Ephesians 14-06-01b

We pick up our study now in Ephesians 4, and we're going to pick up the pace a little bit as well, in looking at this and seeing the importance of truth, the key to everything that Paul has been talking about, all of those in him benefits in chapter 1, the being brought near to God when you were one time afar off in chapter 2, the unity in chapter 3, and the pleading that he makes in this chapter that we walk worthy of the calling with which we were called, is centered in truth. We've been talking about truth and the problem that truth has in our current day, because, here's the thing, sometimes truth is distasteful. You look in the mirror, and you find the truth distasteful.

I don't like what I see. I like what I used to see. Of course, back then, I didn't like what I saw, but I didn't know that I'd be looking at what I'm looking at now, or I would have been a lot happier.

What was I thinking when I wasn't happy back then? I had no idea of what truth would look like now. But it's about the truth. What is true? Now, does truth make a difference? Here's the thing.

If you don't like the truth, when reality confronts you, and this is difficult, you think about, now we've had recent examples and some earlier examples of people who reach a certain age and can't drive anymore. That is a distasteful truth. If something doesn't get me before then, eventually I'll reach the point where I can't drive.

Anybody that knows me knows that I prefer to drive. If I'm in a car with one or more other people, I want to be the driver, because I'm the best driver I know. I feel safer with me than with anybody else.

But there will come a time when I've got some problem where I'm no longer the best driver I know, and I'll have to give up driving. That's going to be a distasteful reality. However, if I say, I don't like that reality, so I'm going to ignore it.

Well, this is the problem that is happening today in the postmodern culture. In former days, an ugly truth had to be confronted and dealt with. Well, we don't have money, therefore we can't buy a color television.

We're going to have to continue to watch the black and white television, because we don't have the money to afford color TV. Those of us who grew up in the early 60s, there was a transition. Everybody had black and white, all of a sudden color TVs came out.

You'd go to your friend's house to watch cartoons after school, because they've got a color set. We've got an old, blurry, bland, no contrast Magnavox, which, by the way, we still have. The last time I plugged it in and turned it on, there was a popping sound and smoke.

But I've got a whole case of tubes. I'm going to take that thing out and replace the tubes and see if it'll fire. I'll either blow another breaker, or it'll work.

But we've still got that TV. That's the TV I grew up with. You can see pictures of me before I had any brothers and sisters, and that TV is in the background.

It's the oldest living Magnavox I know of. But we can't afford a color TV. We didn't afford a color TV until the 70s.

I don't think we had a color set until we moved to Claremore. Well, I guess it was 1968, 1969, somewhere in there. But a long time, we couldn't afford a color set.

It's a distasteful, unfortunate, uncomfortable truth, but it's true. Deal with it. You're a member of the awkward squad.

You've got no athletic skill at all. You couldn't hit a volleyball if they handed it to you. You're just not coordinated.

Well, but I want to be on the team. I want a jacket with a letter on it, and I want to be part of the cool. Look, you've got no hand-eye coordination at all.

You don't understand the game. You're just going to stand there and make a fool of yourself. But I want to be on the team.

You can't be on the team. You're not athletic. That's a truth.

It's distasteful. It's uncomfortable. We wish it was different.

I wish I could sing. I can't sing. I've got a five-note range plus a nearly perfect pitch so that when I do sing, it's like self-torture.

Why would you do that to yourself? Make noises that assault your senses. Love to sing. Can't sing.

Well, but I want to sing. I wish I could sing. You can't sing.

It's truth. It's reality. Well, here's the thing.

In the modern day, facts such as these created conclusions upon which people would then go forth and function. I'm not going to favor you with a solo this morning because I can't sing. I'm a modern man.

I'm not going to stand up here and make an idiot out of myself and torture myself by breaking out into, you know, Deo or something because I can't sing. Okay. In the postmodern world, in the postmodern world, we have a solution to these uncomfortable truths.

I am no longer going to worry about whether what I believe reflects reality. So you will see me next week as a contestant on American Idol. I'll have a microphone in my hand, and I'm going to

go out there, and I'm going to wow them, and I'll just be disappointed and melt into tears when I don't win because my truth is I'm a great singer.

My truth is I'm a great athlete. My truth is I look like I did when I was 23. My truth is what I want my truth to be, and I don't let reality intrude into my worldview anymore because I'm now a postmodern person.

Well, we were coming over here this morning, and Dr. Jeffers at First Baptist was actually illustrating an entirely different point, but he gave an illustration that was really apt. He said, if you go to your accountant and say, where do I stand? What does my balance sheet look like? And your accountant comes back and says, you are in great shape. You're in the black to the tune of about $100,000.

You're really well off. And you think, wow, that's great. And so you begin to go out and write some checks, and you buy yourself a new car, and you buy yourself a boat, and you buy yourself these different things that you have been longing for, and you say, wow, I didn't know I had $100,000.

This is great. Well, then all of your checks bounce, and people come back and repossess everything, and the authorities come and are looking for you for fraud and embezzlement, writing hot checks. And you go back to your accountant and you say, well, I don't understand why my checks are bouncing.

You told me I was $100,000 to the good. And the accountant says, well, yeah, I said that, but really, you're $250,000 in the hole. You know, your debt picture is really pretty scary.

Well, why didn't you tell me? Well, I didn't want to make you feel bad. I wanted you to feel good, and I figured if I told you that you were wealthy and affluent and had a lot of money, you would begin to act like a person who is wealthy and affluent and has a lot of money, and that truth for you would condition you into being someone who acted like someone who has money. And you think, well, but that's not reality.

Exactly. Why do we care about all this stuff? You know, theology, wah, wah, wah, wah, wah. I'm going to go off and do what I always do.

This coming week, I've got a job, I've got responsibilities, I've got stuff to do. Why does this matter? Here's why it matters. Truth matters.

Reality matters. If you reconstruct reality to suit your whims, it is going to come up and smack you in the face and smack you hard. There is no dodging what is real.

And this is what the postmodern world has not yet figured out. Why? Because we have credit cards. That's why.

I am not really in debt. It's just numbers on paper. If somebody will give me a piece of plastic and

I can show that piece of plastic to somebody else and then I can walk out with a Martin D-45 guitar, I'm going to do it because I want that guitar.

Don't bother me with the details. I had a piece of plastic. Now I've got a guitar.

Now I've got a car. Now I've got a new computer. I've got a 65-inch flat-screen television.

I've got all of this stuff that I want. Then all I had to do was somebody gave me this piece of plastic and I showed it to another guy. I've got all of this stuff.

That's my reality. I have the stuff. Postmodernism.

What's going to happen? There is a short amount of time where, hey, isn't this great, will not burst your bubble, and then reality will set in. This human life is sort of an extended version of that principle. Yes, you can live apart from God for a time.

Yes, you can fool yourself into thinking that it's all, you know, every day in every way I'm getting better and better, you know. Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all? It's me. I can sing.

I can be an athlete. I can do whatever I want. And now we have, if you've noticed, a society that is conditioned to affirm everything and everybody.

People with horrible entertainment potential are proactively pursuing a career in entertainment. They have scary bad voices. They look terrible in their choice of clothing.

But they are confident because nobody has ever intruded reality into their worldview. Their mommy and daddy and their music teacher at school has done nothing but affirm them, done nothing but tell them positive things. I didn't want to make you feel bad.

Sooner or later, Simon Cowell is going to say, you stink. What are you doing here, right? Well, in a small way, this is an illustration of why truth is important. Truth is not what most people think it is.

Most people think, well, you know, I just want to kind of have a happy time. I want to have a good life. I want to enjoy some stuff.

You're writing checks with nothing in the bank. And there is going to come a time when you're going to look back and say, what was I thinking? Well, we want to get in touch with truth now. That's why chapter one is important, what is true in him.

You are a believer, and those things are absolutely God-guaranteed truths. But you've got to cash them in. This is the reality of how to do that.

To have a genuinely happy life, happy in reality. Wouldn't it be great if you really were possessed

of the things that you want? If you really were able to do the things that are fulfilling and satisfying and enjoyable. I think being a singer would be the most wonderful thing.

I think owning a particular piece of property, some possession, would be the key to my happiness. God knows that in reality there is something that would fulfill me and give me a deep and permanent and lasting joy exponentially beyond that. Because I'm a child.

You know, there is a time when children, their most important priority is to get a hold of that pacifier and stick it in their mouth. Take the pacifier away, they're going to scream because the key to their happiness in that moment is that pacifier. Later on, it will be a toy.

Their woobie or their doll or their little teddy bear, whatever it might be, their blankie. When you're trying to wean them, it's the bottle. They suddenly have a fixation that, you know, I've got to have my bollo or all is lost.

And they think, you know, I must have this. And when they have it, they are content and happy. Look, does anybody seriously need a blankie right now? Do you need a pacifier? Do you want to go back and get it? I mean, we look back on that and say, you know, that was then, this is now.

When I was a child, I thought as a child, I spoke as a child. I have grown up and I realize that as a mature person, there are things far more satisfying than some little possession. That is an analog.

That is an illustration of what we're talking about here. This truth matters. Reality matters.

And this is reality. You can't get this reality anywhere else. Reality is we are body of Christ.

And because of that, we need to know how it functions and what it does. Now, there is an alternative that is offered that isn't reality and isn't true. And it is sevenfold.

And that's what we have picking up here in verse 17. We've already covered the truth and how important it is. You remember that, right? The truth is what informs us and activates us and lets us understand our ministry to one another so that the body of Christ is built up.

Every part does its function and you are one of those every parts. This is reality. This isn't just theology.

It's reality. You really are connected to Jesus Christ. You really are connected to other believers.

And it really is important to figure this out and to function effectively in it. There is no other path to happiness. There is no other path to fulfillment.

There is no other path to the future in reality. Anything else you choose as a substitute is somebody humoring you. Somebody telling you something, including your own senses, telling you, Oh, this feels good.

This must be right. Do you really want to go through life being Debbie Boone? It can't be wrong because it feels so right. It's not right because it feels right.

It's right if the Word of God says it's right. And it's wrong if the Word of God says it's wrong. Homosexuality is not okay because it feels good to tell everybody that it's okay.

It's wrong. It is corrosive. And by the way, it's not just the act.

It's not just the nature of, you know, falling in love with someone of the same gender. It is a symptom. It is the measle on the skin that bespeaks a much deeper and darker infection.

It is a symptom. People say, well, what's the harm? What's the hurt? You know, if people are committed and love each other, why can't that be okay? I'll tell you why it can't be okay. You say, well, it's just a measle.

Why can't I just paint over it so that it's not red? And why can't I cover it up with a shirt so that it doesn't show? And why can't it all be fine? Because you haven't gotten rid of the virus. You haven't gotten rid of the soul kink that is manifesting itself in that way. And I will tell you from the word of God that people who engage in same-sex relations of any kind, committed or uncommitted, have a soul kink.

This is why the promiscuity rate amongst same-gender oriented people is exponentially higher than other people. They have more partners in a year than anybody else. They have more non-lasting relationships than anybody else.

Their divorce rate in same-sex relationships is higher even than the supposedly half that take place in the normal genuine marriage. There is more degeneracy. There is more disease.

There is more destructive behavior. There is a higher suicide rate. Look up the statistics that nobody will tell you and you'll really have to dig to find them because it is politically incorrect to point out the corruption and the degeneracy that is a part of that lifestyle.

And they willingly and proactively place children into these homes now and let them adopt. And you want to talk about child abuse. Planting an adopted child into a home like this.

Oh, but they're loving. No. It is a soul kink.

The Word of God says so and that is reality. Deal with it. That's what God knows who wrote the manual on the human soul, who built the human soul, who knows all of its operations.

And he said the reason you have got to eliminate these people from your society in Israel is because it is a serious, corrosive, gangrenous, malignant cancer. And when you tolerate it, it is only going to spread. Has it spread? Yes.

Is it going to continue to spread? Yes. Are people in denial about the reality of the consequences of this? Yes. It's not reality.

Deal with reality. It's so important for us to deal with truth. Truth matters.

Well, verse 17, And see where it says the rest of the Gentiles? The rest of is not in there. You should no longer walk as the Gentiles. And in this context, he's not talking about Gentile versus Jew.

He's talking about the heathens. You can scratch it out and put heathens. You should no longer walk as the heathens, those without a relationship to God.

One of the reasons he uses Gentiles is the circumcised had a relationship with God, the God of Israel. Gentiles, almost by definition, were not related to God in any way. So this is the heathens.

In our vernacular, heathens makes the most sense here. You should no longer walk as the heathens. This is peripateo.

This is lifestyle. You should no longer walk as the heathens walk. He's writing to Gentiles.

That's why somebody felt like they had to put in the rest of. Because he's writing to people in Laodicea, in Asia Minor here. And they're largely, quote-unquote, Gentiles.

But he's talking about that culture, that thought sphere. In the futility of their mind. So, number one, there's going to be seven characteristics.

It defined the heathen culture then. It defines the heathen culture now. This is reality.

I hope I've convinced you that reality is important. Here's what you get if you don't walk in truth. Here's where you will be if you don't pay attention to the pleading of the Apostle Paul when he says, I, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling.

Remember that, verse 1? I beseech you to walk, peripateo, lifestyle, live your life, invest the time that God has allocated to you. The sands and the hourglass, so are the days of our lives. Only a few of you know what that really means.

Beseech you to walk worthy, verse 1. Here, I testify, I say and testify. Testify is martyreo. He's a prisoner of the Lord.

He says, like a martyr with a living testimony, I say and testify. This is important. That you should no longer walk.

You want to walk worthy of the calling, no longer walk like the heathen. How do they walk? There's seven characteristics. Number one, futility of their mind.

The word futility here is mataios. Some of you will be familiar with the term mataiotes. From studies and days gone by.

This is the vacuum of the soul. This is emptiness. This is futility.

This is vanity of vanities. If you remember our extended discussion in Ecclesiastes. It is a vapor, effervescent, insubstantial.

It seems to be there and then it's gone. It's illusory, ephemeral. How many different synonyms for temporary and disappearing do you want? That's mataiotes.

Insubstantial. That's number one. Futility of their mind.

Mind is noose. This is the thinking. The conclusions that they draw, the thought processes that they use, the rationale is faulty.

It's not connected to truth. It is self-deceiving. It's a feel-good thought process.

I'm going to think this and conclude this and do this because it feels good. It is empty. You are living on credit and you're going to have to pay and that payment is going to be with interest.

It's going to hurt and hurt a lot. Mataiotes in the noose. Empty, futile thinking.

That's number one. Number two. Verse 18.

Having their understanding darkened. Remember in Ephesians chapter 1 where it said, Having the eyes of your understanding, the eyes of your heart enlightened so that you can know the truth? Remember that? Back in chapter 1, verse 18. The eyes of your understanding, the eyes of your heart, literally, your cardia, having been enlightened.

This is the gift from God. But it's like we were talking about in the first session. It's like that coupon.

Your eyes have been opened. Your eyes have been enlightened so that you can understand these wonderful things that fill out the rest of chapter 1. But are you going to cash in the coupon? Are you going to use your enlightened eyes? Or are you going to continue to walk like the Gentiles who, number two, have their understanding darkened? This is skotoo. S-K-O-T-O-O.

And skotas is lack of light. Last night, middle of the night, cat got out. Trying to find the cat outside, 2 a.m. What do you need? You need a flashlight.

You know what's great about cats? They got big eyes. And if they're hiding in the bushes or whatever and you shine a light at them and they're looking at you, it's like little headlights shining back at you. So if you want to find a cat in the dark, what do you need? You need some light.

If you want to keep from stumbling, if you want to find your way around, this is why in this age, we just take it for granted, but there's light everywhere. Have you ever been up in a plane over a city at night? Look at the light. Why do we do that? Because darkness bad, light good.

They have their understanding. Notice this is having been. This is a past.

This is a perfect tense in the sense that it's already done. It was done in the past and they continue in that condition. Their understanding having been darkened.

Having been darkened. It's a perfect tense. Past time.

Their understanding here is not cardia like it was in chapter 1. This is deanoia. You can see that N-O-I-N-O-U-S. Talking about the thinking, the understanding, the mind.

This is your faculty of understanding, of feeling, of desiring. This is your mental process. Your mental process is in the dark.

Do you really want to be making decisions in the dark? Have you ever had to do this? They put you up against it and you say, well, you've got to choose. You're in school and they say, choose your major. Well, I don't know what major to choose.

Man, I nearly exploded trying to figure out what to major in when I was at Navy. Naval engineering, you can be this engineer and it's an engineering school. You've got to pick some kind.

Do you want to be an electrical engineer? Do you want to do physics? Do you want to do oceanography? Do you want to do what they call a bull major? Do you want to be history or one of these? What do you want to be? Well, I didn't know. I never had any jobs out there. How do I know? And you have to make a decision in the dark.

I thought, well, systems, that sounds good. Systematic stuff, I like organization. Systems engineering, well, that sounds good.

You kind of integrate stuff. Okay, I'll do that. I made that decision completely in the dark.

And, oh, was it a horrendously maladjusted decision for me. I had no more fitness for that than I do for American Idol. And I got smacked just as hard by the reality of the fact that just choosing it and wishing it to be so didn't make it happen.

I had no ability to be a systems engineer. Making decisions in the dark, does anybody think this is good? No. If you're understanding, if your deanoia is darkened, you're in big trouble.

Well, that's the heathen. That's the way people work, and specifically the reality that is beyond this physical world. They're dark.

It's dark matter, dark energy. It always makes me laugh when the only way they can explain the universe is to posit dark energy and dark matter. It's the fudge factor that makes everything work.

Well, we don't understand why the universe is expanding so much, but if there was such a thing as dark matter and if there was dark energy, it's dark because they can't measure it. They don't know what it is. They just postulate it.

It is this way because God told it to be that way. They may or may not ever figure out the mechanism, but this dark matter, dark energy, I just think, you know what? Your understanding is dark. That's your problem.

You are scotos. Dark. Number two, darkened mind, blind mind.

You can't see. And who wants to make decisions? Do you really want to have somebody put their hands over your eyes from the backseat and have you drive down the road at 65 or 70 miles an hour on Central in rush hour? I'm in the dark, but hey, we're moving now. 65, 70 miles an hour, hey.

You know, reality will catch up to you very quickly. Number three, being alienated from the life of God. This is apollotrio, to be estranged.

To shut out or to be shut out from fellowship and intimacy. Cut off. Quarantined.

Over there. We feed you with a slingshot. We don't get close to you.

You stay over there. There's something wrong with you. You cannot approach.

You cannot get near. Unclean. Leprosy.

Some, you know, flesh-eating bacteria. Stay away over there. Alienated.

Cut off. Separate by design and by purpose and by necessity. We can't get close to you.

That's apollotrio. Being in a state of moral darkness, they also become alienated from the true life. That's what the expositor's commentary says.

Alienated from the life of God. You're stuck with a temporary, ephemeral, very unsatisfactory form of material life. The life of God.

Transcendent life. Eternal life. Abundant life.

Real life. Reality life. You're separate from it.

Can't get there. Behind the bulletproof plexiglass from it. That's number three.

Number four. And notice it says, because of the ignorance that is in them. This is agnoia.

Remember where we had epinosis? The experiential knowledge of Him. And how important that is. Knowing the truth.

This is agnoia. We get agnostic from this. Having no knowledge of.

But it says this is the agnoia, the ignorance, the lack of knowledge that is in them. It doesn't just say they're ignorant. It's the ignorance that is in them.

They embrace this. They have enfolded it. They have made it their banner and their flag.

I don't know and I don't want to know. It is willful ignorance. The ignorance that is in them is a way of saying willful ignorant.

Willfully ignorant. Willfully ignorant. It is and therefore a culpable, a responsible.

You're accountable for this. You should know and you don't. If the city sends you a flyer and says mow your grass or move your car or we're going to cut it and bill you or we're going to tow your car away.

You know, fix this problem or we're going to take action. And you read the notice and you do nothing. You are culpable.

And you say, well, I didn't know they'd really do it. You're willfully responsible. That's number four.

Number five. Because of the blindness of their heart. This is not blindness.

Scratch out blindness. This is hardness. This is the word porosis.

Porosis. Hardness. Poros had the idea of callous or hard skin, leathery type of skin.

Poros. This is porosis. It is calloused.

It's scarred and insensate as a result. Hardness. This is moral hardening.

They are separate from the life of God. And because of that, they don't have a connection to God. They don't understand what is right and what is wrong anymore.

Right and wrong become relative. If it feels good, it's right. If I don't like it, it's wrong.

It's a floating standard, and everybody's got their own floating standard. And, well, what's right to me, you know, it's right to me that you have a lot and I have a little, so I'm going to take some of what you have because that's right to me. It's not right that you should have a lot and I should have a little.

Or, better yet, I'm going to take from you and give to these people over here that don't have enough because you have a lot and they have a little. I'm going to play God because it's right to

me that you shouldn't have so much. You don't need all of that.

I'm going to take that forcibly, and I'm going to give it to these people over here because that's right to me. That's my rightness. Well, the person from whom it's being taken doesn't think it's right.

The people who are getting it think it's right. But everybody's got a different standard of right and wrong. These people think, well, it's not enough.

Give me more. These people got that by ill-gotten means. Not only should you take it from them, but you should punish them on top of it.

That's my right and wrong. So, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the darkness of their heart. And this is hardness of heart.

Even when the truth comes, I've calloused myself over. I'm not going to let it penetrate. I don't want to hear it.

You know, that's the little closing refrain of New Kid in Town. There's a new kid in town. I don't want to hear it.

I don't want to hear it. I don't want to hear that I used to be the big man on campus and now I'm not. I don't want to hear that my girlfriend's run off with another guy.

There's a new kid in town. I don't want to hear it. Shut up.

Don't tell me that. That's hardness of heart. That's number five.

Number six, verse 19. Who being past feeling. This is a great word.

Being past feeling. This is apalgeo. And you think, why is that a great word? Well, because, have you ever read like a Bactine bottle and it says analgesic and antiseptic? You know what antiseptic is? Septic means it's infected.

Antiseptic means I'm going to disinfect and keep it from being infected, right? What's analgesic? Well, the algo part of that, the ALG part is feeling. You feel. Analgesic, I don't want to feel my sunburn, so I'm going to spray myself with, you know, solar cane.

I don't want to feel this cut or this bite, so I'm going to spray myself with Bactine. It's an analgesic. Takes away the feeling.

It'll numb it. Chloraseptic in my mouth and my throat. It's an analgesic.

It's a topical deadener, right? Well, that's what you have here. Apalgeo. It's a participle to cease to feel pain, to cease to feel grief, to cease to feel guilt.

I don't even feel guilty anymore. I can do these wrong things and because I'm postmodern, I don't let arguments about rightness and wrongness intrude into my world view. I feel good.

Da-da-da-da-da-da. I knew that I would. Why? Because I've applied the analgesic.

I don't let myself feel bad. I don't let guilt intrude. I don't let anybody harsh my mellow or rain on my parade or, you know, make me feel... Don't make me feel bad about myself.

That's wrong. In my world view of morality, it's wrong for you to make me feel bad. I feel good.

And I feel good because I'm feeling no pain. Right? Apalgeo. That's number six.

We got one more to go. I'm a little bit over time but I'm going to finish. That is moral insensibility.

Have you ever seen, have you noticed now that in our culture in so much, people can do egregious, egregious, grievous wrong and they don't feel bad at all. They don't feel guilty. They don't have regret.

Hey, you know, that was me being me in the moment. You know, I was just in the moment. You know, that's how I was.

I can't, you know, I'm not going to let myself feel bad about that. Apalgeo. Finally, number seven here, having given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

This is insolence. You give yourself over and this is paradidomy. This is to give alongside, you know, para, paramedic, parallel, things that are alongside.

The medic is alongside you, helping you. Para, the Holy Spirit is the paraclete. The one who is called alongside, who comes alongside to comfort.

Well, this is paradidomy. Having given themselves alongside. Having said, I'm going to give myself to be beside these things.

And this is asalgeia, which is, it's got a long history in Greek. But this is wanton lawlessness. This is the worst kind of, I don't care what you think, I'm going to be as depraved and as gross as you can imagine.

And I'm going to go alongside that. I'm going to partner up with that. I'm going to sit beside that.

Asalgeia person sees no reason for restraint. No reason for, you know, no limits. No rules.

Be a rebel. You know, you're a hero if you disregard the rules. Everyone does what is right in his own eyes.

I have complete disregard for any restraint, constraint. The rules don't apply to me. I'm unique.

I'm special. It's all about me. I live in a pre-Copernican world where everything revolves around me.

I'm at the center of the solar system. I'm at the center of the universe. It is a complete surrender and giving over of oneself to whatever feels good in the moment.

This is not reality. This is not truth. Now, what is the purpose of this sevenfold heathen view of life? What does it accomplish? You see it in the end of verse 19.

To work all uncleanness with greediness, with covetousness. What does Paul say covetousness is? What does he say it is? Covetousness, which is idolatry. It is the worship of self, the worship of pleasure, the worship of whatever makes me feel good.

Anything but God. Fill in the blank. I think Friday night Dan showed me a bumper sticker that said Jesus is and then you just fill in the blank.

Well, that's it. Covetousness. If I want it, it's good.

If it makes me feel good, it is good. I am the sole arbiter of what should be and what you must do to make me happy. So it is to work.

The purpose of this is to work all uncleanness. Ah, catharsis. You know, catharsis used to be what they would shoot for in a Greek play.

The Greeks way back, hundreds of years before Christ, you had these great dramatic plays. And they would show the hero with his flaw and he would go through things and it would catch up to him, a bad decision that he made. And they would watch this and say, you know, by watching this, I cleanse my soul.

I see it portrayed on the stage and looking at this, I can learn from it and be a better me. I can cleanse myself. I want to achieve a catharsis.

Catharsis in Greek literally means a cleansing. Well, this was a human and very deficient method of trying to better yourself. By cleansing faulty thinking and bad decisions and wrong priorities by looking at it depicted in a play.

Here's what will happen, you know, if you go the wrong way. Well, I'm going to learn from that. And people still do this today.

The whole world of English literature is full of people who treat works of fiction like the Bible. They'll exegete it. They will do hermeneutics on it.

They'll interpret it as though Eugene O'Neill or Shakespeare or, you know, some other author has got some valuable insight that can make you be a better person. It's all false. It's all a chasing after the wind.

But they do all of these things to work a catharsis, uncleanness. You just get worse. You get more grubby.

You get more defiled. You wake up in the morning with a worse foul taste in your mouth. Uncleanness, and yet you still want, you have this acquisitive.

You wake up and it's unclean and you feel defiled and rotten and nasty. And coupled with that is this insatiable desire to not feel that way. And so it's a vicious cycle because the heathen sevenfold false disconnected life, disconnected from God and disconnected from truth, never satisfies.

And so what do you come away? You come away working those things that leave you unclean and still hungry, unclean and dissatisfied, unclean and grasping for something more. This is why drug addiction always progresses. You start with something and it feels good for a while, but pretty soon that's tame.

I need more. People that get addicted to pornography start out with something soft, but it takes more and more and more to achieve the same level of whatever it is they're looking for. You have to progress.

People who are into violence, a little violence isn't enough. They've got to be more and more violent. Serial killers have to do it more and more egregiously each time because they get calloused over.

And it takes more to achieve stimulation. It takes more to achieve this momentary satisfaction. It's more, more, more.

And it's never enough to the point that this uncleanness coupled with desire is just a living hell. And there's people who kind of stop and just circle at a safe distance from the black hole, but they never escape it. They can't be free.

They can't move to the light. They can't move to truth because they won't. Can't because they won't.

That's the sevenfold disconnected life, life apart from God. It is centered in deceit. And you'll notice that there is deceit all the way through this.

Look at verse 18. Their understanding is darkened. They're alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance, lack of knowledge, because of the hardness of their heart.

Look at verse 22. We're not there yet, but that you put off concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to deceitful desires. Corruption due to deceitful desires.

What we want deceives us. We think if we could get it, we'd be happy. Did you ever want something, just crave it, save up for it, fantasize about it, and when you first get it, you just, oh, man, I can't turn loose of this.

If it's a car, you want to drive it. If it's an instrument, you want to play it. If it's a toy, you've got to have it in front of you all the time.

You want it, and it just seems like the biggest thing. Well, then some future distance down the road, you say, well, you know, that's really a great thing, but I don't spend all my time with it. I don't think about it like I did before.

I've got my eyes on something else. You know, I had one, but now I want, you know, version two. I had this, but now this is what I really think would make me happy, and we learned this as children that, you know, at Christmas, I wanted a vacuform.

I thought if I had a vacuform, I'd be happy to the end of my days. Finally got a vacuform, made stuff with it, really enjoyed it. It was a great toy, but I didn't crave the vacuform three weeks after Christmas the way I did three weeks before Christmas.

I became sated once I had it. I realized, you know what? By the way, I haven't made anything with a vacuform in about 45 years. You know why? Vacuform, just a little insight here, vacuform is not the key to happiness.

There was a time when I thought it was, but that was not reality. That's what this passage is talking about. We have to wake up to reality.

We really do, and this is what Paul is beseeching us to do, and he details it so forcefully. But you will notice, as my closing thought here, that those seven things greatly correspond to what we heard Friday night from Douglas Gruthius about the things that are attacks on truth in the postmodern age, substitutes for truth. I don't like what truth tells me, so I'm going to cut the rug out from under the notion that truth matters.

Truth doesn't matter, therefore you can tell me your truth all day long. This is why, have you ever been astonished that you make a perfectly cogent, reasonable, factual argument, it's indisputable, it's irrefutable, and somebody says, so what? This happens, I'm telling you. Matthew knows this, I know this, Ken knows this, Dan knows this.

You can explain something to people, it's factual, it's indisputable, it is absolutely sterling, 24-carat, whatever you want to call it, it's true. And people say, they're not persuaded, they don't care. That's not their truth.

And they've cut the legs out from under the notion that truth matters. No, what I think matters, what I want matters. This is a dangerous way to live, it's a dangerous way to waste life and be

deceived by deceitful desires, by the deceitful cunning cubia of men, and this one opportunity, the beer commercial had it right, you only go around once in life, and we want to grab what counts.

Go for the gusto, and the gusto is the plan and purpose of God. It is the truth of God. There is no substitute.

No substitute. That's what Paul is arguing here. It's a powerful, powerful chapter.

We'll close here, and we'll pick up next time in verse 20, where he says, you have not so learned Christ. And just by way of anticipation, it doesn't say, you have not so learned about Christ. It says, you have not so learned Christ.

Think about that, and we'll talk about it next time. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You that we are privileged to have reality revealed to us through the ministry of Your Spirit, through the power of Your Word.

We do not need to be deceived by the photo play of this life. We have the opportunity to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus through all of these wonderful provisions that You have made through Him for us. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these things on our hearts, that they will make a difference in the way we think, in the way we act, the way we choose, and the way we live our lives in the time that is left to us before the Lord Jesus returns and takes us into that ultimate reality that awaits us in the eternal future.

We pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen.