

Do Not Live Like the Gentiles

by Alan Martin

This sermon delves into Ephesians 4:17-19, emphasizing the spiritual downward spiral to avoid at all costs. It starts with choosing a purpose other than glorifying God, leading to a darkened understanding and separation from God's life. This progresses to a hardened heart, loss of sensitivity, and giving oneself over to unrestrained sensuality, resulting in corruption and self-destruction.

Scripture: Galatians 6:7, Ephesians 4:18, 2 Timothy 4:3, Hebrews 3:12, 1 John 1:5, Romans 1:18, John 3:19, Matthew 4:15, Matthew 11:28, Psalm 139:23, Mark 9:24

Topics: "Spiritual Downward Spiral", "Importance of Glorifying God"

Description

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Transcript

I sent you the passage today from Ephesians chapter 4, verses 17 to 19. We're only going to stop at 19. I said in my text to you that if we had time, we may look into the verses after that, but we're not going to get there, just 17 to 19.

So follow me as we read together, and I'm kind of reading to you my own translation. That's why it might be a little bit, I like to study straight from the Greek New Testament, and this is what it, the way I feel the clearest in our English today. So I tell you this and insist on it in a word, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the vanity of their mind.

They have been darkened in their understanding and have been alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance being in them, because of the hardness of their heart. They have become callous and have given themselves over to unrestrained sensuality, unto the working of uncleanness in all forms of covetousness. And just for review, we know that Paul has spent the first part of this letter emphasizing the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and all the fullness of God's wealth in Christ.

Christ is the chosen one to accomplish the great mystery of God. And this mystery, remember, was that God was making a new people. He's going to tear down the dividing wall of hostility, the law with its commandments and regulations that made you either a Jew or a Gentile.

Because remember, Gentiles at one time were without God, without hope. They weren't a part of the covenant of the promises. But God's mystery was that in Christ Jesus, you and Gentile would become one, a new people, a new people that did experience the calling of God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

And this new people would come together in an assembly called the church. And through being strengthened with the Holy Spirit on their inside, and growing up and becoming rooted and established in this love of God that He sheds abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we form this testimony together that where God desires to be glorified by the lives that come together and work together in the church and to accomplish this great purpose, He gives leadership gifts, apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers for this joining together of the God's people for a work of service to build up the church until all of us reach the unity of the faith. We are all agreed.

We live in an agreement that Jesus Christ is Lord and that His Word is truth and that God our Father is wonderful and it's such a blessing to be His children. And we each develop our own personal comprehensive knowledge of God. We know Him personally and deeply for ourselves and we even grow up.

We become mature into His likeness. We begin to live our lives loving the Father like Jesus loved the Father, obeying the Father like Jesus obeyed the Father, and then we're no longer infants. We're not as influenced by the ideas that we hear coming from every direction, but we become stabilized in Him.

And what happens then is through the church, through our being together, God receives glory. And this is our purpose for being in the church and for maturing in Christ Jesus. And then Paul, in typical fashion, he's going to say, and this is how you don't do it.

That just describes what we're called to. But just like a Paul's going to make sure we don't already know what we're called to do. He's going to make sure we know how we're not supposed to do it.

And that's kind of where we are today. That's the verses that bring us to today. So Ephesians chapter 4, let's just look at verse 17.

Let's begin to break it down together. Ephesians 4, 17. So I tell you this and I insist on it in the Lord that you no longer live.

Now, what does that tell us right there? If He says that you no longer live, what does that mean for each of us? Right? That's what we were doing. We were living that way at one time. Okay? We all got that, right? We have a past, don't we? We all have a past that we want to completely put behind us, forget the things that are behind and press forward to things ahead.

We no longer live like the Gentiles. Okay? In the vanity of their mind. Isn't that fascinating? That word vanity.

What does that mean? It comes from the Greek word *matheos*, believe it or not. Is that Greek to you? It was to me too. Here's what the word means.

It means without any basis or purpose. So the mind of the Gentile from God's point of view is without any basis or purpose. Therefore, how can it be profitable? What good can come out of a way of thinking that has no basis or purpose? So the question now, based upon what Paul has been writing, what do you think

the purpose is that's lacking? What purpose is lacking? What basis is lacking? Like the will of God? Yes.

And what has Paul expressly stated God's will for us to the church is. What's his will for us? Yes, to be holy. And Paul has said this quite often in the book so far.

The basis and purpose for our relationship with God is to bring him glory. Amen. And that's not in the mind of the Gentile.

That's not what they're living. That's not the purpose they live their life. Their mind is void of the basis that God deserves to be glorified.

And if this is not your purpose for living, that's the mind that you have right now. It's the vain mind. Because a mind that does not bring God glory, if that's not the purpose in a person's life, they don't understand the basis that God has given them life for.

For example, everything God created, light, color, shape, dimension, sound, taste, feeling, in all, he created it as a manifestation of who he is. He created it to display his wisdom and the power and ability. And he created it so that we would recognize him and thank him and adore him and worship him.

And if you're enjoying the things he's created, and you're not glorifying him and recognizing him in everything, you've missed the basis for all these things that he's made entirely. And that's what Paul said. That's the mindset of the Gentiles.

Their purpose is not to glorify God. That's not the reason they live their life. Do not let that mind be in you.

That's the way the Gentiles think. Our calling is to glorify God in everything and seek him. Are you following me? All right.

Now, those who do not see this, following Paul's train of thought, if you do not see this, you know what you are? You're blind. That's right. If a person can't see, they're blind.

Well, this explains, let's look again. Sam, if you will, read Ephesians 4.18. A person that does not see that this is God's purpose for all the things he created. Which Sam? During the dark.

This Sam Serda. Sam Serda over here. Is there another Sam here? I think he's, oh, Sam Willdeas is back there.

Thank you. Sam Willdeas is back there, please. All right.

What's Sam Serda? So what are they in their understanding? They're in the dark. They don't see God's purpose for creating things. They don't see the purpose for them even having life.

They don't realize that everything they enjoy, everything that is good comes from God, is sustained by God, is made possible by God, and that he deserves thanksgiving, recognition, honor, appreciation for it all. They're in the dark. They don't see it.

They miss it entirely. And you know what? Darkness represents the inability to see something. What does light do? Light makes it possible to see.

That's why Paul said light makes everything visible. You can't see. I've been in places in Southeast Missouri, way out in the country, way out in the, outside the light pollution zone, where I left work, turned

off the light for the place that I was working.

It was out in the country. And when I turned off the light and closed the door, I turned around and could not see my hand in front of my face. It takes light, even little bits of light, to see something.

Light represents the ability to see. And darkness represents what someone is not seeing. So where are they darkened? They're darkened in their understanding.

They just do not see it. And this explains something that the prophet wrote that Matthew understood. Brother Rudy, you want to read for us Matthew 4, 15 to 16? Yeah, you'll get it.

The land of Zebulun and the land of Mattah lie towards the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who sat in darkness saw a great light. To those who sat in the region and shadow of death, to them light has dawned.

Ah, so what does darkness represent? You're not seeing it. What does the land of the shadow of death represent? I really never fully appreciated this verse about the shadow of death until I drove a truck and was trying to find the dock in the cafeteria on a bright day. And the dock was in the shadow.

And I'm looking in the mirror, trying to find it. Where's that concrete edge? Boom! Oh, it's right there. The shadows hid it from me.

Couldn't see it. So both of these things represent a people living in a situation where they can't see. They're in their understanding.

They are not seeing. But here's a question. What people are sitting in the land of darkness? Who's talking about? Well, no, in this particular, it's more specific.

You're right. But more specific than that. Who's, what people specifically, who did Jesus come to? The Jews.

God's own people. God's own people who received the law, had the temple, hundreds of years of traditions, they're sitting in the dark. They don't understand God.

They don't see who he is. And who brings the light? Jesus. The one who says, I am the light.

That's what John is saying. You know, when you ask the question, what light dawned upon them? Let's read together. Brother Thomas, can you read John 1, 1 through 5? We'll have it up there.

Or you can read it from your phone, either one. John chapter 1, verses 1 through 5. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was the Son, and the Word was God. The thing was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him. Without him was not anything made that has been made. Verse 4. Who is he? In him was light, and the light was the light of man.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't overcome it. You see the answer for the darkness? In him was light. The very light of God.

And what was that light? The light that lightens every man coming to the world. No one knew who the Father was. No one had seen God fully.

Jesus came to reveal God. So that people, he could say, when you've seen me, you have seen the Father. And he goes on to say, John chapter 1, verses 6 through 9. This time, Brother David, if you, David and Amanda, would you read John 1, 69? Verse 9. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

And that's why Jesus said in John chapter 8, verse 12, Jesus spoke again to the people and he said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness. You'll understand.

You will have the light of life. You will know who my Father is. You will know how good he is.

You will know what the truth is. You'll be able to see the difference between right and wrong. Follow me so you can see the way God meant life to be.

So do you see, well, before I go to that, there's another verse I want us to go to. Light and darkness. And do you realize that whether you, whether you come to the light or whether you stay in the dark is a choice we make? That's what Jesus said.

And he made this very clear. Let's look, Brother Mario, I never pick on you back there. Will you read John chapter 3, verses 19 and 20? John 3, 19 and 20.

Can you see that? The verdict is light come. There is no excuse to be in darkness now. Light has come.

Jesus has come to the world, but men love darkness more than light. If your version says instead of light, the better translation is they love darkness more than light. Yes, please.

The thing is, the darkness of the world can be very attractive without hidden. Yeah, you're getting ahead of me. Yeah, but you're right.

It can be. Well, and it certainly is that the people in this passage, it says what Brother Mario read quoting Jesus, Jesus, everyone who is doing evil, he hates the light. Why? Because you see it's evil.

Light makes it what it is. That is wrong. So he don't come to the light.

He doesn't want to be seen what he's doing. So this is, remember, we're talking about the Gentiles being darkened in understanding. So are they darkened in understanding by choice? Yes.

That's the consideration. Is it or they have not had the opportunity to know that some people think, well, people just don't know. How can they know? The question is for us to consider how much evidence has God made available for all men? Then he sure has.

Let's look in. And that's why Paul said this. They're in, and what Jesus said is in perfect agreement with Paul.

Paul says, Jesus said, they don't come to the light for fear that their deeds would be exposed. Paul says, don't live like the Gentiles do in the vanity of their mind. They're darkened in their understanding for a reason.

That's kind of what he's saying. And because he goes on to say having been darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them. What's the root word of ignorance? Ignore.

You know how you become so ignorant of God? You have to ignore an awful lot of evidence of who he is. The heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of his hand.

Day after day, they pour forth speech. Night after night, they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

Their words go to the ends of the earth. And that's what Paul said in Romans chapter 1. Someone read that with me. Brother Larry, would you read Romans 1, 18 through 20? Now, notice this.

The wrath of God is being revealed against heaven against all manner of ungodliness and righteousness of men who do what? Suppress the truth. It's not that they don't know the truth. It's they don't want to know the truth.

Is the wrath of God and the anger of God being expressed against little children who don't know anything? No. Are they suppressing the truth? No, they're not. Even when God judged Israel and made a whole generation die in the wilderness, it was only everyone who was 20 years old or more who died.

Everyone younger than 20 years of age was shown mercy and grace. And they actually entered the promised land after the older generation was held accountable. The generation had seen all the miracles, experienced the manna, drank water from the rock, all of the things that God had done.

That generation was held accountable for what they knew and what they should have understood. The younger generation was not. It's against men who suppress the truth that the wrath of God is being revealed.

Because the things that God are clearly seen being understood from the things that are made, but God has made it known so that all men are without, men are responsible for what they know of God. There's no, and Paul understands this. Now, talking about the people sitting in the land of darkness, talking about someone being darkened in their mind and understanding, if it's possible for the Jewish people, as Brother Thomas pointed out, the very people who received the law of God, had the temple of God, all the traditions of God, if they could be sitting in the land of darkness, then is it possible for someone to sit in the church and be in the dark? So attending church doesn't guarantee that you'll actually have light, does it? No, it doesn't.

It's not a cure. As a matter of fact, the Apostle Peter actually warned that there would be teachers, teachers in the church promoting darkness, speaking vain things, speaking things that do not have the purpose of bringing God to the Lord. They have another purpose, making the people feel good about this stuff.

Second Peter, I'm going to have David Nipper to read Second Peter chapter two verses 17 and 19. Second Peter chapter two verses 17 and 19. These people are afraid to go out of the bar and mislead by the storm.

Black people start to use it, for by the mouth and the people, the word of God, and by the teams of the left and the right of the flesh, they unite people for a justification for those who live in error. They promise us freedom while they themselves are slaves of society, while people are slaves of whatever has happened. So Peter is talking about individuals in the church, in the church, and they speak swollen words of vanity.

These guys are good speakers. They're excellent orators. But what does he mean by swollen words of vanity? Remember what vanity is? Vanity means without a proper basis or without a legitimate purpose.

We know what the basis of life is. God gives life and has created all things that he might be glorified. So they can say all kinds of wonderful messages, expound in all kinds of languages, but the purpose is not.

Instead, they're actually telling the people things that give them freedom to walk in their own self-indulgence. Isn't that incredible? Using God's place, God's church, to tell people, hey, you're free. Enjoy yourselves.

And such people bring a great reproach, not just upon the church. They especially reproach men of God who understand every word of God and everything God has created has been created for God to receive glory. And what they do is they twist that.

This was already happening in the early church, 1,000 years ago. It's been almost 2,000 years. It was already happening.

And that's the very reason that John, the apostle John, wrote his letters. You know, he wrote the gospel of John. And later in his life, he wrote three letters, smaller letters, 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John.

Well, this is from 1 John, verses 5 to 7. I'm going to let Sam Lowe, back to the other Sam, Sam Lowe Diaz, can you read 1 John, chapter 1, 5 through 7? God is light. If you say that we have fellowship with him, and walk with us, you see light. But if you walk with us, you see the light.

If you have fellowship with one another, and run with us, you see light. If you pray after your son, such and such is all the same. Okay, so walking in the light, it means you want God to see everything.

You want to be clear. There's nothing to hide. Why do people walk in darkness? Remember, what did Jesus say? Everyone who does what? Because evil hates the light, and he will not come to the light.

He loves darkness more than light. So what does it mean to walk in darkness? If you don't want me to know everything you're doing, you don't want me to know who you're living with, you don't want me or anyone else to know what you're doing behind those closed doors, you can't walk with God if you're living like that. God is light, and in him there is no darkness.

And if we want to have fellowship with God, and true fellowship among people of spirit, following Christ, we walk in the light. Amen. We do what's right.

We have fellowship with God. That's the fellowship of light. The walking in the light, we put it this way.

Walking in the light is holding to the actual truth of what Jesus and his apostles have taught. Simply, pay very close attention to this, simply trying to do what you think is right is not the same as walking in the light. Everyone does what he thinks is right.

The guys that go into the bars and getting drunk, they think I'm not trying to drink too much. The guys and girls that are out there hitting on other people, they're just trying to hit on the right people so they can have a good time. They don't want to go too far.

They're not trying to murder anybody. The guy selling drugs, he's not trying to kill someone. He's just trying to provide someone a high to make some money.

They all think they're trying to do what's right. We're talking about living by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God. Amen.

That's walking in the light. And isn't that what Jesus said? If you abide in me and my words abide in you. And he told his disciples, looking at his disciples, he said, you are my friends if you do what I say.

Whoa. But what it means if we don't do what he says, we're not walking in the light. We don't have fellowship with God.

There is a difference in living your life by every word of God and just being a religious person. The Jewish people were a people sitting in the land of darkness. And they didn't follow Jesus.

They chose to continue to hold their own way. So let's look at the consequence of not knowing God because you choose to stay in the darkness. There's a verse that expresses this.

It's talking about how a person is held accountable for being ignorant. When you should know, when God has given enough evidence to know, and you don't, there's a price to pay. And this is found in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 verses 6-8.

Richard, you want to read that for me? 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, 6-8. Always got to follow me in this train of thought. We normally think, well, if someone doesn't know, come on, they're innocent.

But very carefully consider to take vengeance upon those who do not know God. What does that tell you right away? Why don't they know God? They didn't want to. They did not think it worthwhile to have God in their knowledge.

Therefore God gives them over to a depraved mind. This is ignorance by choice. This is darkness preferred more than light.

This is not obeying because I heard it, I don't want to. And for those people, when Jesus returns, he's going to execute vengeance. This is our Jesus.

He died on the cross to save the world, to give men the opportunity to come to know him. He was the light. He's the one that said, anyone, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. But take no mistake, this is the verdict. The verdict has already been given.

Light has come. It's men of darkness rather than light, would you agree? Well, yes, sister. He is.

Remember, we sing the song, mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. What's he doing? He's trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath were stored. I have seen his faithful lightning of his terrible swift sword.

Where's that sword coming from? Out of his mouth. And what did he tell the Jewish people? What did he tell them? He goes, look, I'm not judging you. I didn't come to judge you.

There is a judge, however, for the one who hears my words and does not keep them. The very word I spoke will rise up and judge him in the last day. But what's coming out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus? The sword of his word.

The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword. And it's able to pierce deep into the division of soul and spirit and joints and marrow and exposes the hidden attitudes and thoughts of the heart. And you know what's really going to get exposed in the day of judgment? You didn't want me.

You ignored every evidence I gave. You chose to walk in darkness because you didn't want. You love your sin.

You rejected every attempt I made to make myself known to you and to turn you back to me. And that is going to get rid of you. And Paul's saying, that's why we don't live that way.

We don't have that mindset. Our understanding is not darkened. We hear.

And then Paul describes the heart of the Gentiles. What description does he give it? What is their heart like? What is it? Ephesians 4.18. Ephesians 4.18. Jasmine, you read that for me. Ephesians 4.18. So their heart is described as how? Hard.

Hard. You think they were born with a hard heart? How does the heart become hard? Hmm. Well, this hardness is a result of refusing to hear or accept the truth of God.

It's a hardness through resistance. It's the rejection of God's multiple attempts to call people to himself and restore them to relationships with him. And this is what the writer of Hebrews warns about.

Norma, can you read for me Hebrews 3.12-13. Hebrews 3.12-13. So what does the deceitfulness of sin cause? It causes a hardening. And what does it harden our heart towards? It hardens our heart towards receptivity to God's Word. And the attitude becomes, I don't want to hear it.

Keep it to yourself. I'm tired of hearing that stuff. What does it become? The deceitfulness of sin hardens the heart against God's own attempts to say a person.

And notice it also says in verses 4.19, Ephesians 4.19, Paul is talking about a progression. So far, it's don't live like the Gentiles, the vanity of their mind being darkened in their understanding, separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their heart. And now he adds the next thing that is, Ephesians 4.19, Yolanda de los Santos, can you read that for me? Ephesians 4.19. So what do you picture, what picture comes to your mind when we talk about the word callous? What do we usually associate callous with? Hands.

Men that work in those construction industries, you grab their hand and they feel like you grabbed a sheet of sandpaper. Because their hands get so hard. And it's from, what do you think the callousness is from then? Having become callous.

What do they become a callous? All the attempts that God has made to speak to them. All the attempts that God has made to reach them. And every time you resist it and wrestle against it, it produces in you a callous.

And you know what the callousness is? It's a loss of healing. It's a loss of sensitivity. We started having meetings in our home again this year.

And I had this nice baby grand piano and I love the piano a whole lot more. I can play guitar chords, not like Sam, but I can play, I can play, Sam over here, Sam, I can play the guitar. But here's the thing, when you have piano hands and you go to pick up the guitar, you have to press these metal strings.

And right away you find my fingers were not callous. They were very sensitive. But I mean 30 minutes of singing and my fingers are on fire.

They don't hurt so much anymore. Then since January we've been having meetings. Now I pick up the guitar and I play and my fingers are finally becoming callous.

But spiritually being callous is a deadly thing. Losing sensitivity that what you're doing is wrong is a deadly thing. And this is what happens.

Their mind is vain. Their understanding is darkness. They're separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is due to them because of the hardness of their heart.

And what happens? More and more they begin to lose any sensitivity. They lose a sensitive conscience. The things that as a child they knew were wrong, they can do.

I sat in a restaurant with a brother on Thursday morning. It's the IHOP right over there on Dezavola and I-10. And we were eating our meal.

There was these three guys in the booth next to us and we were talking and all of a sudden they just all jumped up and ran out the door. And it took us a minute to even realize what had happened. They sat there and ordered everything they wanted without a single intention to pay a penny for it.

How can you do that? Because you can get to a point where you even enjoy that. It's fun. It's a game.

And this is what happens if you continue the progressive way. You live like the Gentiles. Things that used to prick your conscience remain bothering you.

You're not even troubled by it. You know one of the signs that one of the first symptoms of leprosy before the sores break out on a person, it affects the nerves before it breaks out on the skin where you can actually see in the end of the fingers and parts of the body start to show this ugly, ugly sores. You know what the first indication is? You lose the ability to feel pain.

You can scrape your finger and not even feel a thing. Some of us kind of know what that means. Our bodies get older.

We're bleeding. I don't even feel anything. It happens.

The ability to feel pain is a blessing. The ability to have a sensitive conscience. Paul told Timothy, man of God, keep a good conscience.

Keep a sensitive conscience. Don't lose sensitivity of conscience. That's like the Gentiles.

They lose that sensitivity. And when you lose the sensitivity to conscience, the next thing that happens, here's what happens. They begin to give themselves over.

And what do they give themselves over to? It says, if you understand the Greek word right, they give themselves over to lack of restraint. They begin to cast off restraint. What's the restraint? People who love darkness more than light because their needs are evil.

What do you think the restraint they're wanting to cast off is? What bothers them? What pricks them? What restricts them from doing what they want? What is it? What's the restriction they're wanting to cast

off? The word of God. They begin to cast it off. They begin to cast off restraint.

And you know what happens? You know how they begin to do that? They don't say the restraint from God. No, it's not God. It's you, mom.

You put this on me. It's your conviction. And you abused me.

You raised me. You deprived me. And by your religious morality, you big Pharisee, you are a part of a cult.

You're laughing because you don't have people throwing this in your face. All over the internet, people, there are people with blog sites deconverting. They call them recovering sites where young people get on there and vent about the way they were raised, calling it psychological and emotional abuse because they had Christian parents who took them to church and had rules about when to come home and who they were going to go with and what they were going to do.

And instead of blaming God, I blame you. You did that to me. The church did that to me.

It's happening. You see the spiral that goes down, what happens? And if you begin to go down that road and what's the beginning of the road? Again, the Paul started where the beginning is. They are in the vanity of their mind.

And remember, vanity means without basis or purpose. And what is the basis for God creating life? This is what the angels in heaven, the four and 20 elders around the throne and the four seraphim, the mighty majestic beasts that are worshiping in heaven. And what they do, they call out continual, nonstop, holy, holy, holy is God, the almighty, who was and is and is to come, the almighty.

Thou art worthy to receive glory, honor, wisdom, and power because thou has created all things and they exist and are created because you created them. Therefore, God deserves glory and honor always at all times from all those who refuse to live that way. One day, this is what this is what Paul said.

In the meantime, until that day happens, Paul warned Timothy that as this progresses in the world, it's lawless. Jesus called it lawlessness abounding. It's not an ignorance of the law.

It is a refusal to acknowledge the law of God that's abounding in the world. Lawlessness is increasing and causing the love of many to wax cold. Paul described it this way to Timothy, 2nd Timothy chapter 4, 3 through 4. Let me see, uh, Ben's certa.

Can you read that 2nd Timothy chapter 4, 3 through 4? He said, the time will come when men will not put up with sound teaching. What do you think the sound teaching, what if, if it's sound teaching, it's not vain. It's got a legitimate basis.

It's teaching for the right purpose. What do you think that sound teaching would be? Give God glory, worship God, love God, serve God, please God. That's sound teaching, but they don't want to hear that.

Instead they gathered in themselves. They want to be taught. They still want to go to church, but what they want to hear is something that suits their own desires.

Something that makes them feel good about casting off the restraints. Hey, you be you. You be you.

Rudy, you just be you. Don't let anybody tell you in a layer. You, you, you talk like you want to talk and you do what you want to do and you don't let them Bible thumping fundamentalist fanatics.

It's out there. I'm not making this up. This is out there in the world.

If you're insulated from it, good for you. Thank God that you insulated from it, but it is out there and it's growing and it's increasing and some of us are already having to deal with it in our children and in our grandchildren. It's sad.

It's, wow. So let me, let me wrap this up. This is why I number my pages because now and then I get a flip phone.

I got one, one page left. It's not long. Let me find it.

Nope. Well, I can't find it. That means I put it somewhere.

That's all right. I know it. I know where it is in my heart, where I want it.

I know what it is in my heart, where I want to do it. Remember, this is the way we're not supposed to live. I said 10,000.

Oh, can you pass that up there? Bring it up there. Thank you. That's why it's good to make two copies.

Two are better than one. He says, this is, thank you, Sam. Well, he is.

Yeah, we need it. Y'all need to tell Samuel and Ruth how much we appreciate them all the time. And this is important.

We've been talking about the downward spiral. First of all, you don't even have the very basis of God, just your vein in your mind. And you're darkened in your understanding.

You just don't see you're not, you're not walking in the light. If you don't want to walk in the light, you're, you're separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in you. Cause you've been hardening your heart against all God's attempts to reach you.

And you becoming callous and insensitive. And you just give yourselves over to a pleasure to self-fulfillment. And this is the last phase of the downward spiral.

This is the last phase. Ephesians chapter 4:19. I'm going to, Kathy, read that for just that last part of that verse, Ephesians 4:19.

What they give them, what's the result of them giving themselves over to unrestrained sensuality. You see, when you cast off restraint, because God is good and God is pure. And the only reason God calls anything evil is because it is bad for you.

And you cast that off. You cast off his attempt to protect you from the bad. What are you going to get? Bad.

You're going to get it. You're going to get the pollution. You're going to get the corruption.

You're going to get what you yourself are choosing. And that's the last spiral. We, what we give ourselves over to becomes the very thing that controls us.

And that becomes the very thing that corrupts us. They give themselves over to the working of all unclean with a continual desire for more. Mega.

Hey guys, the lottery is mega now. The jackpot is mega now. More and more, never satisfied.

Galatians chapter six, verse seven, seven and eight. I'll read this Galatians six, seven and eight. Do not be deceived.

God cannot be mocked. The word mock, I like to translate it sneered. The literal Greek word is you turn up your nose.

Nobody turns up their nose, like Sister Kathy said, one day, every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess. You don't turn your nose up with God.

You don't sneer at God. God is not mocked, not sneered at. Whatsoever a man sows to please their flesh, from their flesh, they will reap corruption.

Is God doing it to them? Or are they doing it to themselves? They're doing it to themselves. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap corruption. Whoever sows to please the spirit, from the spirit will reap eternal life.

All right, I'm going to close with this. This is the summary. And allow me to read it.

I don't often read, but I wanted to think through this carefully. And I want you to hear this very carefully, this summary of this spiritual downward spiral that we are to avoid at all costs as believers. If you begin to live like the Gentiles, you will choose a purpose other than glorifying God with your life.

This will cause you to miss the very basis for the things God has created to be enjoyed by mankind. He created all these things so that men would recognize Him, thank Him, honor Him, and worship Him. You will end up avoiding the light of Jesus because it exposes the things in a bad light that you're more interested in continuing to join than you are in knowing God.

And this will eventually result in you having a darkened understanding by your own choices. You will forfeit any true fellowship with God to protect your own pleasures. You will choose darkness over walking in the light.

And without the light of God working in your conscience, your conscience will little by little lose more and more sensitivity to God and gradually become harder and harder. The more you lose a God-given sensitivity towards sin, the more you will give yourself over to self-indulgence with fewer and fewer restraints. And without feeling guilty or troubled because of what you're doing, you will accept whatever you're doing as good for you, truth to you.

And the things that God calls evil because they are actually bad for you, that's what you'll be choosing for yourself. At that point, you will begin to reap what you are sowing. Your own choices will begin to corrupt your life and you will begin to avoid any light that makes your choices look wrong.

What eventually happens to you will be completely your own fault. The result of not receiving God's multiple attempts to save you from your sinful self. You did this to yourself by resisting and rejecting all God's attempts to save you through coming to know people.

Going a little bit back to the Polish people, God told Isaiah to tell the people, woe to those who call good bad and who call the bad good. Now, because those people bring ruin and destruction on people, promising them freedom and instead leading them straight into death. Okay, are we following me? Next Sunday, we will talk about what we're

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