

“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.” Ephesians 4:17-19 NLT

## lectio // Ephesians 4:17-5:2

Yep, that’s me! Or that’s us. How did Paul figure this out. We (Gentiles) do not have a history of moral law, purity or order that comes from anything resembling the commandments. We live for now. We eat, mess around, and try to live by the code that makes life better for one - me. Our conscience has been thickened by selfish pursuits, self determination and self promotion. When authority figures tells us to do one thing, we do another. We want to work hard, play hard, make money and spend it on ourselves. We are Gentiles! Or, we used to be, Paul reminds the churches in Ephesus. Ephesus was THE hotbed for “anything goes.” Whatever pleasurable pursuits you’d like to explore, it was not tolerated, it was PROMOTED. With a goddess like Dianna with multiple breasts, she was the green light for anything your imagination could conceive. And believe me, there’s a lot of weird and wicked stuff our brains can come up with. What would it be like to live in a city like that? Well, actually you already know. You might live in one of them in California or Nevada! What’s legal? How much money do you have? Paul planted a church in a modern day Sodom and Gomorrah. And he left Timothy in charge of pastoring in sin city.

## oratio

Dad,  
Oftentimes I wish I had grown up with more or better moral boundaries. From birth, Jewish children were taught a code of ethics and honor and godliness that I am seriously jealous of. But, I wasn’t born Jewish. Not only did I lack in moral ethics, I also lacked in discipline, a sense of belonging and safety. I read about the Gentiles and admit - that’s me, or was me. But you taught me. You were/are so patient with me. You not only redeemed my chaotic past, you also ushered me from darkness to light, from anger and hate to love. Thank you so much. As a former shameful Gentile, I am grateful for for your grace.

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root