

Ephesians 4:20-24

Ephesians 4:20 resumes Paul's thought began in 4:1-3:

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, Urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called...humility...gentleness...patience...love..."

But, was diverted by the sections on:

1. The Unity of the body of Christ (4:4-6)
2. The Diversity of gifts in the body of Christ necessary for spiritual growth/maturity (4:7-16)
3. The identification of the former way of life (4:17-19)

Ephesians 4:20 – “But that is not the way you learned Christ! —

1. “You” is a definite contrast with the “they...the Gentiles...” of 4:17-19 who are:
 - a. Futility of their minds
 - b. Darkened in their understanding
 - c. Alienated from the life of God
 - d. Ignorant
 - e. Harden hearts
 - f. Calloused souls
 - g. Given themselves over to sensuality and greed
 - h. Practicing every kind of impurity
2. “to learn Christ” is *emathete tou Christou*. The Greek *emathete* is aorist indicative active from *manthano* (or, “disciple”) meaning “to learn”. The implication is that just as the Jews learned the Torah, now the believer learns Christ.
 - a. This implies two things:
 - i. Educational, academic, catechetical /cat-e-cet-i-cal/ instruction
 - ii. Life of devotion becoming a follower or a disciple of the person Jesus Christ.
 - b. Paul studied and learned of Christ
 - c. Paul sent Timothy to Corinth to remind them of Paul's ways in Christ and to teach the things Paul teaches in every church (1 Corinthians 4:17)
 - i. “That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.” – 1 Corinthians 4:17
 - d. Colossians 2:6 is the very essence of this concept “to learn of Christ”:
 - i. “Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that *no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit*, according to *human tradition*, **according to the elemental spirits of the world**, and **not according to Christ**.” – Colossians 2:6-8
 1. According to Christ:
 - a. Received Christ Jesus
 - b. Rooted in him
 - c. Built up in him
 - d. Established in the faith
 - e. You were taught
 2. According to the elemental spirits of the world:

- a. Take “you” captive (believers can still be taken captive by demons)
 - b. “Philosophy” - world views based not in the Truth of God’s created reality or God’s revealed Word)
 - c. “Empty deceit” - vain, empty, false realities such as OT idols)
 - d. “Human tradition” - all human tradition was at one time a new, novel idea that superseded some previous “tradition” and created a new culture, a new way of life, a new idea that became the tradition, culture or the new, contemporary way of viewing life and doing things. Point: if something can be updated and changed, then it cannot have been eternal Truth.
3. These Colossians “came to know the grace of God in truth”...
- a. ...from Epaphras who himself came from Ephesus after being with Paul according to Colossians 1:6-7 – “...just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf.”
 - b. Paul had not visited the Colossians (Col. 2:1) when he wrote the letter to them.

Ephesians 4:21 – “assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,”

1. “assuming” (*ei ge*), or “if indeed”, or “surely” means it is a certainty. This is the first class condition of “if” in the Greek which means “if, and I know it is true”, and not the third class condition which we are familiar which means, “maybe you did or maybe you did not, we are not sure.”

Conditions of “If” or “εἰ”			
Class	Viewpoint	Statement	Example
First	Reality	“If, and I know it to be true.”	Mt. 4:3, 6
Second	Unreality	“If you will, but you won’t”	Mt. 4:9
Third	Unknown	“If, maybe you will, maybe you won’t”	1 Jn. 1:9
Fourth	Unlikely	“If, I wish it were true, but it is not”	1 Pt. 3:14, 17

2. “Heard” *akouo* – “to hear”
 - a. Occurred in Ephesians 2:17-20 – When Jesus preached and when the teaching of the apostles and prophets of the NT church preached/taught.
3. “Taught” *didasko* – to teach, or to be taught (passive)

Ephesians 4:22 – “to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,”

1. “to put off” *apothesthai* – meaning “to put off”, “to remove as one puts off clothes”
 - a. The changing of clothes image signifies an exchange of identities.
 - b. The fact this word is infinitive, or includes the word “to” denotes the substance of what they had been taught...they were “taught to...” So, teaching is the basis for the action.
 - c. The aorist denotes a once and for all, definite, concluding action such as the stripping off is to be done at once, and for good.
2. “former manner of life” *anastrophēn*, or “old behavioral haunts”

3. “is corrupt” *phtheiromenon* – is in the present tense and means “is being corrupted” and reveals that the fallen state of the unbeliever is in a continuous process of disintegration.
 - a. This refers back to the futile thinking of the unbeliever and the 8 stages of reversionism.
4. This same idea appears in Colossians 3:9 with this distinction that the Colossians are reminded that they have already “put off”, where here in Ephesians they are told to “put off”. This is the “now, but not yet” contrast in the NT:
 - a. Colossians is indicative (mood of reality) and
 - b. Ephesians is imperative (mood of a command)

Ephesians 4:23 – “and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds

1. This is a contrasting POSITIVE statement about the believer who formerly was an unbeliever in a continuous state of undoing or progressive deterioration.
2. The believer is now in a state of perpetual renewal/renovation of the MIND and SPIRIT, or literally “in the spirit of your minds”, which is speaking about the SOUL and the second phase of salvation...the present sanctification, the renewal of the mind
3. This is the reorientation of their world view as the NIV says, “to be made new in the attitude of your minds.”
4. Romans 12:2 – do not conform, but be transformed
5. 2 Corinthians 3:18 – “from one degree of glory to another”
6. 2 Corinthians 4:16 – the inner man is being continually renewed day by day

Ephesians 4:24 – “and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

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

²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.

²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

²⁹ Let no

corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

³¹ Let all **bitterness** and **wrath** and **anger** and

clamor and **slander** be put away from you, along with all **malice**.

³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.