

## Resisting the System: How to Live the Jesus Way

### Part 3: How to Stop Fixing Symptoms and Start Living New

Ephesians 4:17-5:2

#### Summary:

In a world that dehumanizes us, the Holy Spirit makes us new and shows us how to resist by walking in radical love.

#### Main Ideas:

We all want to live like good humans, but we're not sure how.

We're trapped in a system that is trying to un-human us.

The system dehumanizes us. Jesus offers to restore our true humanity.

When we live by the world's system, we lose our humanity.

Jesus didn't come to make you more moral. He came to make you new.

Jesus invites us to embrace a new identity.

We resist the system by being something entirely other.

We resist the system by choosing to walk in love daily.

The world doesn't need more Christians who believe in love. It needs new humans who actually walk in it.

#### Invitation:

Ask: Where am I still wearing the "old self?"

Ask: What would walking in love look like?

Then do it.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you in this week's message?
2. In what ways does our culture promote a version of "goodness" that is more about performance than transformation? Where have you felt pressure to appear good rather than be made new?
3. What are your thoughts when you read Ephesians 5:1-2? How realistic does living your life this way feel right now?
4. Is there an area of your life where it feels especially hard to "walk in love"? What might change if you approached it with Jesus' mindset?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

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#### Transcript:

**WE:** I know something about you... ("I hate it when he does this/who does this guy think he is").

- Don't worry, it's a good thing.
- You're here or listening b/c deep down you want to be a good/better person.

You want to live well, make the right choices, and have a life that actually matters.

But if we're honest, a lot of us feel stuck

- Like we're just running in circles trying to figure out what "good" even is, and what this life is really for.

We all want to live like good humans, but we're not sure how.

- We all want purpose, meaning, direction—something solid to stand on.

But instead, our everyday choices feel like a moral minefield:

- “If you drive a gas car, you’re killing the planet. But electric cars? Just as bad in the long run.”
- “Boycott this company for those reasons.”

I remember moving here 15 years ago, and having new friends who seemed morally offended that we didn’t recycle or compost.

- Don't worry, we recycle now.
- But when did my trash turn into a moral litmus test?

We’ve traded true purpose for performative goodness.

The whole thing is exhausting and confusing.

So we settle for the safest goal: Just don’t be worse than whoever we’ve decided ‘them’ is today.

But, do you know why we feel this way?

- We’re trapped in a system that is trying to un-human us.

The system whispers...

- “Sure, be good—just don’t let it cost you.”
- “Chase your truth. Protect your comfort.”
- If someone gets in your way... cancel, ghost, mock them.

We think this system will bring freedom, happiness, purpose, fulfillment.

- Instead, it gives us anxiety and a deep sense that something’s still missing.

So we good, modern people, try to fix it with...

- More laws
- More education
- More/less government—democracy or socialism
- More arguing and activism
- Even more religion—“Let’s get people into church so they can follow the rules.”

Some of this can help—but it’s addressing the symptoms, not the disease.

- It's like putting a band-aid on a tumor...
- Might cover it for a bit, but it's still growing... still killing.

The problem isn’t that we aren’t trying hard enough.

- The problem is the system itself is destroying us.

What if the answer isn’t a moral upgrade... but spiritual rebirth?

If all of our efforts to fix this system from within are just spinning our wheels...

Then we have to ask: Is there a better way to live, beyond this broken system?

That's the question the Apostle Paul answered around 60 AD to a group of JF's in a letter that we now call the book of Ephesians.

- He offers a completely different way of being alive.

We've been looking at how God, through his Spirit—what the NT calls the Holy Spirit—does something the system never can...

- Started two weeks ago, talking about the first step to resisting the system is enjoying and being rooted in God's love.
- Last week we talked about living as people formed by HS-unified community...

This week, Paul zooms in even closer—how the HS transforms us, daily, to live in complete contrast to a broken world.

Now, If not JF... not required to do anything... See this as me explaining the life God is inviting you to D/E/S.

What we'll discover is... The system dehumanizes us. Jesus offers to restore our true humanity.

Let's look at it together...

**GOD: Eph. 4:17-19 (NLT)** *With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.*

Geez... Paul seems like an elitist, judgmental racist.

- This feels harsh—but Paul's not slamming individuals. He's describing what happens when a whole culture lives under the system

First... by Gentiles, he means Pagans/Romans... People who are not JF's.

"Live no longer" ... Other translations: walk = lifestyle of being immersed/trapped in the world's system.

When we live by the world's system, we lose our humanity.

"Hopelessly confused": Meaning without deeper aim or goal.

- What is actually right/wrong?
- What is truth?
- Being spiritual but feeling at the mercy of the universe... hoping our karma balance is right... but never sure.
- Living to survive, without knowing how to thrive.
- Longing for purpose, with no idea how to become more.

“Wandering far from the life God gives”...

- Not experiencing the true deep overflowing life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Their minds and hearts have been closed to the reality and love of God

- Not necessary b/c they are horrible people
- But b/c they are trapped by and enmeshed in the system.

The system that pushes self-gratification

- Living FOR “lustful pleasures”
- If it makes me happy, it must be good. The ultimate goal is comfort
- Satisfying appetites that can never be filled.

The system that keeps us stuck in the same destructive cycles over and over while we can't figure out what's actually wrong or how to get out of it.

Paul is describing the Gentile/Roman culture around him. A culture a lot like our own...

- Advanced, amazing literature, art, and technology.
- Entertained by empty sex and gratuitous violence.
- Exploitive... using whoever we need to get what we want
- Enslaved to superstitious ideas of divine retribution and judgment.
- Worshipping our power and Empire
- Holding onto our power through elitism, fear, propaganda, and domination.

When a culture is fully ensnared by the system of the world, no matter what we see on the surface, it creates pain and emptiness for its people.

But Paul isn't shaming the broken... he's pointing out the brokenness the system creates so he can hand them the tools to become someone new...

So after showing the Ephesians how dark and empty the world's system is... he tells them... You have been invited to become something entirely different...

**Eph. 4:20-24 (NLT)** *But that isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.*

Paul is saying... “While the world is enslaved to this system... Jesus has come to set you free.”

So often, people think that the Jesus Way is about figuring out how to stop doing all these bad things you want to do, then God will be happy with you

Jesus didn't come to make you more moral. He came to make you new.

He tells us.... “You can now throw off the old way of being human... ensnared by the world’s system... and put on the new human”

It’s so much more/better than behavioral modification.

It's a complete transformation...

I mean, you wouldn’t go out wearing a drenched, stinky, mud-stained hoodie from yesterday’s storm.

- So why clothe ourselves in bitterness, anxiety, deception, contempt from your old life?
- Instead, Paul says: Put on kindness like a fresh set of clothes. Put on peace like a brand new jacket at the beginning of fall.

### Jesus invites us to embrace a new identity.

- An identity that doesn't come from following the right rules but from knowing the truth that comes from him.

The truth of Jesus- Every human has infinite worth and value b/c we were all created in God’s image.

- He loves us completely and unconditionally.
- And he has made a way to restore us to our true humanity through his life, death, and resurrection.

This identity doesn’t come from trying really hard not to do the bad things we want to do, but it comes from the HS renewing us from the inside out.

See, it’s the HS who actually makes us this new humanity.

- Renews our minds, thoughts, hearts to be more and more in line with Jesus’
- The HS’s job isn't to shame us but to transform us. To build us into new humans

And the amazing thing is when we allow the HS to reshape our thoughts and attitudes, then our behaviors begin to change... b/c who we are at our root begins to change.

- It’s asking the HS... “Give me your thoughts today. Allow me to use the love, joy, peace... you’ve put in me.”
- It’s wanting to retaliate, but listening to the voice that invites us to forgive.

So Paul continues and says, Instead of just trying to stop doing bad things... allow the HS to create you into something new...

Instead of lying/spreading and posting misinformation... become a truth teller/fact checker

Instead of being controlled by anger... become a forgiver/a force of peace

Instead of stealing... become a generous giver to those in need

Instead of using your words to tear down... become an encourager who creates hope/joy

It’s not just stopping bad behaviors... It's becoming a community of new humans transformed by the HS who resist the world’s system by bringing Jesus’ love to the world.

God says, “I have made you **mine**... so resist the system by remembering who you are and who you are being made into.”

We resist the system by being something entirely other.

So if the system dehumanizes, and Jesus rehumanizes, what does that really look like day to day?

- Good question... here's the tried and true 2000 yr old answer

**Eph. 4:31-32 (NLT)** *Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

We work with the HS by reminding each other of the truth of Jesus through our actions toward each other...

- God is kind to you... so be kind to others
- God is tenderhearted toward you... so be tenderhearted to others
- God has forgiven you... so forgive others.

And as we keep reading, we get the secret. The simple life-changing way to work with the HS as he transforms us...

**Eph. 5:1-2 (NLT)** *Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life [Other translations: Walk filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.]*

"Live a life"- Other translations: Walk in love

Paul started with... "Don't keep walking in darkness like Gentiles"... Ends it with "Imitate God by Walking in love."

Live a life filled with love/Walk in love = Ongoing, life-long journey.

B/c you were and are loved... become more like God and walk in his love daily.

Reminds me of true story...

Jameel McGee was an innocent black man who spent four years in prison after being falsely accused and framed by a white cop named Andrew Collins. Collins later admitted to falsifying reports and was himself convicted and sent to prison. Years later, the two men unexpectedly crossed paths. And against everything the world's system tells us—**Jameel forgave him**. They didn't just reconcile—they became friends. They travel the country now, sharing their story of radical forgiveness. That is what walking in love looks like. That's what it means to put on the new human.

Jameel said, "I forgave him because if I didn't, it would eat me alive every day... And I had to see him the way God sees him."

See, we don't just need a better way to be moral—we need to become new.

The system isn't broken—it's working exactly how it was designed. And it's destroying us....

- It needs to be resisted, destroyed, and replaced...

And the only way to do it is to become individuals and a community that allows the HS to remake us as we practice walking in love together.

We resist the system by choosing to walk in love daily.

**YOU:** So this week... let me invite you to ...

**Ask:** Where am I still wearing the “old self?” Like a dirty, stinky outfit you forgot to take off.

- Anger/Fear/Divisiveness/Apathy/Selfishness/Addiction to being right or creating drama?
- Name it

Then **Ask:** What would walking in love look like? And— here’s where true transformation starts...— **then do it.**

**WE:** Imagine a community like that.

Not just believing in Jesus’ love... but walking in it every day.

Where walking in Jesus’ love is the goal of our dinner tables, texts, policies, attitudes, parenting, triumphs, and pain?

What kind of marriages, friendships, neighborhoods, and world could we build if we became people marked by true love?

This is how we resist the system.

- Not with better debates or stronger opinions.

But by becoming the kind of people who walk in love—

- Every room. Every moment. Every day.

But because we are God’s beloved.

- The new humanity.

Let’s be that kind of different.

The world doesn't need more Christians who believe in love. It needs new humans who actually walk in it.

