

Why is Separation from the World Important?

Ephesians 4:17-24

Intro:

1. Jews were different from Gentiles (non-Jews).
 - a. Non Jewish people were called “the nations” - the other guys.
 - b. Jews were superior as a group to them spiritually & morally because they obeyed the Law of Moses.
2. In this passage, we (the church) are considered like the Jews & the world (those like your former lives) are considered like the non Jews.
3. So - why is separation from the world so important? Because you are in Christ - a different creature than before! You must not conduct yourself like the world & this is why.

I. v17-19 - What the World Really Looks Like from God’s Perspective

A. v18 - The world’s **understanding is darkened**.

1. **v17 - The futility of their thinking** = lit. their brains were empty!
2. You may focus so much on this life that you don’t focus much on the next one.
3. When the Lord comes again your focus on things like money, status & world relationships lose their position of importance!
4. Lord Jesus wants you to **seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.** - Matt 6:33.

B. v18 - The world’s lives are **separated from the life of God**.

1. Do you have a **willful ignorance**? You just don’t want to know the Lord!
 - a. Do you use intellectual calisthenics as a smokescreen to justify why you can’t believe?
 - b. Do you feel you would have to give up too much? You don’t give up things when you receive the Lord - you just trade them in!
2. Do you hesitate to surrender to Him because you are too ashamed of your past behavior? **Jn 3:19-20 - This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.**
3. Do you just have a **hardening of your heart**.
 - a. Pharaoh: his heart was hardened when the plagues were removed.
 - b. How is your heart hardened? By hardship? By personal tragedy? By riches & the easy life?

C. v19 - The world’s consciences **have lost all sensitivity**.

1. **Sensitivity** (ἀπαλγέω) = lit. cease to feel pain for, so - callous (NAV), petrified.
2. **ILL: The Petrified Forest.**

D. v19 - The world **has given itself over to sensuality** = they’ve become shameless!

1. **ILL: The Law of Sin (Rom 7:14-15).**
2. The more you do it, the more addicted you become to it & the more it takes to give you the same kicks!
3. With drugs, you start in secret but eventually cry out publicly for it.
4. Like an alcoholic, you become so enslaved you eventually don’t care who sees you.

II. v20-24 - God Expects His Redeemed Children to be Different

A. v20 - Because *you did not come to know Christ that way.*

1. The way of the world - diametrically opposed to the ways of God.
 - a. In the Lord - we have respect for human life. The Lord created it, you should not abort it or euthanize it for your convenience or profit.
 - b. In the Lord - we have respect for human dignity. The Lord created us as one, not for different classes or levels of dignity.
2. Notice the way of the Lord.
 - a. He cared for people by eating with them, healing them, rescuing them from sin.
 - b. God's word tells us that *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus - Phil 2:5.*

B. v22-24 - Because being in Him involves a change of conduct.

1. **v22** - Your *former way of life* (your old self) must be laid aside. *Rom 6:1-2 - Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?*
2. **v24** - Your *new self* must be *put on* - like a change of clothes. *Gal 3:27 - all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*
 - a. *Put on & Clothe yourselves* (ἐνδύω) are the same words in both passages!
 - b. **v23** - This is accomplished by *renewing the attitude of your minds.*
 - c. *Rom 12:2 - Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

If you are aware that your life has not changed much since you gave your heart to the Lord, it's time to get with it! It's the changed life that becomes the abundant life - not the life of the world!