

Vanity Of Their Mind

Ephesians 4:17-19

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

We are commanded in Ephesians 4:17-19 by Paul, by the witness of the Lord, to not walk as other Gentiles. Gentiles can be translated: a race, a foreign one, pagan, heathen, people. By reading the context of this scripture, I believe it means heathen and/or people.

The next part of that scripture is the real meat, "In the vanity of their mind." In checking the Greek definitions of mind and vanity, mind is the easiest to understand. It simply means intellect. Vanity is a little harder to get a handle on. It's definition is very involved. Vanity means transientness and moral depravity, It comes from another word meaning empty, profitless, and vain. I looked up transient and it means passing with time, not enduring, temporary, momentary and uselessness. Let's look at what vanity of the mind means:

1. uselessness of the intellect 2. moral depravity of the intellect 3. emptiness of the intellect 4. profitlessness of the intellect

I could go on and on, but I think you get the picture.

Let's keep going and we will tie it all together shortly. These are some of the Greek definitions for some of the words in the above scripture.

understanding - deep thought, mind, imagination darkness - to obscure, vague, hidden alienated - to estrange away (to cause to be hostile) ignorance - to ignore through disinclination blindness - stupidity or callousness (hardness) lasciviousness - licentiousness (lewdness, immorality) , filthy uncleanness - impurity greediness - inordinate desire

Now it's time to put it all together by using my paraphrase:

17. This I (Paul) say therefore, and by the witness of the Lord, that you no longer walk as other people or heathens walk, in the uselessness, moral depravity, and emptiness of their intellect, 18. Having the understanding, deep thought, and imagination hidden, causing to be hostile and alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the stupidity and hardness of their heart: 19. Who being past feeling (become apathetic, to grieve out) have given themselves over to lewdness and immorality, to work all impurity with inordinate (excessive) desire.

Before you take me out to stone me for taking liberties with the Word of God, let me share with you how I arrived at the above paraphrase. I checked out the words in the Greek by using The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible and cross checked that with the Young's Analytical Concordance of the Bible. And when I wasn't sure of a definition of the Greek word, I used the New American Webster Dictionary. Just the checking and cross-checking took two hours because I didn't want to be presumptuous when it comes to the Word of God.

Now let's get back to the scripture and relate it to today. There is a lot of emphasis placed on the intellect and education. You don't have to speak to too many ministers to see that. You'll hear a lot of bragging concerning college, university, seminary, degrees, etc. I'm not saying it is wrong to get an education, but where is it focused? If that education is not led by the Holy Spirit and focused on Jesus Christ, then it is the vanity of the mind that Paul talks about. Their focus is on man's wisdom, not God's.

When ministers get caught up in the vanity of their mind, they no longer have an understanding of God and become hostile toward Him and His Word. And because they lack understanding and no longer want to know His truth, they go for more education and look for ways to discredit the Bible. Just a few examples of what I mean. 76% of the ministers in denominational churches today do not believe in the virgin birth. The rapture is being taught in very few churches today. Instead, people are hearing about the Kingdom Age. A high percentage of ministers do not believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and that is the very foundation of Christianity, Can you not see the vanity of the mind? It becomes more important than what God says to us in His Word!

Ministers and their congregations start rationalizing the Word of God. To avoid any misunderstanding, rationalizing means to devise plausible explanations for one's acts, beliefs, etc., usually without being aware that these are not the real motives. If you rationalize the Word of God, you are making it conform to what you WANT to believe about yourself and your actions. God says we are to conform ourselves and our actions to His Word! If we are not where God wants us to be, we can always justify it. We always want to believe that we are OK in God's eyes. It's the old "I'M OK, YOU'RE OK" psychology.

You can hear it from the pulpits today. Love, love, love. Don't preach about sin, that's a negative gospel. Be positive, only preach love. Many ministers believe that if they don't acknowledge sin in their congregation, then their congregation will not see the sin in their minister. Be warned! We can't hide our sins from God and we will be accountable.

In Ephesians 4:19, it is very clear where it all leads. It no longer matters if they are leading a Godly life, and they are under the control of excessive desire for sin, especially immorality.

This was and is a very strong warning from Paul. It's something that we need to be watchful of and be careful not to fall into. He does tell us how to do that.

Look at Ephesians 4:20-32. I will hit a few high points and let you read and study it yourself.

In Ephesians 4:22, Paul says, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation (behavior) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts:". That's pretty plain. Stop the old behavior that is corrupt, rotten and against God's Word!

In Ephesians 4:23, "And be renewed (meaning the whole course of life now flows in a different direction) in the spirit of your mind (intellect)."

In Ephesians 4:24, "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Paul gives us the warning and then tells us how to keep from falling into it. If we don't take heed and follow his instructions, we are without excuse when we stand before the throne of God.

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