

A Whole New You

Pastor Paul Springer | Ephesians 4:17-32
March 11, 2018 | Winter Cycle: Week 9 of 10

Personal Connection (25 minutes)

Icebreaker

As a child (or as an adult), did you collect anything valuable? How did you sort and categorize your collection?

Sharing Christ and Praying for Each Other

Does your LIFE Group encourage you to share Christ or to be more Christ-like? Please offer an example.

What prayers has the Lord answered for you this week? Are you still awaiting God's response? How can we pray for you?

Review Last Sunday's *What Now?*

Last week, we discussed sharing the good news of Jesus Christ both in *truth* and in *love*. We also discussed how important it is to follow God's leading — in his timing — neither rushing ahead nor lagging behind.

Digging Deeper (30 minutes)

This Week's Key Concept:

When we receive Christ's gift of salvation, it is both a one-time event as well as a daily conscious commitment. We must put on the new nature, head in the new direction, and have the new way of thinking that the Holy Spirit gives.

Read Ephesians 4:17-32

Reread Ephesians 4:17-21

Q. Who do the Gentiles represent, and how does the Apostle Paul describe the way they live life?

Q. As believers, we are saved by grace and given the gift of the Holy Spirit. If someone has ever told you that he or she sees Christ in you or something different about your life, what was the circumstance? Did their remarks open up further conversations?

Q. Take a moment to think of a time when you reacted to something difficult in public. After you recall the specifics, consider whether your behavior set you apart as one who is different somehow... as one who lives by faith in Christ.

According to Ephesians 4:17-21, Christians should be different from non-believers by being:

1. Informed of who we are (anthropology) and who God is (theology)
2. Connected with God in our hearts
3. Tenderhearted; God gives us soft hearts that are directed towards him and others
4. Holy Spirit-directed; not controlled by sensuality, greed, pride, etc.
5. Pure of heart and mind in our devotion to the Lord

Q. Which one of these do you struggle with the most?

Reread verse 17. What is the importance of what the Apostle Paul says in the very beginning of the verse?

*Note: The entire passage of verses 17b-32 talks about the Christian walk and being direct in our efforts to be Christ-like, but it is key to remember that none of those results are possible without doing life **with** God. You can go it alone and try to be more Christ-like, but you aren't going to get very far if you do it alone, no matter how much you have learned from him, or even if you are well-intentioned.*

Reread Ephesians 4:18-24

Q. Do you find it a struggle to be Christ-like sometimes? Or, do you struggle with your old self versus the new self Christ has created?

Q. What are the biggest changes you notice about yourself as you become more like Jesus Christ?

Q. As a believer, do you catch yourself blending in like a chameleon or actually seeking to do so, at times?

Reread Ephesians 4:25-31

Q. Do you believe that God has the redemptive ability to fix the sin patterns you struggle with most?

Note: If you are struggling with a secret sin or a repetitive sin that separates you from being close with the Lord, won't you please pray that the Lord would put someone in your life who you can confide in and who you can be accountable with?

Impact Questions

Q. Where would you like to be in your relationship with the Lord? Are you on fire for Christ and desiring to grow even closer to him, or are you struggling and missing that closeness?

Ephesians 4:30 (NLT) says, "And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption."

Q. Can you recall times in your Christian walk when in certain decisions or scenarios, you were about to do something, and the Holy Spirit directly said to you, "Don't do that"? Or the opposite when the Holy Spirit said, "Do this/that" or "Go!"? How did you react?

Believers struggle in many of the same ways that non-Christians do but God provides victory over sin! You can't *passively* surrender yourself to the Lord; it is a daily, *conscious* decision that equips you to be more like Christ. Make the conscious decision, be earnest, and watch how God changes your entire being!

What now? (15 minutes)

Pray that you will seek to know, listen to, and follow Christ's Spirit residing in you. Pray that you would better hear his voice and have the courage to follow. Pray for discernment to know when the enemy is "mocking" the Holy Spirit.

Closing Prayer (15 minutes)

Please pray specifically for the events taking place at Northwest during the next month, regarding the outreach opportunities surrounding Easter. Pray that we as a congregation would encourage each other to be actively involved and that souls would be reached within our community.