is 'blasphemy' in the Greek, meaning 'speaking against God or man.' **Malice ...** takes delight in inflicting hurt or injury."

Next Paul encourages us to put on the exact opposite behavior of this that he has just forbidden.

He encourages us to be kind to one another; to be tenderhearted; to forgive one another. Paul reasons that we should do this because God in Christ has

forgiven us.

The sanctification of a Christian does not take place overnight. It is not like turning the page in a book. It is more like turning a spade in a garden. It is cultivating the new life in Christ. We must eradicate the weeds from the garden of our Christian life, so that good, healthy productive plants may thrive. In this way, we are not only blessed, but we become a blessing to others.

This song performed by the Hemphills describes this process of sanctification that God is working in the hearts of Christians.

“He's Still Workin' On Me”

He's still working on me
To make me what I need to be
It took him just a week to make the moon and stars
The sun and the earth and Jupiter and Mars
How loving and patient He must be
'Cause He's still workin' on me

There really ought to be a sign upon my heart
Don't judge him yet, there's an unfinished part
But I'll be better just according to His plan
Fashioned by the Master's loving hands

In the mirror of His word
Reflections that I see
Makes me wonder why He never gave up on me
But He loves me as I am and helps me when I pray
Remember He's the potter, I'm the clay

He's still working on me
To make me what I need to be
It took him just a week to make the moon and stars
The sun and the earth and Jupiter and Mars
How loving and patient He must be
'Cause He's still workin' on me

Songwriter: Joel Hemphill

Artist: The Hemphills

Album: Workin'

Released: 1980

L. Scott Gage

Fayetteville, AR

Sources:

Burton Coffman Commentary

Thayer's Greek English Lexicon

“God became man to turn creatures into sons: not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man. It is not like teaching a horse to jump better and better but like turning a horse into a winged creature.”

C. S. Lewis

Reflections of the Psalms: Psalm 5

For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness,

Nor shall evil dwell with You.

The boastful shall not stand in Your sight;

You hate all workers of iniquity.

You shall destroy those who speak falsehood;

The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy;

In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple.

Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies;

Make Your way straight before my face.

Psalm 5:4-8

How many of you have heard the expression, "I am not a morning person!"? For many people, that expression is all too accurate. In fact, we have all sorts of expressions that point to how we get up in the morning. "Boy, he must have gotten up on the wrong side of the bed this morning!", or "What's wrong with her? She's as grouchy as an old bear." Sound familiar?

Even if these expressions do not apply to you, and you are one of those irritating people that get up cheerful and talkative in the morning, you probably still get going by a set routine that does not vary very much from day to day. Too often, we get up and face the day like we would face some unpleasant task that has to be done. This may sound humorous, and it may be accurate, but how does this compare to what a Christian should do?

In Psalm 5, we find an answer to this in the words of David. For David, the morning was a time to

reflect on what had been happening, and what he would face that day. The first three verses are significant in that David showed several important characteristics of his life. First, he began each day in prayer. "Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my meditation. Give heed to the voice of my cry, My King and my God, For to You I will pray. My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up."

For David, the morning was a time to reflect on what had been happening, and what he would face that day.

How many of us begin our daily routines with prayer? We have time to eat breakfast (maybe), or read the newspaper, but do we have time to pray to our Heavenly Father and ask for help with the day? Why is each day a burden? What did Jesus say? "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matt 11:29-30)

Another characteristic of David is that his prayers were not always cheerful. He wrote, "Give heed to the voice of my cry" The responsibility of ruling a nation must have been immense, and David knew that his success was tied directly to his dependence upon God. Likewise, we must present our petitions to the Lord in prayer whether we feel like praying or not. It is during the times that we do not feel like praying that we especially need to pray.

Finally, David prayed with patience. "I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation." David had learned the priceless lesson that we must wait on the Lord. The Lord knows what is good for us, and when it is good for us. Too often, we look for the quick solution - we almost DEMAND instant satisfaction. But the Lord's wisdom is infi-

nately deep and rich. We must learn to "wait in expectation".

As David thought about the day that was facing him, he knew that he would be facing two categories of people: those that loved the Lord, and those that did not love the Lord. Throughout the centuries, men and women, who follow the Lord, have been repelled by the worldliness and sin that exists in the world.

David knew that his success was tied directly to his dependence upon God.

Some try to deal with the problem by hiding in a sanctuary - a monastery. Others only associate with "our kind" of people and look down on other "less spiritual" people. Well, David did not have that luxury. As a ruler, he had to confront evil and worldliness daily. So, David prayed for the Lord to guide his paths, "make Your way straight before my face." (vs. 8) He knew that the Lord would protect those who love Him. The last two verses are almost a song of praise because of David's confidence in the Lord's help.

Today, we are more than just a ruler of physical Israel. We are children of God and His ambassadors to this world. Yes, for a Christian, the destructive effects of sin that we see in people is like a knife in our hearts, but we cannot turn from the world just because it is unpleasant! As Paul wrote, "God forbid!" Instead, we have a mission, a responsibility, to take the good news - the Gospel - to the world. The people who are so deeply sunk into sin - THEY especially need to hear about Jesus Christ.

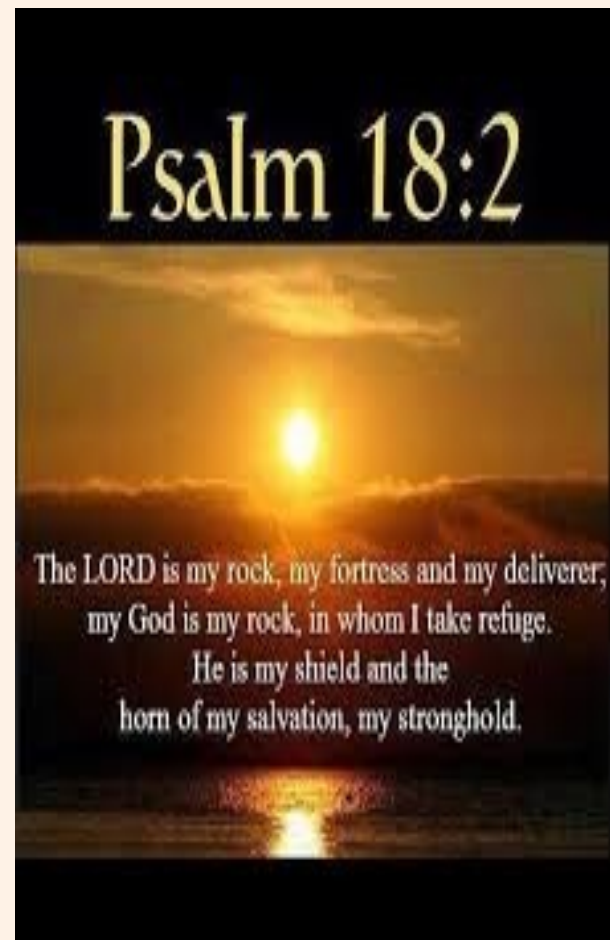
Each morning, as we get out of bed and go through our routines, we must approach the day as an opportunity to spread some good around us. Do you have to preach a sermon each time you see someone? No. But, we can preach a sermon in our lives. We can show that we love Jesus Christ. Sooner or

later, someone will become interested and ask us about why we are a Christian, or what we believe. THEN we can plant a seed, or bring a soul to Christ.

It will happen my friends, IF we live our lives for Christ; and the FIRST STEP is to begin with prayer. At night, we can pray for help and peace; in the morning, we can pray for guidance and strength. We can also praise God; because, like David, we KNOW that the Lord is our shield as we face life each day.

Jim Shelburn

San Antonio, TX



Made To Do Hard Things

"We were made to do hard things" is the motto by which Katie Wells and her family live. Did she know when that motto was formulated that it would also mean "made to walk on hard things"? Regardless, that is now why she and four friends are in the news.

On October 10 of this year Katie and her friends, part of a group called "Wellness Mama", set a new Guinness World Record for longest distance walked barefoot by a relay team on Lego blocks in one hour. In front of independent witnesses, supportive family and friends, and two medical professionals (for foot verification), the five friends walked 2.04 miles in one hour - on Lego blocks.

Any of us with kids or grandkids have likely felt the pain of unintentionally stepping on a small building block. These mothers did it intentionally! Each of the five spent over twelve minutes doing it. At the end Wells commented, "I've always said that moms are one of the most powerful forces on this planet, and they proved it this morning."

Becoming a Christian means beginning a new walk in life. Paul put it this way in Romans 6:4: "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The idea of "walk" in the Bible means how we live our lives.

If someone asks me to join them on a walk, I'm apt to say Yes; I enjoy a good walk. But if I learn that the walk will take me to places that might be dangerous or hard, I may not accept the invitation. An easy stroll? Yes. A hard climb up a mountain? Maybe not.

Here is the walk Jesus invites us to take: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24). Two challenges appear in that invitation. To "deny" self means I will walk with Him even when I might not like where He is going. To take up a cross means that we will continue walking even if we must be sacrificed upon a cross. An easy walk with Christ? Hardly!

Walking with Christ will prove to be a blessing for others, as Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:10: "For we

are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Just as Jesus "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38), so His followers will do good things for others who are in need.

Sometimes our walk will be relatively easy; at other times incredibly hard. But one thing will always be true: "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). And here's something you need to know about faith: "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith" (1 John 5:4).

Christians are made for hard things! When we walk with the Lord, He empowers us to be victorious over every obstacle.

Timothy D. Hall
Lightgrams – Nov. 26, 2020

Psalm 55:22 "Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved." A powerful verse, Psalm 55:22 touches on how you don't have to go it alone when times are tough. Instead, turn to the Lord who will 'sustain' you and help you get through it.



Volume 42 - Number 1 - Jan/Feb 2023

BC is published every other month. Send all inquiries, address changes and subscriptions to the editor: L Scott Gage, PO Box 3425, Fayetteville, AR 72702-3425 Voice 479-521-6809

Email: Lsgage129@cs.com

www.basicchristianity.net