

## **SERIES: 'WALK WORTHY' - -1/5/25 (#9))**

### **PASTOR ROB**

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*EPH 4:17-32- - Now, this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. (18) They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. (19) They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. (20) But, that is not the way you learned Christ! — (21) assuming that you have heard about Him and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus, (22) to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires (23) and to be renewed in the Spirit of your minds, (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 that is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it might 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.*

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- **Not coincidental that we fall on this perfect Passage this first week of the New Year...and as we ponder any new 'Resolutions' for the Year. These Verses are about putting off your 'old self' and putting on your 'new self'.....its like a biblical framework for re-claiming New Year's resolutions. "Quitters' Friday" is coming up reflecting the superficiality and/or disingenuineness of so many of these resolutions....Paul suggests something so much more weighty/worthy.....spiritual and Godly....and so more justifying of commitment.**
  - **Fulfilled resolutions require a partner....in spiritual ones, that is Jesus.**
  
  - **V-17-19 sounds, on the surface, rather abrasive.....but Paul is getting the believing Gentile's attention....and warning them about falling back to classic Gentile norms/**

- behavior. (Note: understanding our sinfulness, our proclivity toward it and our need for Jesus is key- -just like these Gentiles to whom Paul is addressing). **UNDERSTANDING OUR SINFULNESS IS THE FIRST STEP TO UNDERSTANDING OUR NEED FOR JESUS AND THE HOPE HE GIVES US.**
- Paul addresses their (and our) past sinful lifestyle...in ignorance, not appreciating at all our past (dark and gloomy) futility, sensuousness, impurity and sinfulness....knowing of no other option. Ironically but naturally, we become greedy for more of it! The core issue: a callous ('conditioned' non-feeling) and hardened heart!!
  - **BUT JESUS HAS SAVED US FROM THE DARKNESS AND SOFTENS OUR HEARTS!**
  - A tender heart leaps for joy....that Jesus died for that person...and that softened heart both loves and fears/reveres God. (Pastor Rob refers to Lot and wife ...contrasting their respective fear/reverence of the Lord....and their consequences as she-alone- turns, in disobedience...transforming to a pillar of salt- -she, symbolizing a 'calloused heart' and a 'walk unworthy' and someone who clung longingly to her old life-style).
  - V-20....But there is hope for change for us.....an accountability partner (Jesus!!)- - it is by Grace that Jesus loves you AND by Grace that you are saved (through faith- - we are saying "YES" to His Grace).
  - V-21-24 Remember that the truth is IN Jesus.....once we put our faith and trust in Him....we are no longer the (flawed) fixers of our lives, He is (perfectly)....and He will walk along side you....By His grace, He will give you a whole new heart...one that WANTS to 'Walk Worthy' ..... BUT, as we 'Walk Worthy' we still have a responsibility to put off our 'old self' (Question: what part of your 'old self' do you need to focus upon?). In doing so, turn to Jesus as your Counselor.
  - V-25-29 Reminds us of areas to potentially change.....elements of our brokenness that might need addressing. Principles like: speaking truth...with good intent, controlling/managing anger for good, sharing- -not stealing, etc.....all reminiscent of the Ten Commandments....of which the believing Gentiles may or may not have been exposed.
  - V-26-Re: Anger....no tension here....there can be 'just anger' ..... but should be 'righteous'. Not dark....not festering.
  - V-30-31-...."And do not grieve the Holy Spirit...." ....you were sealed with the Holy Spirit.....are you giving Christ room? Are our hearts bitter/wrathful/clamorous and/or filled with malice, reflecting streams of darkness- -even angry at God?- -..... or.....are they consistent with our total commitment to Him and to His Spirit? Do we give Jesus access to our Hearts? That is what He desires.....a tender heart.
  - What grieved the Holy Spirit is what grieved Jesus- -See Mark 3:1-5 (ie. The hardness of the hearts of the Pharisees)

**2025: OPEN A TENDER HEART- -LISTEN TO JESUS.**

**\*\*WALK WORTHY\*\***

