

Ephesians 4:23—and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

Paul employs “*be renewed*”—a present passive infinitive that can be interpreted “*and being renewed.*” Thus, “*the spirit of your mind*” is being “*renewed*” by God if you are pursuing Christ. Romans 12:2, Colossians 3:10, and Titus 3:5 also relate to this teaching.

The “*spirit of*” the “*mind*” (Ephesians 4:23) encourages believers to think along lines compatible with truth. It gives them a God-centered purpose, which results from being a new creation. Unbelievers (the depraved) cannot be renewed in this fashion until they repent and believe on Jesus. Note: Just as the “*old self*” (Ephesians 4:22; Romans 6:6) includes the mind of an unbeliever, “*the new self*” (Ephesians 4:24), which is the “*new*” creation (2Corinthians 5:17), includes the mind of the New Testament believer.

Ephesians 4:24—and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

“*Put on*” (Ephesians 4:24) is an aorist infinitive in the Greek. As we discovered in Ephesians 4:22 (where “*lay aside*” is also an aorist infinitive), the past tense is indicated. Thus, Paul isn’t exhorting his readers to put on the “*new self.*” He is encouraging them to realize that they are already the “*new self*” (new man)—2Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:10. Because the New Testament believer is the “*new self*” (new man, new creation), he is “*holy*” (Ephesians 1:4), “*justified*” (Romans 5:1), “*forgiven*” (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 2:13), “*complete*” (Colossians 2:10), “*the righteousness of God*” (2Corinthians 5:21), “*sanctified*” (Hebrews 10:10; 10:14), “*glorified*” (Romans 8:30), and a saint (1Corinthians 1:2) the moment he is made new—after repenting and exercising faith while depraved. Peter even proclaims that church saints are “*partakers of the divine nature*” (2Peter 1:4). Hence, Paul writes regarding the “*new self*” (new man): “*which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth*” (Ephesians 4:25). God makes no mistakes nor cuts corners when creating the new self (new man). Consequently, we are not lowly sinners saved by grace. We are saints who sometimes sin. We are indeed special due to God having eradicated the old man (Adamic nature, sinful nature, old self, dead spirit) at the point of salvation/justification. Should the old man remain alive, we would walk in spiritual adultery based on Romans 7:1-4:

Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. (Romans 7:1-4)

For additional input relating to the eradication of the old man, review the notes associated with Ephesians 2:16a.

Ephesians 4:25—Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.

Paul begins this verse with “*Therefore*” to connect his prior teachings to the subject matter of verses 25-32. He has previously taught that God makes every New Testament believer into a holy and blameless saint (Ephesians 1-3); that He has gifted the members of the body of Christ so the body might grow in unity

and maturity (Ephesians 4:1-16); that every member of Christ's body is no longer the old self, nor a combination of the old self and new self, but the new self only (Ephesians 4:17-24). Because of what God has done for the members of Christ's body, they, by His grace, can live in a manner that begins to match who God made them into at the point of salvation/justification. Therefore, Paul addresses the saints' behavior in Ephesians 4:25-32.

The words "*laying aside*" (Ephesians 4:25) are an aorist participle, meaning that Paul is actually communicating, "having laid aside once and for all." Hence, "*falsehood*" (Ephesians 4:25), or as some versions render it, "*lying*," has been laid aside as a lifestyle for the saint of God. Because the old self naturally committed sin, the old self (who we were before we met Jesus) lived a lifestyle of habitual "*falsehood*" (Ephesians 4:25). But our old self has been eradicated (Ephesians 4:22; Romans 6:6; 7:4; Colossians 3:9) and replaced with the new self (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10; 2Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20), freeing us to live a lifestyle of righteousness and holiness. We sin at times, but sin is an unnatural act. In fact, for a child of God to continue a lifestyle of habitual sin is impossible (1John 3:6-8). Thus, when Paul writes, "*laying aside falsehood*," which can be interpreted "*having put off once and for all falsehood*" (*Wuest Commentary*),¹ he is communicating that a lifestyle of falsehood (habitual falsehood) is no longer part of the believer's experience.

"*Falsehood*" can go undetected if we fail to remain alert; for blatant lying and slightly exaggerating the truth are included in this same category. The believer is no longer bound to such behavior:

Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him (Colossians 3:9-10)

Instead of speaking falsehood, we are to "*speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another*" (Ephesians 4:25). Christ's body, the church, functions most efficiently when each member communicates "*truth*" with its adjacent members according to God's blueprint. As a matter of illustration, just imagine the resulting chaos should the brain generate a constant stream of lies (the brain being the computer that takes messages from our physical senses and transmits them to the mind). The eye could be focusing on a butterfly yet the mind think "viper" as a result of the brain's miscommunication. This scenario would generate bedlam within the entire body! Consequently, only when believers "*speak truth*" to their "*neighbor*" (Ephesians 4:25—to fellow believers) does the body function according to design. Truth is properly communicated through allowing "*the Spirit of truth*" (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13) to teach each member of Christ's body the Word of "*truth*" (John 17:17) which, in turn, reveals the Source of "*truth*," Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Hence, the supernatural seeks environments where truth is exchanged among saints. Spiritual growth transpires, resulting in the corporate body epitomizing the truth through daily living. Lying stymies this growth and destroys the common life in the body (Romans 12:5; 1Corinthians 12:14-27).

To communicate publicly what has been entrusted to us in private conversation is betrayal. However, to purposely withhold information in an attempt to mislead or deceive is falsehood (lying). Also, to "*speak truth*" in the form of a loving rebuke (when needed) is healthy for everyone involved.

¹ Wuest, Kenneth S. (1989). *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, MI. www.eerdmans.com. Used by permission.