

LIVING FREE

Sunday July 12, 2026

Ephesians 4:17–24 (NKJV) 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, ¹⁸ 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; ¹⁹ who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

²⁰ But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Introduction: Last week we celebrated one of the greatest truths in Scripture. Jesus has set us free. We discovered that we have a new King, a new identity, a new family and a new future.

But that raises an important question: If Christ has truly set us free, what does freedom look like on an everyday basis?

Was what Jesus accomplished simply to help us avoid hell and judgment? Or does it change the way we live right now?

The answer is clear.

Freedom is more than a destination; it is a transformation. It is a new way of thinking and living. It changes how we respond to those who hurt us, how we raise our children, how we treat our neighbors, and how we handle our finances. It changes everything!

Paul makes this clear in our passage.

Before Christ, we were completely lost, living in darkness and far away from the life God intended for us. Our minds were blinded, our hearts were calloused, and we lived to only to satisfy our sinful desires.

But because of Christ we have been rescued from the power of darkness and set free to walk in a new way of life.

However, this Freedom must be guarded and lived out each day.

So how do we do this?

Winning the battle for our mind (Ephesians 4:17-19)

Paul begins with the way we think.

The unbeliever walks in:

- Futility of mind. (Their minds are set on worthless things)
- Darkened understanding. (Unaware of the truth)
- Hardness of heart. (Insensitive and resistant to God)

As a result, people live to satisfy their own desires even at the expense of others.

But as believers we have learned Christ differently.

To learn Christ is more than simply knowing about Him.

- It is encountering Him as Lord and Savior
- It is hearing and believing the gospel
- It is having our minds enlightened by the truth
- It is experiencing the transforming grace of the Spirit.

When Christ changes the heart, everything begins to change.

Three realities of every believer

1. God gives us new desires

When we have truly been set free, God places within us a new desire to live in a way that honors Him. A changed heart naturally leads to a changed life.

Philippians 2:13 (NLT) For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

We don't obey to become children of God; we obey because we are His children.

Ephesians 5:1 (NLT) Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children.

2. We have a new allegiance

Since sin is no longer our master, our hearts now long to serve the One who has set us free.

Romans 6:17 (NLT) Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

Colossians 1:13-14 (NLT) For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, ¹⁴ who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

Our allegiance (loyalty) is no longer to the prince of darkness or our flesh; it is now to the King Eternal who alone is wise. Jesus Christ our Lord!

2 Corinthians 5:15 (NLT) He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.

3. There is an ongoing conflict

Although we have been set free, the battle is not over. Our old master has not stopped pursuing us. The enemy continually seeks to pull us back into our former way of life.

Ephesians 4:27 (NKJV) nor give place to the devil.

1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

The enemy knows that the only way to gain a foothold in our lives is through the avenue of our flesh. He appeals to our fallen human nature, our pride, selfish desires, sinful pleasures, and worldly ambitions to draw us away from wholehearted devotion to Christ.

Every temptation begins with a thought.

Although God has made us new in our hearts, our minds still carry memories of past experiences and old patterns that once promised momentary pleasure.

The world continually appeals to our fallen nature, enticing us to satisfy every whim and desire, many of which stand in direct opposition to the will of God.

The greatest battlefield is not around us. It is within us.

If the enemy can influence our thinking, he can influence our choices. But when we renew our minds with God's Word, we learn to reject his lies and walk in the freedom Christ has given us.

Which bring us to Paul's practical instruction.

Three daily choices that help us protect our freedom

Freedom is a spiritual reality that must be lived out.

1. Put off the old self

Ephesians 4:22 (NLT) Throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life

Making it practical:

- Reject the old way of thinking.
- Walk away from destructive patterns.
- Remove whatever feeds the old nature.

2. Renew your mind.

Ephesians 4:23 (NLT) Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.

This is where lasting changes take place.

Romans 12:2 (NKJV) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Making it practical:

- **Read** God's Word every day, even if it's just one chapter or a few verses.
- **Memorize** one Scripture each week so God's truth is available throughout your day.
- **Meditate** on what you've read by asking, *What is God saying and how should I respond?*
- **Study** the Bible more deeply by looking at the context, taking notes, and comparing related passages.
- **Apply** what you learn by intentionally obeying one truth each day.

When our minds are aligned with God's Word, the Holy Spirit renews our thinking, deepens our understanding, and transforms our lives. Changed thinking leads to changed living and changed living results in making godly choices every day.

3. Put on the new self.

Ephesians 4:24 (NLT) Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

Choose every day to live like the person Christ has freed you to be.

Choose righteousness, holiness, love, forgiveness, purity and humility.

Remember, freedom is more than avoiding sin; it is becoming more like Jesus.

Galatians 5:13 (NLT) For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

Every day we decide which nature will govern our lives. Will we live by the Spirit or the flesh?

Conclusion:

Jesus didn't simply set us free from sin; He set us free to become more like Him. True freedom is not just something we celebrate; it is a lifestyle we pursue every day.

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Creation Date: 7/13/26 11:05:00 AM
Change Number: 2
Last Saved On: 7/13/26 11:05:00 AM
Last Saved By: Microsoft Office User
Total Editing Time: 0 Minutes
Last Printed On: 7/13/26 11:05:00 AM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 5
Number of Words: 1,345
Number of Characters: 6,172 (approx.)