

The Reverent Life

Ephesians 4:17-24

October 26, 2025

Opening Illustration

Renewal and new life.

Introduction

What a beautiful picture of starting over, of letting go of the old to embrace the new. This is what Paul continues to stress to us in this final part of the sermon series; Blueprints for a Healthy Church. Its entitled, The Reverent Life.

Three Qualities that Lead to a Reverent Life

1. The reverent life is a different life.

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.

¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

Ephesians 4:17-19

Paul continues his appeal for the believers in Ephesus to see the difference in their life that comes from walking with Christ.

Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. James 1:22

As Christians, we are to live differently than those in the world. We are to be separated from the world and its system of worldly thinking which rebels against God.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1 Peter 2:9

The KJV says we are a 'peculiar people'. We are not the same as those who live by the world's standards.

Paul speaks of three characteristics of the unsaved person.

Firstly, their thinking is futile. Futility fails to produce the desired result. It never succeeds and amounts to nothing.

Secondly, they are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the hardening of their hearts. Hardened comes from porosis; to petrify.

Thirdly, the heart of the unbeliever is spiritually and morally calloused. When people turn away from God and continue to sin, they become apathetic about moral and spiritual things.

both their minds and consciences are corrupted. ¹⁶ They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good. Titus 1:15-16

Illustration

The difference Jesus Makes.

2. The reverent life is a daring life.

That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; Ephesians 4:20-22

The believer in Christ is to think differently than the worldly person. For the believer has moved from ignorance of God to personal knowledge of God. We have learned Christ which is far different than learned about Christ. To simply learn about Christ doesn't mean a person knows Christ personally. I can learn about Terry Fox but that doesn't lead me to know him.

Because I can know Christ personally, I can live differently. As I heard about Christ and was taught about Him, I made a choice in my mind to give my heart and life to Him. I could do this because of the truth that is in Him. The apostle John spoke of this truth in Christ that leads us to Christ.

We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. 1 John 5:20

As I grew closer to Christ, I learned that I needed to put off my old self which is being corrupted by its deceitful and selfish desires. Before we meet Jesus, the enemy of our faith blinds us to keep us from seeing the truth.

*The god of this age has **blinded** the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4*

To put off the old self is a verb that means to strip off as we would strip off old filthy clothes. When we come to Jesus, we strip off the old rags of sin when we repent of our sins and turn in faith to Him. As we live the Christ led-life we continue to strip off the old rags of sin daily as we keep putting on the new garments of righteousness and holiness. In doing this, we are becoming more like Jesus in our thoughts, our words and our actions. It's the life-long process of being perfected in Christ.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

Illustration

Clean Clothes

3. The reverent life is a determined life.

to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:23-24

As we lay aside the old self with its old nature, old thinking and old attitudes, we can put on the new self with its new heart, new mind, new attitudes, and new way of thinking. As our old way of thinking has changed, so has our way of behaving.

For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. Proverbs 23:7

The word new means brand new. The new self in Christ is new because it has been created in the likeness of God. Paul described this change in his second letter to the church at Corinth.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2Corinthians 5:17

We are created to be like God in two ways, in righteousness and holiness. Righteousness is upright behaviour. Holiness means a sacred observance of God. Both are essential to the new life we have in Christ. It's the way we are to relate to God and to others. Jesus made this clear once to a religious teacher.

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

³⁷ Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Matthew 22:36-39

The story of Lazarus is a picture of removing the old self and putting on the new self. After Jesus raised him, He commanded that his grave clothes be removed.

The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” John 11:44

Lazarus was alive! His old grave clothes needed to be discarded. When we come to Christ, our old grave clothes from our former sinful way of life need to be thrown as well. We need to put on our new garments. Don’t live in those old filthy rags of sin and death. You have new garments of life and hope and joy! Put them on and keep them on every day of your life!

Closing Illustration

Putting on the new self.