

Connect

What do you think must happen for a prideful person to become a genuinely humble one? How could they come to such a decision? How can it be done most easily?

Verses - Ephesians 4:17-24 (CSB)

CONTEXT: In Ephesians 4:7-16, Paul informs us of the gifts / callings that were given to the church for its edification toward works of love. The full picture of the mature body is Christlikeness.

17 Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer walk as the
Gentiles do, in the futility of their thoughts. 18 They are darkened in their
understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is
in them and because of the hardness of their hearts. 19 They became callous and
gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity
with a desire for more and more.

20 But that is not how you came to know Christ, 21 assuming you heard about
him and were taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to take off your former
way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, 23 to be renewed in
the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, the one created
according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.

Study

1. In v.17, Paul, speaking to the Gentiles, tells them not to walk as the Gentiles do. What does this mean? (1 Peter 2:11; Colossians 3:10; John 3:6)

2. By the time Paul wrote this letter, how had they come to know Christ? (v. 20, 21) What does it mean to come to know Christ? (v. 21; Romans 10:14-15) Who were the ones gifted that did this work? (John 17:18; Matthew 23:34)

3. Before coming to know Christ, how had their lives been different? (vv. 17-19) What are they like now? Are they perfected? How do we know this? (vv.22-24) What changed in their thoughts, feelings, behavior, and spiritual ways?

APPLY: Is Paul mainly concerned with correcting the external behavior, or is he more concerned with inward transformation (ie. thoughts, feelings, behavior, and spiritual ways)? What can we learn from this as our goals in various areas? (Such as raising children, disciplining each other, or counseling one another)

DISCUSS: How and by whom is the spirit of our mind renewed? (v. 23) Can we achieve such renewal by ourselves? Is there any way for us to help one another to achieve such renewal? If so, how?

Share

Think of a beneficial change in your thoughts, feelings, or behavior which has happened since you came to know Christ. Did this change happen suddenly, or gradually? Did it happen by your own willpower and conscious effort, or "automatically" as God changed you inwardly? Share your experiences.

Grow

Minister to one another through sharing praise and specific prayer requests.

- Pray that God will transform us by renewing the spirit of our minds, so that what we desire, think, feel, say, and do will all be increasingly pleasing to God; and, so that we are no longer corrupted by sinful desires.