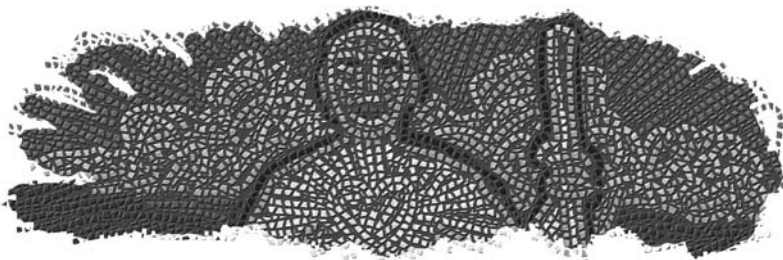


# Living *the* New Life



## SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week's Study:** *Rom. 1:26-32; 3:10-18; 12:2; 1 Cor. 2:9-16; Eph. 4:17-32; Phil. 4:8, 9.*

**Memory Text:** “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you” (*Ephesians 4:32, NKJV*).

Paul’s presentation on the practical implications of Christian unity began with a call to Christians, both Jew and Gentile, that they “walk worthy of the calling with which [they] were called” (*Eph. 4:1, NKJV*). This walk makes several demands of us. The first is preservation of the unity of Christ’s body in the midst of diversity (*vss. 1-12*). The second, our study this week, deals with walking in a new way, which is crucial for maintaining the unity Paul talks about.

This new way is neither a modification nor an improvement of the old. It is a radical transformation that rejects old values and adopts a totally new lifestyle—in thought, character, values, relationships, and motives. It is passing from death to life. It is a change of owners: from Satan to Christ.

**The Week at a Glance:** What kind of picture of humanity does Paul depict? How is the life of a Christian to be changed after accepting Christ? How is the new life to be manifested among Christians? How is this new life related to the unity of the church as a whole? What role does the Holy Spirit play in our new life? How are we to be “imitators” (*Eph. 5:1, NKJV*) of God?

*\*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, November 26.*

## Put Away the Old *(Eph. 4:17-22)*

A life “worthy of the calling” (*Eph. 4:1, NKJV*) is not only a life of unity and growth as we saw last week but also a new life. This new life is a series of negatives and positives. The first negative is “put off . . . the old man” (*vs. 22*). The Christian life begins with a clean and clear break from the past, and Paul appeals to the Ephesians to “no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk” (*vs. 17, NKJV*). To the Romans Paul used a more serious language and called upon them to crucify the old man “that the body of sin might be done away with” (*Rom. 6:6, NKJV*).

**List** some of the characteristics of the old man as mentioned in Ephesians 4:17-24. Compare with Romans 3:10-18. What kind of picture does he depict of humanity in general? What, if anything, has changed in the more than nineteen centuries since Paul wrote?

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Notice, in his depiction of the Ephesians, that Paul uses words such as “darkness,” “ignorance,” and “blindness” that led them into moral decadence. Their mind, because of sin, could not comprehend spiritual truth. As a result, their lives were wasted in seeking God either in themselves or in worthless idols or in vain philosophy. They indulged in wishful teachings and lived in spiritual darkness (*Eph. 4:18; see also Rom. 1:19-21*). Their moral sensitivity was so compromised that they could make no distinction between good and evil. The pleasures of the body, particularly immoral and deviant behavior, became their favorite pastime. They lived in “lewdness,” “uncleanness,” and “greediness” (*Eph. 4:19, NKJV; see also Rom. 1:26-32*).

Such was their life—the life of the old man—before the Gentiles came to Christ. Paul, therefore, appeals to the believers: “Don’t ever go back to the old.”

**Look at verse 19. What is Paul saying there? What does it mean to be “past feeling”? How does one become “past feeling”? In what ways have you experienced this negative principle in your own life? Why is this a danger to anyone, even a professed Christian? What is the only protection against this problem?**

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**Key Text:** *Ephesians 4:22*

### Teachers Aims:

1. To stress that the Christian life is a new life, not merely a modification of the old.
2. To draw attention to the role of the Holy Spirit in this new life.
3. To understand that Christ is the model for the life we should be living as Christians.

### Lesson Outline:

#### I. Life, Old and New (*Eph. 4:23-25*)

- A. Life without Christ really is just a stage of death.
- B. To have new life, to become a different person, requires active participation in the death of the old person and the old life.
- C. We can have the new life only through our acceptance of Christ's death for us.

#### II. Life in the Spirit (*Eph. 4:30*)

- A. Paul identifies the Holy Spirit as the vehicle of the new life Christ gives us.
- B. The Holy Spirit is a personal Being and can feel grief or joy because of our thoughts and behavior.
- C. Our love of God and knowledge of His love for us should motivate us to behave righteously.

#### III. Imitating Christ (*Eph. 4:32*)

- A. In our efforts to live a life pleasing to God, only Christ Himself is a suitable role model.
- B. The most important quality to imitate—the one from which all others flow—is self-sacrificing love.
- C. To imitate God is, literally, to manifest God to others.

**Summary:** All religions and philosophies seem to agree on one thing: We are not adequate as we are. We have to change. Another thing they have in common is their lack of success in bringing about this change. Christianity recognizes that we must become something or someone other than what or who we were before—in order for this change to be genuine. Christ gives us the example, the power, and the motivation to become different and better.

## COMMENTARY

Having argued that the Christian walk should be in balance with the Christian calling, Paul proceeds further to describe the Christian's new life as a radical transformation of the old. He expresses this radical change in terms of putting away the old and putting on the new.

### I. The New Life: Put Off the Old (*Eph. 4:17-23*)

When Paul commands, put off the “old man” and put on the “new man,” he is not speaking of some abstract theory but a

**“Put On the New”** (*Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 4:20-24*)

**Having** told the believers to “put off . . . the old man” (*Eph. 4:22*), what counsel does Paul give? *Eph. 4:22-24*.

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In accepting Christ, the believers “put off” the old lifestyle of the Gentiles. But putting off is not enough. Christianity is not a religion of negatives. It expects the believer to rise to a higher ground of moral and spiritual living. So Paul urges: “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind and . . . put on the new man” (*Eph. 4:23, 24, NKJV*).

If the life of the old man were characterized by a futile mind, the life of the new man is distinguished by a renewed mind. “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (*Rom. 12:2, NKJV*).

**How** are believers to be renewed in the mind? *Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 2:9-16; Phil. 4:8, 9*.

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After describing the vain, dark, and sinful life of the Gentiles (*Eph. 4:17-20*), Paul asserts that they were taught to give up such a life when they came to Christ. By using three words—learned, heard, taught—Paul reminds the believers they already well know the effect of salvation and new birth on their lifestyle. This truth did not come to them from any human source but from Jesus Himself (*Eph. 4:21*). Paul’s use of the name Jesus is not accidental. He wants the believers to know that the historic Jesus—the incarnate, the crucified, the risen, and the ascended One—is Himself the Truth, Himself the Revealer of truth (*John 14:6*).

“Those who receive the Saviour become sons of God. . . . Their minds are changed. . . . From cherishing supreme love for self, they come to cherish supreme love for God and for Christ.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1117.

**In your experience in becoming a Christian, did you find that suddenly your thoughts and heart and motives and actions became pure? If not, what practical, day-by-day things can you do that will help you reach this desired goal? At the same time, what are you doing (if anything) that can hinder this work of purification?**

transformation of character and personality. The old man belonged to one owner (Satan) and the new man to another (Christ), and the two lives stand in absolute contrast. Putting off the old man involves being dead to sin. Putting on the new man is living unto righteousness. “Through the power of Christ men and women have broken the chains of sinful habit. They have renounced selfishness. The profane have become reverent, the drunken sober, the profligate pure. Souls that have borne the likeness of Satan have become transformed into the image of God. This change is in itself the miracle of miracles.” —Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 476.

This transformation involves a conscious act of putting off characteristics that are typical of the “old man”: mental vanity, intellectual pride, rationalization, and unholy speculation; a life without the benefit of God and His Word, acts of uncleanness, greed, corruption, and lust (*Eph. 4:17-19, 22*).

The reason for such a pathetic life is that they “have not . . . learned Christ” and “have [not] been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus” (*Eph. 4:20, 21, NKVJ*). When heard, accepted, and obeyed, the truth that is Jesus transforms the whole inward nature.

**II. The New Life: Put on the New** (*Eph. 4:24-29*)

The apostle, having urged the people to put off the old man, now emphasizes the need to put on the new. This new self is a new creation, that “God . . . created in righteousness and true holiness” (*Eph. 4:24*). Observe below the contrasts between the old and the new as in Ephesians:

The old man:	The new man:
Futile mind	Renewed mind
Alienated from God	Created according to God
Darkened and ignorant	Taught in Jesus
Unclean and greedy	Righteous and holy
Corrupt	True
<b>Therefore, put off</b>	<b>Therefore, put on</b>

This putting on the new demands the total renunciation of the old and the establishment of a new relationship with Christ. Consequently, the new life takes on a radically different orientation. Paul mentions four examples: (1) Falsehood in thought, speech, and actions will change and become truthfulness in all things, and the making of life totally transparent and honest, particularly because “we are members one of another” (*Eph. 4:25*). (2) The new life has no room for anger that belittles and degrades. The Bible does not deny that there are situations when anger is right and proper (anger that denounces sin and injustice and establishes righteousness, as Jesus did [*Mark 3:4, 5*]); but even in such situations, reconstruction,

## Live the New Life *(Eph. 4:25-29)*

The apostle is no lofty theoretician. At one moment he can lift us to majestic heights of theology; at another he can bring us down to the realities of our neighborhood. So, he outlines four imperatives of the new life. They are so simple yet so vital to maintain good relationships.

**1. Put away lying; speak the truth** *(Eph. 4:25)*. Falsehood and hypocrisy hurt relationships and destroy trust. Truth, on the other hand, builds trust and confidence, strengthens relationships, and preserves unity.

**In** what ways has lying hurt your relationships with others?

**2. “Be angry and do not sin”** *(vs. 26, NKJV)*. As humans, we inevitably face situations that anger us, and maybe even justly so. In any case, in times of anger, three cautions need to be heeded: Do not sin; that is, do not let it lead to resentment or transgression of the law. Do not let the sun go down without correcting the situation. Do not give the devil an opportunity to use anger to destroy unity and relationship.

**How** has the devil used anger against you and your relationships?

**3. Do not steal, but work** *(vs. 28)*. Thieving takes many forms—from downright stealing to withholding what rightfully belongs to another to destroying another’s name or character. A Christian lives on a high moral plane. Honest work, unselfish life, generosity, and preserving the other are marks of the new life in Christ.

**Using** the definition listed above, how has “thieving” impacted you or someone you know in a negative way?

**4. Guard your tongue, be edifying in speech** *(vs. 29)*. Words are powerful tools. Used well, they can be a great blessing. But Paul warns against “corrupt” talk. The Greek word for “corrupt” also means “rotten.” Rottenness, vulgarity, swearing, and gossip have no place in our speech. A Christian’s speech should edify and build.

**When was the last time you were hurt by damaging words? Also, look at your answers for the day’s questions. What do they tell you about how important living as the “new man” *(vs. 24)* is for the unity Paul talks about?**

not revenge, ought to be the motive. (3) The new person in Jesus will cultivate honesty and desist from dishonest means. *Stop stealing*, Paul says, without mincing words. Steal not one's possession, steal not one's character, steal not your employer's time or product. Steal nothing but work hard and work honestly. Paul's new man is one who takes honesty as a basic virtue of the new person and an underlying principle of human relations. (4) The new person will speak truthfully, and that which "may minister grace unto the hearers" (*Eph. 4:29*). His or her speech has no room for gossip and slander (*James 5:12*). "The chief requisite of language," says Ellen White, "is that it be pure and kind and true—the outward expression of an inward grace." . . .

## Inductive Bible Study

**Texts for Discovery:** *Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 3:16; 4:17-22; Philippians 4:8, 9, 13*

❶ Think of the new things you have in your house. Are they new because you just purchased them or because you received them as a gift? How does being new differ from being "made new" (*Eph. 4:23, NIV*)? How has God changed your life to make it "new"? (*See also 1 Cor. 2:9-16.*) Plan to share this with a person God leads you to this week.

❷ Look up the words *transform/transformed* in a dictionary. Then, using a concordance, see how Scripture uses these words. Paul directs us to "be transformed by the renewing of [our] mind" (*Rom. 12:2, NIV*). Read *Philippians 4:8, 9, 13*. What focus and power make it possible for us to live as Jesus lived?

❸ When someone asked you for directions or to describe something you saw, how did you do it? In *Ephesians 4:25-29*, Paul describes some of the visible attributes of a changed life in Christ. List these attributes. How are they practiced in our lives? Example: What does speech sound like that is "good for . . . edification" (*Eph. 4:29, NKJV*)? What does an unchanged life sound like?

❹ In *Ephesians 4:32*, Paul commands us to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving. How is it possible to mandate these attributes? How does outward behavior differ from true inner character transformation? How do *Ephesians 3:16* and *Philippians 4:13* help us explain God's power in human lives to someone who is searching to overcome destructive habits?

## “Grieve Not the Holy Spirit” (Eph. 4:30)

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30, NKJV).

The church at Ephesus had its beginnings when the apostle laid hands on the believers to receive the Holy Spirit (see Acts 19:1-7). No wonder Paul speaks so much about the Holy Spirit in Ephesians—at least twelve times.

**Look** up the texts below and write down what Paul says about the Spirit:

*Eph. 2:18*

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*Eph. 3:16*

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*Eph. 5:9*

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*Eph. 6:17*

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Elsewhere Paul states that the Spirit gives life (2 Cor. 3:6), sonship (Rom. 8:16), understanding (1 Cor. 2:10-16), fruits (Gal. 5:22), hope for the future (Gal. 5:5), spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:4-11), sanctification (Rom. 15:16), indwelling power (Rom. 8:11), etc.

Paul clearly placed great importance on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and the congregation. Hence his charge: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit.” The statement at once reveals that the Spirit is not simply divine power but an active Person in the Godhead, sensitive to relationships. To grieve the Holy Spirit is equivalent to grieving the Father and the Son. All we have to do is read the Bible, and we can see how much God cares about our actions and how our sin and disobedience bring pain to Him. There are moral and spiritual responsibilities on all who are brought into God’s family by the Spirit; and when we violate those responsibilities, we grieve Him. It’s hard for us to understand that God could actually be pained by what we do, but that’s what our Bible tells us, and certainly the life of Jesus shows us the intimate care God has for His creatures. Thus, if He loves us and cares for us, it’s not surprising that He could be pained by what we do.

**What things might you have done in the past 24 hours that would have grieved the Holy Spirit? Were these actions inevitable? If not, why did you do them?**



“We think with horror of the cannibal who feasts on the still warm and trembling flesh of his victim; but are the results of even this practice more terrible than are the agony and ruin caused by misrepresenting motive, blackening reputation, dissecting character?”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 235.

### **III. The New Life: Under New Control** (*Eph. 4:30-32*)

The new life is new not only because it differs from the old fundamentally, but it is new because, having been redeemed by Christ, it has come under the stewardship of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the Agent of the new life. He is the Teacher, the Comforter, the Third Person of the Godhead through whom Christ indwells (*John 14:16-26*). So, it is important that Christians “grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (*Eph. 4:30*).

How do we grieve the Holy Spirit? Ephesians says: when we do not live like God’s children (*Eph. 1:17*); we defile our body, which

## Witnessing

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has identified three core values critical to the overall Adventist experience: quality of life, unity, and growth. All three focus areas guide church members as they move steadily forward to complete the mission of sharing the good news with humanity. Teaching, preaching, and healing are successful, hands-on methods used to touch the lives of men, women, and children in need of salvation.

Personal participation in mission should be the ringing cry of every Adventist church member. To some, mission remains closely associated with supporting the work overseas or away from the member’s home division. Certainly, this remains a high priority with all members. However, mission work can be found all around us—where we live, where we work, where we shop, and where we play.

No matter what part of the world you call home, finding others in need of the gospel message and in need of compassionate, nurturing attention is easy. Eradicating abuse, an obstacle to full joy and trust for many women and children around the world, remains a deep commitment for church leadership. (See <http://beingadventist.org/quality-of-life.html>.) However, it is often the individual church member who can make the most immediate and positive difference in the lives of those who live in such conditions.

Each member can make a difference—in the mission field around the corner or halfway around the world. Just get started! Be an imitator of God! Live the new life!

## “Be Imitators of God” *(Eph. 4:31–5:1, NKJV)*

Paul’s command to those who are saved and now living as one united body of Jews and Gentiles is to walk in the new life. This new life involves many details: putting off, putting on, persevering, and not grieving the Spirit. In today’s lesson, Paul presents a one-phrase summary of the new way: “Be imitators of God” *(Eph. 5:1, NIV)*.

**How** can we, as fallen human beings, be “imitators of God”? What does Paul mean here?

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After telling us to be imitators of God, Paul then makes the charge personal and intimate: “as dear children” *(vs. 1, NKJV)*. When a parent and child have a close and intimate relationship, spending time with each other and sharing life activities, often the child tends to be like the parent. Thus, the more time we spend with God in prayer, meditation, and study, the more like Him we can become.

“Just as children imitate their parents, so we should imitate Christ. His great love for us led him to sacrifice himself so that we might live. Our love for others should be of the same kind—a love that goes beyond affection to self-sacrificing service.”—*Life Application Bible, on Ephesians 5:1, 2.*

**In** Ephesians 4:32 Paul gives three qualities that should mark our lives. What are they, and how is each one, in its own way, a reflection of God? As you write down your answer, ask yourself what you could do to better manifest these qualities in your own life.

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It was Christmas Eve. A child in tattered clothes was looking through the glittering windows of a store, her eyes focused on a pretty doll, but she had no way of getting it. Just then a man removed that doll. The little girl’s face fell but soon lighted up when the man came out of the store and gave the doll to her. She looked up and asked, “Are you God?” Maybe no one has ever said something quite like that to you, but in what ways have you reflected the character of God to someone recently?

is God’s dwelling place (*Eph. 2:22*); we disrupt the unity of the church (*Eph. 5:29, 30*); we return to the life of the old man (*Eph. 5:8-10*); and we give room for Satan by indulging in lying, resentment, thieving, and corrupt speech (*Eph. 5:3, 4*).

In summary, we grieve the Holy Spirit when we do not live a life “worthy of the calling” in which we “were sealed for the day of redemption” (*Eph. 4:1, 30, NKJV*). Our life is the certificate of who owns us.

## Life-Application Approach

**Icebreaker:** What is it like when a child learns to walk? The title “toddler” is very descriptive, isn’t it? Parents and grandparents do their best to capture these important moments on film and video. Share your memories. How does our heavenly Father view our efforts to walk “in newness of life” (*Rom. 6:4*)? What does He do to encourage and support us?

### Thought Questions:

❶ When we read Romans 1:26-31, we are often thankful we do not know anyone who would be included in Paul’s list. Mentally review your life’s journey. What differences are there between how you lived before you met Christ as a personal Savior and now? How have you allowed God to change you during the past year?

❷ When seamstresses sew and carpenters build, they use patterns and blueprints. What would happen if they used the wrong patterns and blueprints or just threw them away and continued on their own? Paul invites us to consider different directions for our lives. “Do not conform . . . to . . . this world, but be transformed” (*Rom. 12:2, NIV*). Why is such a radical redirection a benefit? How would you share this with a neighbor or friend who is struggling with trusting God as Lord of his or her life?

### Application Question:

“There is no one righteous, not even one; . . . no one . . . understands, no one who seeks God” (*Rom. 3:10, 11, NIV*), Paul says, quoting the prophets. Doesn’t this sound like the adversary’s accusations against us? Read 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Ephesians 4:17-32; Philippians 4:8, 9 as a group. Then share a season of prayer, asking for the Holy Spirit to live in your lives. Plan, as a group, to perform an act of service this week that lives out God’s activity in your lives.

**Further Study:** *Christ's transforming work.* "Jesus Himself, in His infinite mercy, is working on human hearts, effecting spiritual transformations so amazing that angels look on with astonishment and joy. The same unselfish love that characterizes the Master is seen in the character and life of His true followers. Christ expects that men will become partakers of His divine nature while in this world, thus not only reflecting His glory to the praise of God, but illumining the darkness of the world with the radiance of heaven."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 731.

*Unrenewed members.* "The accession of members who have not been renewed in heart and reformed in life is a source of weakness to the church. This fact is often ignored. Some ministers and churches are so desirous of securing an increase of numbers that they do not bear faithful testimony against unchristian habits and practices."—Page 172.

### Discussion Questions:

- ❶ There are those who believe that the Christian concept of basic human sinfulness is wrong, even damaging. How would you respond to someone who holds such views?
- ❷ Have someone in class read aloud the second Ellen G. White quote listed above and open a discussion on what she is saying. How do we strike the right balance here; that is, having a church in which sinners are welcomed and brought to the Cross while, at the same time, upholding the high standards of conduct the Christian life requires?
- ❸ In class, ask those who are willing to talk about someone who truly was an "imitator of God." Who was that person, what did he or she do, and what impact did that person have on your life?
- ❹ Go around the class and have each person answer this question: "Name one great change Christ has brought into your life." Discuss the various answers.