Earlier this week, former Disney child star, Miley Cyrus, set off a firestorm with her raunchy dance performance on MTV's Video Music Awards show. She got what she wanted, because people all over the internet were writing about it. I must confess, it caught my attention as well as I read other's responses to what she apparently thinks passes for entertainment. It may seem old fashioned but I'll admit it...I was shocked and appalled. First I was shocked and appalled at Miley. Here was a young lady with so much promise; who had captured the hearts of young fans everywhere; who had projected such a wholesome image; whose TV show's premise had been not letting celebrity go to your head as a young star; who had led us to believe that she was going to be different. And now all those girls who have grown up adoring her have THIS to look up to?

Then a couple of blogs I read started me feeling sorry for Miley as I began to think how sad it is that she would think exploiting herself like that was her best shot at fame and fortune; and I became shocked and appalled again...this time at the society we live in that not only tolerates but really encourages this kind of behavior; the media that celebrates an ever loosening morality; a culture that treats women as objects and teaches them that their value lies in their sexuality; The same culture, incidentally, where three teenage boys in Oklahoma last week shot and killed an innocent young man...because they were BORED! How did we get here?

I was really stewing by this point; and God led me to read Ephesians 4 the next morning and I got shocked and appalled one more time...this time by myself. In what ways am I part of the problem rather than part of the solution; in what ways is my tolerance for, or even participation with, the things of the world allowing the problem to persist; have I done a good job of demonstrating for the world that there is a different kind of life that can be lived?

**As Christians, every day we are given opportunities to demonstrate the different life for which God has set us apart.**

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**Take a look at what Paul says we should expect from the world:**

- v.17 - "no longer walk as the Gentiles do,"; recognize that Paul writing to Gentile believers here; "You're not one of them any more. And yet you are still surrounded by them."

- **futile minds** - may be brilliant, but trying to understand spiritual realities that they have no capacity for understanding; pet hamster trying to dig way out of cage;

- (18) **darkened in their understanding** - people like to think of selves as "enlightened"; especially intellectuals; but until Christ shines His light on their lives, they continue to wander around in the dark;

- **alienated from the life of God** - result of sin;

- **ignorance/hardness of heart** - may seem like Paul is being really hard on the Gentiles/world; but what he is really saying is, without Christ in their lives, they have no opportunity to think, act, behave, live any differently; they are doing what comes naturally - we should not be surprised by that; He goes on...

- (19) **callous** - Frances Foulkes: having ceased to have any appreciation of the truth of God or any feeling of shame in the face of evil; original = no pain/sorrow; deadened conscience; immorality is the inevitable result;

- (19) Paul is even explicit here that a symptom of the world's callousness lies in their passion for sexual indulgence at the expense of others. This is what we should expect from the world. And that is exactly what we are getting.

- Paul is saying, "You're different. You've changed citizenships. You serve a different Master. You have been given an opportunity to shine like lights in the darkness. We should be able to see the difference in your life. We see is in your refusal to live, think, talk, act, dress, dance like them."

- **BUT!!!!**

- (20-21) "in Him" = key phrase in Ephesians; in Christ, the light has been turned on for you; no more excuse; lives no longer dark, minds no longer vain; you have been shown and called to a different life;

- Next three verses three infinitives define what we should be doing as Christians with respect to the sinful patterns of the world: to put off; to be renewed; to put on
1) **Put off your old self (22)**
- completely do away with your old self; sinful way of living;
- in Romans 6, Paul talks about dying to sin, putting to death our old way of life, "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Romans 6:11)
- Here Paul is using common analogy of changing clothes; before Christ, wearing filthy rags of carnal living; it was all you had; but now in Christ you are invited to rip those things off (exercise clothes);
- Unfortunately, here is the way too many of us approach putting off our old self; gently take off, fold neatly, set aside; Problem is - too tempting to put them back on again
- They are part of your old life, not your present; the actions, thoughts, words of your old life were corrupt;
- Desires of the world are deceitful - full of empty promises
- YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE LIKE THAT ANYMORE

2) **Be renewed in your mind (23)**
- Paul emphasizes again that this is a battle that takes place in our minds;
- Where did the problem start? Back in v.17-18? In our minds, right? Minds alienated from God and the life that He offers? So where do we fight this battle? With the renewal of our minds?
- Romans 12:2 "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
- How do we renew our minds? By replacing lies with truth. We've been taught all kinds of lies. Satan is full of them. We defeat Satan's lies with the truth of God's Word.
- Lie, "I want that - it will make me feel good." Truth, "Maybe for a short time, but it's not good for me. God has a better plan." Lie, "If I lie about this, I won't get in trouble." Truth, "The truth will set me free."
- Here's the thing about this renewal - it is in the present tense; which means you have to keep on doing it. Not something you can do and then check off your list. Continuous renewal, lifelong process.
- Constantly bombarded with lies; work diligently to expose self to truth

3) **Put on the new self (24)**
- "new" here describes "a new creation of God";
- This is a deliberate choice - to accept the new self, new man, new life that God has provided for us.
- The old self was what (22)? Corrupt. Deceitful. Full of empty promises.
- The new self, the life God has promised to us and provided for us, Paul says, is "created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."
- "Likeness of God" - we were created in His image; sin shattered that image; in the process of being restored in Christ.
- "righteousness" = right standing before God; created w/ perfect relationship w/ God; sin destroyed that relationship; in Christ, we have been given His righteousness and our relationship has been restored
- "holiness" = set apart, completely other; God's perfection; the standard to which we have been called;

**Conclusion**
- Our lives are to be all about giving God glory, honor, praise. And we need to learn to see every decision as an opportunity to either honor or dishonor Him.
- The bigger decisions are obvious. We know it wouldn't honor God if we murdered someone, or stole something or committed adultery. And we are usually pretty good about making those decisions because the consequences are also big - death, prison time, a ruined marriage.
- But what about the little decisions? How are we doing in those? Are we shining as lights in the darkness? Are we taking those opportunities to demonstrate the different life for which we have been set apart?
- When we choose to lie because it is more convenient or less embarrassing than telling the truth - how does that bring glory to God?