

“Remember Who You Are”

Ephesians 4:20-24

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March 18, 2007

In Ephesians 4:25-32, Paul is about to give a flurry of commands for Christians to live by. Before he does, he first reminds believers who they are not (17-19, unsaved and ungodly) and who they are (20-24, new creatures in Christ). Once again Paul reiterates that biblical imperatives (our practice) must flow from biblical indicatives (our position). What we know dictates how we live.

“^{4:20}But you have not so learned Christ, ^{4:21}inasmuch as you heard about Him and were taught in Him just as the truth is in Jesus, ^{4:22}that you have laid aside the old person according to the former lifestyle who is being corrupted in accordance with the desires coming from deceit, ^{4:23}but you are being renewed by the spirit in your mind ^{4:24}and that you have put on the new person who has been created after God’s likeness in righteousness and holiness that comes from truth”

1. Remember, Christian, that at conversion you put off the old self.

“you have laid aside the old person” (4:22)

A. At a specific moment in time.

B. It is a done deal.

C. The old self is being corrupted by deceit.

2. Remember, Christian, that you are being renewed in your mind.

“you are being renewed by the spirit in your mind” (4:23)

A. It is ongoing.

B. It is a process.

C. It is lifelong.

D. It is internal.

3. Remember Christian, that at conversion you put on the new self.

“you have put on the new person” (4:24)

A. Created in God’s image.

B. Pursuing righteous living before men.

C. Maintaining a holy attitude before God.

D. Consistent with the truth.

Study Notes

4:20—“**learn Christ**” is the literal translation (NAS, KJ); the NIV says “know Christ”; to become a Christian you must first learn about Jesus Christ—Who He really is, what He did and what He demands. Most people say they know Jesus (Mormons, Muslims, JW’s, etc.) but they believe wrong things about Him, so they have not truly “learned Him”...as a result they do not have a personal relationship with Him; they are not truly converted and born again...they are still lost.

4:21—“**have been taught**” is the main verb in the passage and governs the three infinitives that follow in verses 22-23; “have laid aside,” “is being renewed” and “have put on.” It is from the verb *didasko*, from which we get ‘didactics’; the verb is a constative aorist which implies an ongoing, daily learning of Christ throughout the Christian life...we grow in our understanding of who Jesus is.

4:22—“**truth is in Jesus**”—to know Jesus is to know truth. If you don’t know Jesus, you are spiritually blind and remain in darkness and cannot accurately interpret reality, despite your sincerity

4:22—“**you lay aside**”—unfortunately the NAS, NIV, NKJV and KJ make this verb sound like an imperative (a command); but it’s not! It is an infinitive governed by the verb “taught” in 4:21 which is an indicative. It should say “**you have laid aside**” because it already happened at conversion...this is not something we are supposed to do repeatedly. It is in middle voice which means we receive the benefits from this action which happened at conversion. It is an aorist inceptive which means this reality took place in the past when we first were saved.

4:23—“**you be renewed**”—same as above, this is not an imperative but rather a present passive infinitive being governed by the verb “taught” in 4:21 which is indicative. This is not a command but a reality. The literal translation is “**you are being renewed**”; Greek scholars who confirm this view include Eadie, Ellicot, Moule, Meyer, Abbot, Salmond, Robinson, Reinecker, Caird, Stott, Motyer, FF Bruce, Patzia, O’Brien, A.T. Robertson, Osborne, Woodbridge, Hoehner, Rogers.

4:24—“**put on the new self**”—same as above, this is not an imperative but an infinitive governed by an indicative verb. It is not a command but the statement of a reality; the literal translation should be “**you have put on the new self.**” The parallel passage is in Colossians 3 where Paul uses the exact same three words, “put off, put on, renew” and the NASB translates it properly there in the indicative, not as imperatives. Notice: “you laid aside the old self...and have put on the new self who is being renewed” (3:9-10); NASB got it right there but messed up here for some reason...moral of the story: learn your Greek grammar!