

Ephesians 4:17-5:20

Intro

- Share your summary of Ephesians 4:17-5:20.
- What is Paul's revelation? (*Look at 1 on 1 #1 for the answer*)

Read Ephesians 4:17-5:7

- Do you see these verses as a list of "Do's" and "Don'ts?" Explain.
- Based on these verses, why would Paul say that the "Don'ts" are more than just "avoiding sin?" (Look at Ephesians 4:25, 4:32, 5:1-2, 5:3)

This section is much more than just "Do's" and "Don'ts." Paul is saying that people who are a "new self," or a "new humanity," act differently than the rest of the world. We shouldn't see this section as a checklist of how to live but as examples of how God's Spirit transforms individuals into completely new beings. Look at Paul's language and note how the commands to do good are rooted in our identity as a new humanity (Ephesians 4:25, 4:32, 5:1-2, 5:3). His command isn't for Christians to try to be something that they aren't. Rather, Paul is saying "You are a new humanity. Therefore, act in accordance with who you are!"

- How does the transformation of an individual bring transformation to a community?
- Why does Paul instruct people to work (4:28)? Why does Paul instruct people to speak wholesomely (4:29)? (*Answer to both: for the benefit of others.*) What does this reveal about our purpose in the Body of Christ? How might this differ from your normal worldview?
- Do you relate to any of the "old-self" practices that Paul mentions in this section? Which ones?
- What other old self practices are you still hanging on to?
- What does it look like to live as a new humanity?
- Why is the purpose of not partnering with those that are disobedient (5:7)? Where do you feel like you are partnered with those that are disobedient to God?

Living in the new humanity does not mean "avoiding what is bad." Rather, the new humanity takes what is evil or even neutral and surrenders it to Christ for the benefit of the Kingdom. Where there is money, there should be giving. Where there is speech, there should be affirmation and encouragement. The new humanity goes much further than making things neutral but restores them and makes them submitted to the ways of the Kingdom.

Read Ephesians 5:8-20

- How should we engage with those living in darkness?
- Looking through the lens of Paul's revelation, why should we expose darkness?
- What does it look like to make the most out of every opportunity? (5:16) Where do you think you lack in this?

Concluding Questions:

- Do you believe that you are a “new self?” Why or why not?
- How might having a consistent devotional life contribute towards you living as a new self?
- What are ways that you would like to see a “new humanity” in your relationships with others? (Again, not just the absence of evil practices but implementation of Kingdom practices)

Further Study Opportunities (Optional)

- Where do you see the concept of God’s “chosen” people?
- Where do you see the concept of “inheritance?”
- Where do you see Paul’s “temple” language?
- What does Paul mean by “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit?” - Paul is referencing Isaiah 63:10, which retells a part of Israel’s history, starting with God saving them from slavery in Egypt and giving them the inheritance of the Promised Land and ending with Israel being exiled from the Promised Land due to their continual sin. The Israelites “grieved the Holy Spirit” (or in other words, they continued in rebellion against God), and therefore, they forfeited the inheritance that God had given them (they were removed from the land given to them). If we live rebellious against God, we too can forfeit our inheritance as children of God.
- Where is Ephesians 5:14 from? - Paul is referencing Isaiah 26:19 and Isaiah 60. Isaiah 26:19 basically says that those who were dead will come alive and will shout for joy. In Isaiah 60, we see a fulfillment of this. Isaiah 60:1 says “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.” Isaiah 60:5 continues, saying that you too will be radiant and swelling with joy because the light has come upon you. Paul is referencing this because that time is now. Jesus has risen from the dead, so all those who were spiritually dead can rise to life too and be joyful because his light is within us, making us a new humanity.

Do For Next Week:

- Read Ephesians 1-6 in one sitting.
- Give a 1-2 sentence summary of Ephesians 5:21-6:24.