

Christian Students Association Bible Study

February 2, 2021

The Living and Responsibility Needed in the Body of Christ – The Functioning of the Gifts and the Growth and Building Up of the Body of Christ - Ephesians 4:7-16

12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

The Living Needed in the Daily Walk – Basic Principles (4:17-24)

17 This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind,

18 Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

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

20 But you did not so learn Christ,

21 If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,

22 That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit,

23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

Note for “life” in verse 18: This is the uncreated, eternal life of God, which man did not have at the time of creation. After being created, man with the created human life was placed before the tree of life (Gen. 2:8-9) that he might receive the uncreated divine life. But man fell into the vanity of his mind and became darkened in his understanding. Now, in such a fallen condition man is unable to touch the life of God until he repents (has his mind turned to God) and believes in the Lord Jesus to receive God’s eternal life (Acts 11:18; John 3:16).

Note for “reality” in verse 21: The reality is in Jesus refers to the actual condition of the life of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels. In the godless walk of the nations, the fallen people, there is vanity. But in the godly life of Jesus there is truth, reality. Jesus lived a life in which He did everything in God, with God, and for God. God was in His living, and He was one with God. This is what is meant by the reality is in Jesus. We, the believers, who are regenerated with Christ as our life and are taught in Him, learn from Him as the reality is in Jesus.

Note for “new” in verse 24: The new man is of Christ. It is His Body, created in Him on the cross (2:15-16). It is not individual but corporate (Col. 3:10-11). In this corporate new man Christ is all and in all — He is all the people and in all the people. See note 119 in Col. 3.

This book reveals first that the church is the Body of Christ (1:22-23), the kingdom of God, the household of God (2:19), and the temple, the dwelling place of God (2:21-22). Here it reveals in addition that the church is the new man. This is the highest aspect of the church. The church is an assembly of the called-out ones. This is the initial aspect of the church. From here, the apostle went on to mention the fellow citizens of the kingdom of God and the members of the household of God. These are higher than the initial aspect, but not as high as the church as the Body of Christ. Yet the new man is higher still than the Body of Christ. Thus, the church is not just an assembly of believers, a kingdom of heavenly citizens, a household of God’s children, or even a Body for Christ. It is in its ultimate, uttermost aspect a new man to accomplish God’s eternal purpose. As the Body of Christ, the church needs Christ as its life, whereas as the new man, the church needs Christ as its person. This new corporate person should live a life like that which Jesus lived on earth, that is, a life of reality that expresses God and causes God to be realized as the reality by man. Hence, the new man is the focus of the apostle’s exhortation in this section (vv. 17-32).

Fellowship Questions:

- What is our responsibility according to verses 12 – 16?
- What kind of living is needed according to verses 17 – 24?