

LifeGroup Questions

Based On: Ephesians 4:17-24, 5:8-10

Walk Different

January 5, 2014

Overview

The book of Ephesians was written to the church in Ephesus where the temple of Artemis was worshiped. This was not only the accepted religion in the area but was also the backbone of the local economy. The Greeks referred to the goddess as Artemis, but she was known as Diana to the Romans. She was considered the goddess of fertility. As people started to believe in the gospel message they stopped worshiping Artemis and buying her shrines. Last time Paul was in Ephesus this collision of beliefs caused the whole city to riot. Demetrius, a local shrine craftsman, said in Acts 19: “He (Paul) says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. ²⁷ There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.” It is to this group of believers in this volatile atmosphere that Paul is urging to walk differently. They are to put off their old ways and to put on the new way of Christ. The last passage we have concerning Ephesus is found in the book of Revelation. The Apostle John wrote: “⁴ Yet I hold this against you (Ephesus church): “You have forsaken the love you had at first. ⁵ Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.” Walking different is a lifelong process. The church in Ephesus was in danger of letting the culture influence the church instead of the church influencing the culture. The believers in Ephesus probably still had family and friends that worshiped Artemis and yet they were to strive to put off the old way of life and to put on a new way of righteousness.

Bible Study: Ephesians 4:17-24, 5:8-10

1. The Christian life doesn't occur by accident. What steps should new believers take to cast off their old way of life? How much responsibility for change lies with new believers versus God changing them?
2. In what ways can a sinful past keep someone from growing closer to Christ?
3. In this passage in Ephesians Paul refers to the darkening of the mind and the hardening of the heart. How are people's minds darkened and hearts hardened in the church today?
4. Exposure to the ways of the world and a former way of life can cause a loss of all sensitivity to God's ways. What danger is there in being desensitized by the ways of the world? How do believers become desensitized?
5. If you are surrounded by non-believers at work or school, how can you let them see your new walk in Christ without coming across with a holier- than-thou attitude?
6. Is it possible to have a positive Christ-like influence on nonbelievers without being influenced by them? How is this done? What does an influential Christian life look like?

7. In his sermon Pastor Brent said: “We know we shouldn’t ‘follow the world’ but then the way we spend our money, run our mouth, think in our heads, is really no different than what everyone who doesn’t follow Christ does. We fall into the pattern of this world in our greed, anger, retaliation, grudge-keeping, lust.....” Everyone sins. What is the difference between messing up once in a while and falling into the pattern of this world?
8. Walking different could involve changing jobs or friends. In your own Christian life what changes have you found to be particularly difficult as you seek to walk different?
9. In his sermon Pastor Brent said: “But God has made it possible to consistently walk in victory. But it hinges on our consistent and daily discipline – a habit – that says in the face of temptation.” What habits do you have that allow you to put off your old self and put on your new self?