

War of the Worlds

Studies in Ephesians

Lean, Mean, Fighting Machine

Introduction to Ephesians 4:17-32

The phrase, “lean, mean, fighting machine”, coined by boxing commentator, Howard Cosell, describes well the goal of the armed services: to turn every raw recruit into a “lean, mean fighting machine”, who can protect the interests of America at home and abroad. Similarly, as Christians we are called to effectiveness in the battle for Christ’s kingdom by abandoning our old way of doing things, and replacing these practices with Christ’s way of life. Before we came to Christ, our lives were full of futility and darkness—all because we had intentionally chosen to not follow God. The result of this was that we became calloused, insensitive to how much pain we were in because of our sin; this led to even more rebellion against God. However, Christians are taught a different life. The

Christ way of life is based on the truth found in Jesus, as understood both by His words and by His example. The old way of life was constantly being devalued because we succumbed to deceptive lusts, thinking their fulfillment would bring us satisfaction. Christ’s way of life, though, must become our new mindset, and as we live it out, we discover that it is both right and true. The outworking of this in our lives is illustrated in the rest of Ephesians 4. In our relationships, we are to stop lying and start speaking truth, since we are members of the same Body. We must not let our anger become sinful, by limiting its intensity and its duration. Otherwise, we will give the adversary a foothold in our lives. In work,



**The war is on...
are you ready?**

we must stop stealing, and start giving an honest day’s labor—so that we can share with one another. In our speech we are to speak only things that build each other up, and that are filled with God’s grace; otherwise, we grieve the Holy Spirit. Finally, we are to put away all malicious attitudes, and rather be kind and tender-hearted to each other, since God is like this to us. When we do these things, we become “lean, mean, fighting machines”.

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- **Worship**—You were planned for God’s pleasure
- **Fellowship**—You were formed for God’s family
- **Discipleship**—You were created to become like Christ
- **Ministry**—You were shaped for serving God
- **Evangelism**—You were made for a mission

Study/Discussion Questions for Ephesians 4:17-32

(For answers to questions attend an ABF or go to [www.celebrationnet.com/resources/leader resources](http://www.celebrationnet.com/resources/leader_resources))

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| 1. Read 4:17-18. What 5 things describe the way those who don’t know Christ live and think. Which one is the starting point (v18), and how does each one build on the previous step? | |
| 2. From 4:19 what is the overall result of the thinking described in 4:17-18? What outward practices result, and why do you think they do? | |
| 3. According to 4:20-21 how does the “Christ” life compare with the one in 4:17-19? Why are Christians different (v21), and what are we blessed to have (v21)? | |

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Ephesians 4:17-32 Study Questions (cont)

4. In 4:22 what are we told to do as Christians (22a), and what does this mean? Why should we do this (22b)?

5. Based on 4:23-24 what must be renewed when we become Christians, and what are we to replace our “old” self with? How is this described? What does all of this mean to you?

6. From 4:25 what is the thing that must change when we become Christians? Why should we relate to others in the Body this way?

7. Read 4:26-27. What command is given? What limitations are placed on our anger (v26), and why is this so important (v27)? Apply this.

8. According to 4:28 what is the opposite of hard work? What are some of the ways we “steal”? What should be the purpose of our labor?

9. Looking at 4:29-30 what guidelines should we follow in what we say (v29)? What is the result of using our words improperly (v30), and why do you think that is?

10. From 4:31-32 what should we get rid of (v31), and what should we replace it with (v32)? Why does this make sense (v32)?

11. Review 4:17-32. What should we abandon generally (17-19, 22) and specifically (25-32), and what should we accept generally (20-21, 23-24), and specifically (25-32)?

Scripture to Remember

“Put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.” Eph 4:24

Celebration Fellowship

*Reaching—
Restoring—Raising Up*

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Life Group Questions—Ephesians 4:1-6

(Using questions based on today's message, Life Groups meet in homes to build supportive relationships with others at Celebration Fellowship that enable us to grow in Christ.)

1. Share about some of your favorite memories at Thanksgiving. Do any of these memories illustrate the joy of family unity?
2. Discuss the difference between unison, unanimity, uniformity and unity. Why do you think it is so difficult for us to achieve unity?
3. Talk about the seven commonalities in Eph 4:4-6 that we have as Christians. What do these mean, and why is it important to focus on them for unity?
4. Humility, gentleness, patience and forbearance are vital attitudes for unity. Discuss what each of these means, and give some examples of each.
5. Let each person pick out one of these 4 characteristics that they need to work on. Share what stands in the way of its development, and how the group can help you with this.
6. Discuss anything else that impressed you from the message today if you have time.