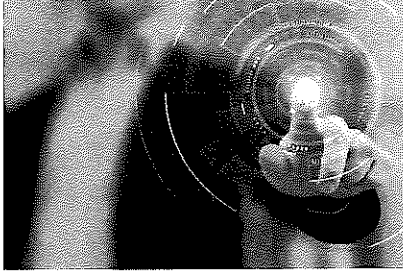


# Walk with Intention



## Topic

Sanctification

## Theme

God expects believers to live righteously.

## Desired Response

The learner will make any necessary changes to reflect new life in Christ.

## Materials

- Visuals 20–22.
- Paper and pencils.

## Scripture Focus

Ephesians 4:17–32

## Summary

Paul commanded the Ephesians to make a clean break with the sinful habits and attitudes of their unsaved past. He urged them to walk in a way that honors Christ. Such a walk involves a renewing of the mind, a dedication to truth, and a desire to live and speak honestly and compassionately.

## Outline

### I. The Wrong Way to Walk (Eph. 4:17–21)

- A. Down a dark road (4:17–19)
- B. Away from the light (4:20, 21)

### II. The Right Way to Walk (Eph. 4:22–32)

- A. Uprightly (4:22–29)
  - 1. Put off the “old man” (4:22)
  - 2. Renew your mind (4:23)
  - 3. Put on the “new man” (4:24)
  - 4. Demonstrate the new life (4:25–29)
- B. Cautiously (4:30)
- C. Gently (4:31, 32)

## Memory Verses

*“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:22–24).*



## GETTING STARTED

### My Favorite Clothes

**ASK:** What is your favorite article of clothing? Why do you like it?

**ASK:** What would it take for you to replace your favorite piece of clothing?

Paul wrote to the Ephesians about putting off their old ways of living and putting on the “new man.” Sometimes we get comfortable in our old ways and don’t want to change. Like a comfortable old garment, we want to hang on to it. Paul’s teaching should encourage us to renew our minds and put away our old ways for good.

### Right Clothes for the Job

**ASK:** What protective clothing have you worn to do a particular job? (Q1)

**ASK:** What would be the consequences of wearing something comfortable instead? (Q2)

Paul likened a believer’s proper actions to putting on certain clothes. He challenged the Ephesians to be proactive to “put on the new man and put off the old man.” We need that same challenge. If we don’t live for Christ intentionally, we will slip into what’s comfortable and familiar. We will live like we are still lost.

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### I. The Wrong Way to Walk (Eph. 4:17–21)

In Ephesians 4:17 Paul told the Christians at Ephesus not to walk like the pagan Gentiles.

#### A. Down a dark road (4:17–19)

Paul portrayed the lifestyle of Gentile unbelievers as a walk down a dark road away from God. He described them as walking “in the vanity of their mind” (4:17). Because their view of life was empty, useless, futile, and aimless, their conduct was aimless.

**ASK:** What goals do unbelievers set for themselves to gain a sense of purpose in life? (Q3) *Attaining financial freedom; saving for a comfortable retirement; accumulating “toys”; reaching a certain level of education; providing for the success of their children.*

**ASK:** What evidence have you seen that unbelievers know they are headed “down a dark road”? (Q4)

Paul further characterized unbelievers as having their “understanding dark-

ened” (Eph. 4:18; cf. Rom. 1:21). The verb tense (perfect tense) identifies a past act with continuing results. Their understanding was darkened in days gone by, and they remained in a state of darkness. Only the light of Christ could dispel this darkness.

Paul also characterized the heathen as “being alienated from the life of God” (4:18). They were separated from the life that God gives to a believing sinner.

Why do the lost travel down a “dark road” away from God? Paul blamed “the ignorance that is in them.” Such ignorance is inexcusable because “they did not like to retain God in their knowledge” (Rom. 1:28). They rejected the knowledge of God that comes through creation and conscience. They replaced God with idols because of their “blindness” of heart (Eph. 4:18). “Blindness” means “callous hardening.” The word is used of the healing around a broken bone. The material that makes up the callus is harder than the original bone. God separated the lost from eternal life because of their willful ignorance that led to their hardened, “callused” hearts.

Paul further characterized the lost Gentiles as “past feeling” and those who have “given themselves over unto lasciviousness” (4:19). The lost lack a triggered moral conscience. As they continue their sinful lives, they eventually reach a point when their sinning no longer troubles them.

Being in such a state of insensibility, the unbelieving Gentiles handed themselves over to lasciviousness, or unbridled lust. They also practiced moral uncleanness accompanied by covetousness. They were never satisfied; they clamored for more of the pleasures of sin.

**ASK:** How is the unbeliever’s clamoring for more of the pleasures of sin evident in our culture today? (Q5) *Increased drug and alcohol abuse; rise in addiction to pornography; growing participation in gambling and sports betting; broken relationships because of infidelity.*

The old nature leads the unsaved down a dark road that appeals to a futile mind and a darkened understanding. Its travelers experience separation from eternal life and abandonment to unbridled lust. They practice every type of uncleanness, and they live by greed.

## **B. Away from the light (4:20, 21)**

Paul began verse 20 with the word “but” to show a sharp contrast between the unbeliever’s life and that of a believer. They should be as different as light is from darkness. The believer’s lighted way of life reflects Christ. Paul wrote, “but ye have not so learned Christ” (4:20). Christ provides the believer’s model for life. As we live like Christ, love replaces greediness as the driving force in our lives (Eph. 3:17–19).

Paul had instructed the Ephesian believers in the ways of Christ, demonstrating that the “truth is in Jesus” (4:21). When believers adopt the unbeliever’s lifestyle, they turn their backs on the light. They ignore what they have learned about walking in the light as children of light (5:8).

**OBJECT LESSON:** Distribute paper and pencils to the learners. Instruct them to sketch a house with a tree with their eyes closed. After a minute, have volunteers show their sketches. Ask the learners to turn their papers over

and repeat the assignment with their eyes open. Obviously the second set of sketches will be much better. Make the point that while drawing in darkness is difficult, living in darkness is foolish and ultimately catastrophic.

## II. The Right Way to Walk (Eph. 4:22–32)

The Christian life involves walking the right way—God’s way. It demands obedience to God’s Word and dependence upon His Spirit. When we obey God, we walk uprightly.

### A. Uprightly (4:22–29)

#### 1. Put off the old man (4:22)

Paul cited three principles he had taught the Ephesians about Christ and the Christian life. First, he had instructed them to “put off concerning the former conversation the old man” (Eph. 4:22). The old man grows corrupt and has no rightful claim of dominance in the believer’s life. The old man has lost the war but still desires to control the believer’s attitudes and actions.

**DISPLAY:** Visual 20—Put off the “Old Man.” **READ:** Ephesians 4:22. **ASK:** What deceitful promises excite the lusts of the “old man”? (Q6) *Money makes one happy; promiscuity brings satisfaction; indulgence quiets frustrations; shirking responsibilities brings contentment.*

Just as a person takes off old clothes and puts on new clothes, so a believer should “put off . . . the old man” (4:22). He or she ought to discard the old sinful interests, desires, ambitions, attitudes, and actions that characterized his or her unregenerate life.

#### 2. Renew your mind (4:23)

Second, Paul had taught the Ephesians to be renewed in the spirit of their minds (4:23). The renewing of the believer’s mind is an ongoing process called sanctification.

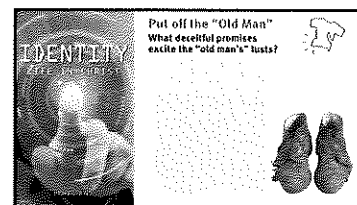
Jesus prayed His disciples would be sanctified by God’s Word (John 17:17). As believers meditate upon Scripture, they learn to perceive life from God’s perspective and desire to walk in God’s ways. As the Bible makes an impression on believers’ spirits, their spirits influence their minds, which in turn influence their actions.

**ASK:** How has regular exposure to Scripture helped renew your mind? (Q7)

#### 3. Put on the new man (4:24)

Paul’s third lesson taught the Ephesians to “put on the new man” (Eph. 4:24). The “new man” is the believer’s new nature patterned after God. In Eden God created man in His image and after His likeness. The fall of humanity into sin marred this likeness. But “in Christ” the believer has a new nature. The Holy Spirit gives him or her new interests, desires, ambitions, and abilities so he or she may grow in Christ-likeness. The new man is something totally new. It isn’t simply a patched or polished old nature. This new nature manifests itself in righteousness and holiness.

#### 4. Demonstrate the new life (4:25–29)



Walking uprightly, the believer is known for integrity. He or she renounces all forms of deception and speaks the truth with his or her neighbor (4:25). Paul added, “For we are members one of another.” In this context, Paul identified fellow church members.

**ASK:** What lies might church members tell each another? (Q8) *About how they are doing spiritually; about praying for one another; about how much they care for one another.*

**ASK:** Why is honesty between believers so important? (See Ephesians 4:15.) (Q9) *To grow, a believer must be honest about where he or she is spiritually. Lying leads to living by perception rather than reality.*

New life in Christ is also demonstrated by using the energy created by anger in a righteous way. Paul commanded the Ephesians to be angry and then added the warning to “sin not” (4:26). God gives us the ability to feel anger. Anger motivates us to take action to solve problems. But anger becomes sinful if we use it to attack people instead of problems or if we allow it to fester by not dealing with the problem that is causing the anger. Anger used for God’s glory is not sinful anger.



**DISPLAY:** Visual 21—Sinful Anger Versus Righteous Anger. It illustrates the difference between sinful anger and righteous anger.

“Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,” Paul cautioned in Ephesians 4:26. The word “wrath” identifies anger that harbors bitterness, irritation, and exasperation. We must be on guard not to give Satan a foothold by giving in to bitter passion. “Neither give place to the devil,” Paul commanded (4:27).

**ASK:** Why does letting sinful anger fester give the Devil a foothold in a believer’s life? (Q10) *Letting anger fester is to live in disobedience. Living in disobedience in one area of our lives lets Satan in to work in other areas of our lives.*

Upright living also involves putting in an honest day’s work for an honest day’s pay. Instead of stealing, each believer must “labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (4:28). By working diligently, we can provide for our own needs and assist the needy. The old nature urges, “Steal what you want.” The new nature instructs, “Work for your keep, but don’t keep everything you earn; be charitable.”

**ASK:** How might a believer be guilty of stealing? (Q11) *Wasting time at work; showing up to work late or leaving early; being dishonest on taxes; sneaking things that belong to others; refusing to tithe.*

An upright walk excludes ungodly talk. Foul and useless words are repugnant to the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth” (4:29). Off-color jokes, dirty stories, profanity, destructive speech, and frivolous talk are unbecoming. Our speech should be “that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (4:29). We should speak words that profit those who hear them.

## B. Cautiously (4:30)

As Christians, while we walk uprightly, we should also walk cautiously. God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit “unto the day of redemption” (4:30), that is, until He gives us glorified bodies at the Rapture. This sealing guarantees that we will never lose our salvation. It is possible, however, to grieve the Holy Spirit by speaking ungodly words and performing ungodly deeds. As we order our daily lives, we must walk cautiously, being alert to whatever offends the Holy Spirit. Knowing that He wants to develop in us spiritual fruit (Gal. 5:22, 23), we should avoid evil and choose what is good.

## C. Gently (4:31, 32)

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice,” Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:31. The Christian walk excludes trampling on others. It avoids resentfulness, brawling, angry shouting, and hatred. To the contrary, the Christian walk displays gentleness. We are to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving, treating offenders graciously, just as God showed His grace to us for His Son’s sake. If all believers heeded this exhortation, they would heal wounds and mend fences.

# MAKING IT PERSONAL

Use the following activities to challenge your learners to reflect new life in Christ.

## Foster Sanctification

**ASK:** What do you do daily to foster sanctification and the renewing of your mind? (Q12)

**ASK:** What can you add to jump start your daily sanctification? (Q13)

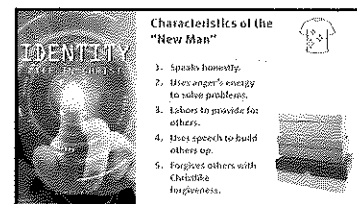
## Stop Putting off Putting off

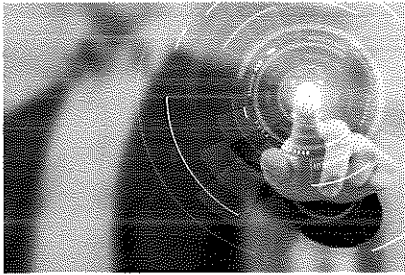
**DISPLAY:** Visual 22—Characteristics of the “New Man.” Review the characteristics of the new man.

Have your learners consider whether they have thought patterns or actions they know they need to “put off.” Challenge them to act, depending on the Holy Spirit for strength and wisdom. Encourage them to look for thoughts and actions to “put on” in their place. (Q14, 15)

## Memory Verses

Encourage your learners to memorize Ephesians 4:22–24. Give them an opportunity to say the verses in class next week.





# Walk in Love and Light

## Topic

God's love and light

## Theme

Love and light characterize those who follow Christ.

## Desired Response

The learners will let God's love shine through their lives.

## Materials

- Visuals 23, 24.
- Inflated balloon.
- Pin.

## Scripture Focus

Ephesians 5:1–17

## Summary

Paul urged the Ephesian believers to walk in love, following the example of the Lord Jesus. As they walked in love, they would shine the light of God's love to a lost world darkened by sin.

## Outline

### I. Walk in Love (Eph. 5:1–7)

- A. Follow Christ's sacrificial example (5:1, 2)
- B. Resist the world's sinful expressions (5:3, 4)
  1. Immoral behavior (5:3)
  2. Covetous desires (5:3)
  3. Sinful speech (5:4)
- C. Consider God's coming wrath (5:5–7)

### II. Walk in Light (Eph. 5:8–17)

- A. Recognize your light (5:8)
- B. Depend on the Spirit (5:9, 10)
- C. Shine brightly to expose sin (5:11–14)
- D. Buy up opportunities to shine (5:15–17)

## Memory Verses

*"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. . . . For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:2, 8).*