

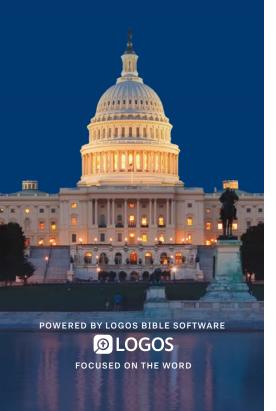
SEPTEMBER 25, 2023

MINISTRY LEADER PROFILE
Dr. Samuel Telliano
Guinea, Africa

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Understanding Why the Unregenerate Don't Vote Right



It always intrigues me when a Christian is bewildered by the fact that unbelievers often do not vote right. It shouldn't surprise you, my friend—especially after you study this week's passage!

The idea of new life in Christ differentiates Christianity from other religions of the world in this way: accepting Jesus into one's heart is the beginning of a personal relationship with God. This personal relationship idea is repeated throughout the New Testament (NT) (Romans 6:4, 2 Corinthians 5:17, and Galatians 2:20); herein is the miracle of salvation that begins when we repent from sin and beg Christ to save us.

Continued next page

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

Governors: Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom

Former Cabinet Members / White House Senior Staff: Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom Senate Members: Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served

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Understanding Why the Unregenerate Don't Vote Right

MINISTRY LEADER PROFILE

Dr. Samuel Telliano *Guinea, Africa*



Our ministry leader in Guinea, Africa, is Dr. Samuel Telliano, an accomplished speaker and lecturer and the pastor of the EPE Emmaus Church in Conakry, Guinea. Pastor Telliano also serves as pastor of the Emmaus Protestant High School, chaplain of the Evangelical Christian Youth of the Basse-Côte Region in Guinea, and lecturer in Christian Education at the Lycée Protestant Emmaüs d'Enta.

He is the founder of the "Pastoral Mission Door of Hope," an educational structure through the media and agropastoral. Pastor Telliano earned two master's degrees in theology at the Jean Calvin Faculty of Aix-En-Provence in France. He holds a degree in theology

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When we possess a personal relationship with God via the regenerating work of Jesus Christ on our behalf, we become indwelled by the Holy Spirit, who simultaneously leads us into all truth.

Such is not the case with the unregenerate—as Ephesians 4:17–20, this week's passage serves to illustrate! After you study what follows, you will not be so surprised as to why non-believers so often vote the way they do. So, let's labor in evangelism to get them saved!

Read on, beloved.

Ralph Drollinger

I. INTRODUCTION

This week I would like to examine Ephesians 4:17-20. In its closest context, this passage is a direct exhortation to connect the behavior of the believer to the doctrine of the believer. The NKJV conveys that particular idea explicitly when it says, This I say, therefore, signaling that what is about to be said is based on what has already been said. In the broader context, when the Holy Spirit regenerates the believer, there is an imputation of newness of life. That person is "born again" in a spiritual sense. The gist of the Apostle Paul's meaning in this passage is that God's redemption changes the believer: For our citizenship is in heaven ... (Philippians 3:20). Therefore, our respective thinking, lifestyle, actions—and yes, even our voting—should be drastically different than that of an unregenerated-by-the-Holy Spirit individual. Even though the believer remains "in the world" post salvation, he is not to live according to the thinking or the ways of the world (cf. John 15:19).

What follows then are biblical characteristics of unregenerate individuals—characteristics that should no longer be a part of

the believer's life. Ephesians 4:17–20 serves to illuminate why those who, biblically speaking, are in rebellion toward God, i.e., the unregenerate, have difficulty (among many other issues) casting votes for matters that are biblically explicit and simple to understand (in one word, perspicuous).

Mind you, what follows is a powerful and direct passage that most pastors today simply skip over because it so condemns those who are without Christ. But in keeping with my discipline of teaching the whole of the Bible (Acts 20:27), such a study is imminent and unavoidable.

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way.



Paul's lead-in statement, So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk ... uses the Greek word for walk as a metaphor to describe the ongoing lifestyle of the believer after he has been saved. The believer is commanded not to walk just as the Gentiles. This Greek word for Gentiles is ethnos, which has the idea of "other peoples in the world." Contextually, it means "those who are unregenerate and ungodly."

The following four characteristics of the unregenerate should be foreign to those walking in and with a new nature who are in Christ, those who have, per the vocabulary of the passage, learned Christ.

As you study the following, compare yourself to the descriptors and ask yourself whether these characteristics are descriptive of you. Ideally, they are not.

II. FUTILE THINKING

in the futility of their mind ... (v. 17).

The first of four descriptors of the unregenerate is keyed by Paul's incorporation of the Greek word translated *futility* (*mataiotes*), which means "vanity" or "emptiness." As used contextually herein, *futility* relates to the pursuits of our *mind* or intellect. Notice that throughout this entire passage, the intellect is what leads to manifested ungodly behavior. Accordingly, this passage identifies the fact that

Unbelievers think differently from believers.

That statement should come as no shock to most, but understanding this statement is attributed to the power of regenerative, transforming faith in Christ! The starting point of sin, according to Scripture, is the mind, not environment. Why? Because the unbeliever's mind is informed by his or her fallen self—not the transformative

(cf. Romans 12:2), indwelling Holy Spirit. Nor is the unregenerate mind informed by God's Word, whereas the believer's epistemological source is captive to, i.e., a slave to, the Word of God. In essence, the non-Christian is his own authority, and he reasons outward from his or her finite autonomy, starting with "Well, I think"

Such a beginning point for reasoning and subsequent behavior always leads to self-centeredness, aimlessness, and meaninglessness. Dr. Well-I-think is not a good philosopher. And even though such futili*ty* is equivalent to the Old Testament (OT) Hebrew words vanity and striving after wind (Ecclesiastes 2:26), the unregenerate spend their whole life consumed by, clawing at, and clamoring after the mental pursuit of wrong objectives. How sad! The believer, on the other hand, has come to know the living God of the universe Who has disclosed Himself in the Scripture. The believer's thinking, therefore, is not vain or empty because it is based on and beholden to a source outside of self-a source outside of his own fallen nature—God's revelation in the Bible.

Do you submit to and base your opinions and decision on God's Word, or are you the preeminent authority for all determinations?

Whereas the former displays godly wisdom, the latter is a manifestation of what this passage labels as *futility*. In fact, in James 3:13 to 4:3, the author, James, calls this in contrast, *the wisdom of the earth* versus *the wisdom from above*.

The fall of man in Genesis 3 is the causal agent for what conservative theologians label "the noetic effect of sin." That's to say that when sin entered the world, it altered man's ability to think straight—and the closer he gets to moral truths, the more warped his fallen thinking is evident. In

VERSE OF THE WEEK

2 Corinthians 5:20

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.



Consistent proclamation of the Word and the making of strong disciples quell the progressive consequences of unbelief and illuminate darkness in the capital community and the culture as a whole.





Continued from page 2

from the Faculty of Evangelical Theology of the Christian Alliance of Abidjan (Ivory Coast), and a law degree from the Faculty of Legal Sciences and Policies of General Lansana Conté of Sonfonia (Guinea).

Pastor Telliano has spoken at numerous national and regional church conferences and seminars. He is married and the father of three children. We were blessed to meet Pastor Telliano through our connections in the Africa offices of the Christian Broadcasting Network who gave Pastor Telliano their highest recommendations. Pastor Telliano is in the process of launching a discipleship ministry and weekly Bible study to national political leaders in his home country of Guinea.



summary of the point, the unregenerate are the victims of the *futility of their mind*.

But we've only just begun to understand the whole thrust of this powerful passage.

III. IGNORANT UNDERSTANDING

Being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart (v. 18).

Unbelievers are *futile in their mind* because they both *ignore* (*agnoia*) and *harden* (*porosis*) their *heart* (*kardia*). *Porosis* is a word used both then and now to identify a condition of hard formations in joints that would lead to immobilization, i.e., a paralysis or a petrifying effect. Paul uses this word to vividly picture someone who continually chooses to sin. As a result, this person becomes increasingly immobilized, insensitive, and paralyzed to God's truth. This volitional direction leads to increasingly deleterious results: *being darkened in their understanding* of God's ways.

Their intentional *ignorance* of God's truth serves to increasingly calcify *their heart*. In other words, they have alienated and *hardened* their minds from the truths that are internally evident within them. In Romans 1:18–20, God Himself says the following in this regard:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

This passage is a twin sister to the Ephesians 4 verse under study. The reason unbe-

lievers have no life in God is that they choose to rebel against God, passively and/ or aggressively. They resolve to *ignore* and *suppress* that which He has made *evident* within them. By mentally rejecting Him, their understanding is continually darkened. For example,

Unbelievers become hardened in their beliefs in Darwinism or evolution, which, in summary states, "Nothing times nobody equals everything."

Others, more "religious" in their outward persona, but nonetheless, not repentant of personal sin nor dependent on Christ in humility for their salvation, quote the findings of the Jesus Seminar which "voted out" Jesus' deity! Such ridiculous viewpoints illustrate *ignorant hearts*. Better understood, the Greek word for *ignorant hearts* in this passage is kardia, which means "minds." All the while they outwardly postulate biblically antithetical ideologies, they are *suppressing* that which they know deep down to be true.

Later, in his first chapter to the Romans, Paul succinctly describes the ungodly as ones professing to be wise who instead became fools (1:22). In 2 Timothy 3:7, Paul gives yet another descriptive insight, stating that unrepentant sinners are always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Commentator MacArthur has insightfully summarized ignorant understanding in this way:

The ungodly are unresponsive to truth. Just as a corpse cannot hear a conversation in the mortuary, the person who is "dead in [his] trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1) cannot hear or understand the things of God, no matter how loudly or clearly they may be declared or evidenced in his presence.²



And if you ever wonder why certain individuals on your subcommittee do not seem to get your biblical argument, here is the reason. It's unlikely to be because you lack perspicuity or communication skills; rather, it is because they are spiritually incapable of getting it; they are spiritually deaf! Don't be offended or take it personally when others reject your biblical positions; this passage informs you as to why: you should absolutely expect it! It therefore follows,

The greatest need of the unbeliever is a spiritual hearing aid new life in Christ!

Evangelizing your colleagues is the best way you can aid other members. Realize to-day that unbelievers—pre-salvation—come into office with *futile thinking* and *ignorant understanding* (the first two points of this outline).

It is, therefore, impossible for unregenerate lawmakers to vote biblically, in ways that are pleasing unto the Lord all the time, my friend! Their hearts, says Paul, have a sinful bias. (Praise God when they do vote right!) This realization is the precise reason why your proffering of saving faith is essential to, and a prerequisite for, any societal change for the better that might be wrought through policy enactment. Take note:

Your evangelism skill as a public servant is more important than your elocution of solid policy positions!

Wise up to this assertion. That conclusion is based on this week's passage! You need to embrace what the Word of God is saying to you lest you continually spin your wheels with lesser priorities while serving in government.

What is doubly sad about the unregenerate politician is this: when public servants continue in their *hardness*, God will *give them over*, and the sinner will seal his or her own fate. The unsaved become forever *excluded from the life of God* (cf. Romans 1:24, 26; Revelation 22:11). Learn to identify those in this spiritual condition, as sad as this biblical reality is, and as difficult as it is to exegete what God is saying in this passage. The longer a person rejects Christ, the greater his or her depravity becomes.

IV. CALLOUS BEHAVIOR

And they, having become callous have given themselves over to sensuality ... (v. 19).

As the unregenerate continually and habitually blot out the truths of God and His accompanying conviction of sin-truths that they know deep down are what is right—they become callous (apalgeo), which means "to cease to feel pain." As a result, they give themselves over to sensuality (aselgeia). This word carries the idea of the absence of all moral restraint, especially in the area of sexual deviation. More literally, it is the state of "no longer bridling self-indulgence." In the same context and use of the same word, the Apostle Peter describes those characterized by aselgeia as people who are daring and self-willed (2 Peter 2:10-12). Such people care not what others think; they have no sense of shame because their conscience (according to our parallel passage in Romans, chapter 1) has been cauterized.

Furthermore, *having become* carries the future tense thought that a downward progression takes place in the life of the unregenerate. This level of classification indicates that these folks have *given themselves over* (cf. Romans 1 where this phrase is stated three different times in describing the same situation—only there it says that God actually gives up on them!). Both of these passages serve to profoundly communicate the theological idea that God's com-

Roger Sherman



"I believe that God ... did send His own Son to become man, die in the room and stead of sinners, and thus to lay a foundation for the offer of pardon and salvation to all mankind, so as all may be saved who are willing to accept the Gospel offer."

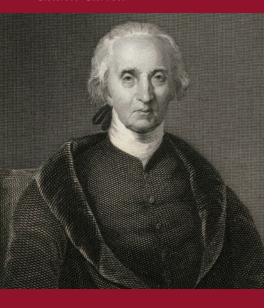
Roger Sherman, signer of the Declaration of Independence, signer of the
 Constitution, "Master Builder of the Constitution," judge, framer of the Bill of Rights, U.S. senator.

Lewis Henry Boutell, *The Life of Roger Sherman* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1896), 271–273.

Understanding Why the Unregenerate Don't Vote Right



Charles Carroll



"On the mercy of my Redeemer I rely for salvation and on His merits, not on the works I have done in obedience to His precepts."

 Charles Carroll, signer of the Declaration of Independence, delegate to the Constitutional Convention, framer of the Bill of Rights, U.S. senator.

Lewis A. Leonard, *Life of Charles Carroll of Carrollton* (New York: Moffit, Yard & Co, 1918), 256–257.



mon, restraining grace is now nowhere to be found in the life of such an individual. God's otherwise gracious curtailment and restraint of our sin—at this level of unregeneracy—has now been removed.

Contradistinctively, those who are believers possess a deep sense of remorse, guilt, pain, and repentance over their sin—quite the opposite of *callousness*! Make sure you understand the following:

When the Holy Spirit
invades, convicts,
regenerates, and
empowers, He also
sensitizes and illuminates
throughout the lifetime
of the believer!

Praise God! What a great gift and miracle is His sustaining and persevering gift of salvation (cf. Hebrews 2:3)!

Politicians in this state of spiritual degeneracy are impervious to the moral depravity of their ways and their votes; in their *callous behavior*, they carry not the mind of God whatsoever—nor should anyone expect them to! Theirs are deep-down, undealt-with spiritual problems. Beloved, again, this passage teaches us that such attitudes among your seatmates should not surprise those who are biblically literate.

V. IMPURE PRACTICE

for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness (v. 20).

As if the first three descriptors that Paul has put forth in this passage are not enough, now things get even worse in the downward spiral of unregeneracy. The word for practice (*ergasia*), carries a profoundly significant meaning. Paul chooses a word under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that communicates much more than

the idea of a personal repetitive ritual, although that is in view here. Ergasia refers to a business practice. The Scriptures state in this passage that callous unbelievers are those who have fallen so low that they have made a business out of impurity in some way! One obvious illustration in America is "the porn industry [which] generates more income than the combined revenues of ABC, NBC, and CBS and more than the combined revenues of NFL, NBA, and MLB. In the USA, the porn industry generates between \$15 billion-\$97 billion a year. Every second, \$3,075.64 is being spent on pornography."3 Building a business based on and in *impurity* is not only evident in L.A., but in D.C. as well.

Many are the unregenerate public servants characterized by impurity who manifest such callous practices as revealed in and by their all-out quest for power!

They will do anything, they will stoop to the lowest forms of sinfulness, unaffected by conscience in their lustful quest for power! Such is a broader application of the biblical meaning of *the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness*.

In fact, the Greek word for *greediness* (*pleonexia*) is closely aligned with *impurity*. Both words carry the idea of "uninhibited lust for that which is wanted." *Sensuality*, *impurity*, and *greediness* are all identifiable manifestations of unregenerate individuals who will use or bulldoze over others for selfish gain and the fulfillment of personal wantonness. Such is characteristic of pattern and end result of those who continually reject God's voice in their heart; this, my beloved friend, is where life leads when one repeatedly, consistently, and habitually rejects Christ.

The ideas from the previous outline points of having *given themselves over* (IV.) and being *excluded from the life of God* (II.) are based on personal decisions to pursue debauchery. As a result, summarily, they



are now incapable of salvation because they themselves have cauterized their conscience toward the things of God.

Oh, my friend, I pray that you are not one of these! At the risk of sounding harsh and unloving, the phrase "throw the bums out" is an appropriate biblically based response as to how believers should treat such hardened individuals who now hold or seek public office. When politicians are motivated by such base, selfish attitudes, wherein they are in transactional benefit from things *impure*, for them to vote correctly now or in the future is obviously impossible.

By the grace of God, not every unbeliever who serves in public office is this hardened.

But those who are transactionally evilthose individuals commensurate with corruption—are those who should be shown the door. Even more sad than that is the biblical conclusion in terms of the possibility of their salvation. Individuals who are characterized by the practice of impurity, Paul says, are beyond being reached by the message or messengers of salvation. Lest you think this is an isolated interpretation or a skewed biblical text, Jesus said in this regard elsewhere: "Do not throw your pearls before swine..." (Matthew 7:6). And again, three times Romans chapter 1 states regarding such individuals, And God gave them over....

Beloved, it is your biblical responsibility, and it is in your keeping in obedience to God that you identify such corruption and act appropriately! You should be witnessing to some in D.C. who have been elected to office, and you should be working to remove some because they are so far gone, beyond remedy, as identified by their *greedy involvement with things impure*. Cleansing D.C. is a good idea, don't you think?

VI. SUMMARY

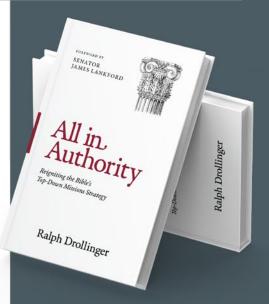
Seeing the downward progression of these four aforementioned horrible characteristics of unbelief is not difficult. I see at least three conclusive takeaways from this passage relative to public servants. The examples follow.

A. REJECTING JESUS CHRIST LEADS TO TERRIBLE BEHAVIOR AND PRACTICE

These characteristics—and a person's progression toward degeneration—are true of every unbeliever. Billy Graham used to reflect the truths of this Ephesian letter passage when in his evangelistic sermons he would say, "You may never get this opportunity again to profess your faith in Christ. Today is the day of salvation! Come forward!!" Certainly, not every unregenerate individual is so far along in this identified progression of sinful hardening that attests to the restraining work of the Holy Spirit or again, what is referred to theologically as common grace. God bestows this protective shield on both the believer and unbeliever, righteous and unrighteous (cf. Matthew 5:45), and helps to curtail and diminish the deleterious effects of the fall the truly severely drastic realities of the fallen world in which we live.

B. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD SERVES TO BOTH PRESERVE AND ILLUMINATE

A summary of this scorching passage would not be complete without mentioning why the world is not worse off than it is. Quite simply, it is due to the preserving and illuminating influence of believers. When the Word of God goes out, it does not return void (cf. Isaiah 55:11). It is like a tiger, which needs no defense—only unleashed! It says of itself that it is *living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword* ...



NOW AVAILABLE

The book of Acts records how a small band of men—the apostles—in very short order *turned the world upside down* (Acts 17:6, KJV) during the first century in which they lived. This small team of uneducated, common men were not elite leaders, so how were they able to saturate the world with the gospel—changing lives, changing culture, and eventually changing the Roman Empire?

Scripture provides the answer: not only did they fulfill the Great Commission one soul at a time through a ministry of geometric evangelism and discipleship, but they succeeded by concentrating on and impacting a particular element of society, specifically kings and all who are in authority (1 Timothy 2:1–4).

All in Authority: Reigniting the Bible's Top-Down Missions Strategy provides the biblical exegesis for this missional strategy that is found in both the Old and New Testaments. The book provides a clarion call for the Church to make political public servants a priority mission field in our nation today. Request your complimentary copy at capmin.org.

Understanding Why the Unregenerate Don't Vote Right

(Hebrews 4:12). Such consistent proclamation of the Word and the making of strong disciples have an effect—like nothing in comparison—to quell the deteriorating consequences of unbelief and to illuminate darkness in the Capitol community and the culture as a whole. That is why these Bible studies disseminated throughout the offices every week are so vitally important to the health of our members and nation.

Like radiation that impeded the progression of cancer, the proclamation of the Word of God amazingly thwarts the rot and illumines the darkness of otherwise unbridled and degenerative unbelief.

C. HOW IS YOUR WALK WITH CHRIST?

And lastly, the main point Paul is making is further signaled in his admonition at the conclusion of today's passage: But you did not learn Christ in this way (v. 20). This rebuke has a present applicability here in the Capitol. In other words, these degenerative, sinful traits should be far from characterizing any and all true believers! For some members who are regenerate in Christ to still vote incorrectly on biblically explicit issues⁴ is to act in callousness to the perspicuous teachings of God's Holy Word!

If you are saved, you must mature in Christ to the degree that it affects both your inward thinking and outward actions, which most definitely should include the way in which you vote on moral issues (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:20)! If you are saved, then show it in D.C. Courageously proclaim to others that you have learned Christ in this way!

- 1. In their book, The Criminal Personality: A Profile for Change, researchers Samuel Yochelson and Stanton Samenow state, "It is not the environment that turns a man into a criminal, it is a series of choices that he
- 2. John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible. New York: Word, 1997.
- 3. Lyndon Azcuna, "The Porn Pandemic," October 28, 2021, LifePlan, www.lifeplan.org/the-porn-pandemic/
- 4. There can be honest disagreement with non-biblically-explicit issues.

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