

# Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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## No Longer Walk The Old Way

by Dan Trygg

**"But truthing in love, we might grow up all things into Him who is the head, Christ, <sup>16</sup> out-from whom the whole body, being closely-fitted-together and knitted-together by every connection (touch) of the supply (provision, support, help), according to the proper inworking of each individual part, causes the growth of the body unto the building up of itself in love. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, this I say and testify (affirm) in the Lord: Y'all no longer to walk as the nations walk, in the futility (nonsense) of their perception, <sup>18</sup> having-been-darkened in their way of thinking, having-been-estranged from the life of God, because of the ignorance (not-knowing, or 'ignore-ance') being in them on account of the hardness (dullness, obstinacy) of their hearts, <sup>19</sup> whoever having-put-pain-and-sensitivity-away-from-themselves gave themselves over to sensuality by the practice of every kind of impurity with insatiableness. <sup>20</sup> But that is not how you came-to-know (discovered, learned-by-inquiry) the Messiah, <sup>21</sup> if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, according as truth (reality) is in Jesus..."**

Ephesians 4:15-21

**I have written about this passage several times, over the years, usually breaking the context up at verse 17.**

While that *is* a natural break, it is not a *complete* break. It is *not* a fresh start, or a totally new train of thought. Verse 17 *grows out of* the previous context. As I have said before, **when you see a "therefore", you need to ask "What is it *there* for?"** It is a conclusion, inference, or deduction from what had been stated or argued in the previous section. **In the past, I have focused on describing how the nations (Gentiles, unbelievers) are choosing to live, ...breaking down the Greek words and painting a picture of the dynamics by which so many people operate, ...people who do not know Christ, or who are not actively following Him. I was thinking in terms of "us" versus "them". "They" are living in a vain, empty, erroneous, and ineffective way. "They" have been darkened in their way of thinking. "They" are people who have been alienated-away or disconnected-from the life of God, ...because they either do not know the truth, or "they" choose to ignore the truth, because their hearts have become dull, resistant, insensitive toward God. "They" are people who refuse to address the painful realities of their lives, and choose instead to give themselves to sensual pleasures to compensate, even though they do not find a lasting solution there. They "stuff" their pain, and "medicate" themselves with sensual experiences to "feel better, when they feel bad." This is "insatiable" because the underlying problems are never dealt with, ...only temporarily put aside. When the temporary "fix", or "escape", is over, the internal realities of emptiness, boredom, sadness, negative self-perception, and woundedness surface again. There is no end to this cycle, and inevitably it takes a toll on a person over their lifetime.**

While that is a pretty fair overview of what Paul describes here, **the point I am seeing more clearly *this* time around it that there is no "us" versus "them". This is the cycle of life we are *all* caught up in, to some degree or another. Becoming a Christian does not magically transfer us from the "them" camp to the "us" camp, where "we" have all our problems *solved*. NO! We were *all* steeped in the dysfunction, dysphoria and disease caused by sin, and reinforced by the dynamics and propaganda of this present evil age (Gal. 1:4; Eph. 2:2). Every one of us has been schooled, misled and misdirected by the influence and power of the enemy, who is "working in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). When we come to Christ, our eternal citizenship and identity have been changed, ...but we don't fully know how to live according to the reality of the new life that God has birthed within us.**

**That is why Paul wrote, in 4:17, that we are to "*no longer*" live as those who do not know God. Because we have been living in the same ways that other people do, ...the same ways we *learned* to live and operate by before knowing Christ. So, instead of seeing this in terms of "us" and "them", as though we were in two very different places, with two very different mindsets and ways of dealing with life, ...I am seeing that we *all* have learned to live "according to the course of this world" in various ways, ...and those of us who are actively following Christ are to be *discovering* new and healthier ways to live. We are to put aside the old, immature ways, and adopt new ways of living.**

As we discussed last time, immaturity is living according to the flesh, whether that means according to physical desires or self-ability. **Maturity is developed as we learn to walk in response to the Spirit. He will lead us to new realizations, healthier and happier ways of living, as we grow all aspects of our lives into Him. We will learn to recognize God's activity in our lives, and we will choose more and more to respond to His direction. We all start out as immature. Our job is to increase our connection to, and expression of, Jesus. Part of that is "*truthing in love*". "Truthing" is an interesting term. It is an ongoing verbal form. The verse before talked about how immature people are vulnerable to deception. In order to become mature, we need to be *radically committed to walking in truth*. Truth is more than right doctrine. It is also about honesty. It is about what is reality. The Greek word for "*truth*" is interesting. It is a *negated* form of a word which means "*hidden, unnoticed*". In other words, *the unseen or hidden reality is now noticed and recognized*. So, when we are "truthing", we are talking about what had been hidden or unnoticed, ...or what is a reality that we or others may not have been aware of. This is an important realization.**

The “truth” may *not* be what we know, ...or what we think we know. *It is what is “reality”, whether we or others recognize it or not.* We can speak or express our own “truth”, our inner thoughts, emotions, struggles, misbeliefs. We need to do this in an environment of *agapē*-love, where we can safely be vulnerable and honest, without fear of rejection, condemnation or reprisal, ...an environment or relationship where we are valued and affirmed. **Or, we can speak to another person what they may not know about themselves**, ...who they are as new creatures in Christ, ...or that they are loved and accepted by God, and by us. Or, we may help them to see areas of brokenness and strongholds that have found a place in their lives, so that they can reject what is the lie they have believed, and embrace God’s love and truth (2 Cor. 10:3-5). Confession, instruction, processing and affirmation can be powerful experiences that can help us grow toward Christ. **Again, “truthing” is not limited to words.** Jesus washed the disciples’ feet, both as an expression of His love for them, and also as an example of how they were to treat one another in humble service. An act of love or kindness can penetrate deeper into someone’s heart than 100 sermons.

**It is important to recognize that there can be more than one truth, or reality, in the same place at the same time.** You may say, “What?” How can there be two realities co-existing at the same time? **There are many examples of this.** *The present evil age is here* entrenched and influencing people everywhere. **At the same time, the kingdom of God is also here**, at work, proclaiming and revealing a different truth for people to choose to trust in, and live by. **Each one of us in Christ has our old self**, the personality and persona that we have developed to navigate through this life. Some of that is a compilation of layers of self-defense mechanisms, and strategies for covering our pain. There is a history of experiences, hurts, messages that have influenced how we live. The enemy has planted and established strongholds in our lives to keep us down, or under his domination. **At the same time, because we have come to Christ, we have been born from above, and are a new person.** The Holy Spirit is working in our lives to lead us away from the negative messages and influences that we have incorporated into our persona. He wants to set us free. **We choose which “reality” we are going to live by.** Are you going to continue to live by the patterns you learned from the world, ...or are you determined to “no longer live as others live”. In Romans 12:2, Paul put it this way, “Do not conform (for yourselves) to this age, but be transformed by the renewal (complete change for the better) of your mind, toward you to test-out-by-trial-to-discover the desire of God, that which is beneficial, well-pleasing and mature.” **We choose whether to go along with the default patterns we learned in this broken world, or whether we will choose to “no longer” live according to those patterns, ...and set out to discover how to live in the truth/reality of God in and with us.**

Let’s look a little closer to what Paul says about the unproductive way that people tend to live, but which we must now turn away from. **Their thoughts and perceptions are vain, empty, transitory**, futile and full of frustration. They think about and live for things that have no productive or lasting value, ...certainly no eternal value. **Their reasonings have been darkened.** Paul’s description here is interesting. They are in the ongoing state of being “having been darkened” in their perceptions and reasonings. **They are “having been estranged from” the life of God.** This is because of the “ignorance being in them due to the hardness of their hearts.” In other words, **the problem is more than simple “not knowing”.** **It is more that they are resistant to recognize or acknowledge God.** In Romans 1, Paul says that, even though the evidence and testimony of God’s existence is clearly seen through the world He made, people “suppress the truth”. They simply do not *want* to acknowledge God, ...so they *don’t*. **Because they are resistant to acknowledging Him, they do not experience the spiritual life that comes from Him**, and they remain in darkness. The next phrase in Ephesians 4:19 is often translated as “having become callous”. The Greek word is *apalgeō*. You may see the root *algeō* in our English word, analgesic. *Algeō* means to “feel pain, grief, discomfort; to be troubled, anxious; to feel shame or embarrassment”. An analgesic “lifts the pain”. An apalgesic would be to “put the pain away from you”. It is a very descriptive word. You *are* in pain or discomfort, but you put it aside, disregard it, or “stuff it”. The pain, discomfort or shame is there to tell you something. By simply disregarding it, the problem remains unaddressed. A responsible, healthy person would want to examine the pain, and deal with the root cause. **These people do not want to listen to their inner pain**, ...which is often the consequence of their behavior. One result of doing this over and over is that you eventually become insensitive toward the pain. Instead of listening to the warning signal of pain or inner discomfort, **these people try to cover the pain with an endless parade of distractions**, ...sensual pleasures and stimulations of various kinds. “...unto a practice of every defilement”. **Many of these sensual diversions lead to further defilement of one’s heart and life.** Trying to escape pain, they only add more grief to their lives.

Here’s the point: **We all have been influenced by these dynamics. We all have been living by these strategies in some way or another.** That’s why he says, “Stop it! Don’t live this way *any longer*!” Paul is going to encourage us to “put aside your former manner of living, and the old self, which is being corrupted according to desires that lead us astray” (vs. 22). **He is going to instruct us put on our new identity as children of God, and learn to walk in the truth.** That may entail dealing with old business, ...understanding and jettisoning old strategies we developed to avoid our pain or discomfort. **It will mean “truthing”, ...getting honest, ...getting real, ...sharing with one another, both the lessons we are learning, and the insights that will help us to grow all things into Jesus, our Source and Completer.**