



September 3rd, 2017: LIVING IN THE MIDDLE

OPENING

- Most polls taken today concerning the moral conduct of the church in Western society show very little difference in behavior between professed Christians and the rest of our society. What is your assessment of this information?
- What is one way that God has changed your life since you started getting to know him?

DISCUSS & APPLY

Read Ephesians 2:4-5

- What do you think Paul means when he said, “you were dead in your transgressions?” What are some ways that a life apart from God causes us to suffer?
- Why are some people saved? What are some ways that Christians are different from others? What are some ways that Christians are the same as those who aren’t?
- What is God’s natural response to our suffering and sin?

Read Ephesians 4:17-19 (understanding the old life)

- What does Paul mean by “Gentiles”? What is the main problem with them? What is a modern-day equivalent?
- What has happened to the Gentiles’ thinking (mind, emotions and will)? How does that impact their lives?
- Which do you believe – that right conduct leads to right thinking, or that right thinking leads to right conduct? Why?

Read Ephesians 4:20-24 (putting off the old, putting on the new)

- How does Paul describe the core of the Christian life in these verses? What is our role in our spiritual growth? What is God’s role?
- What does it mean to “put off” the old way of thinking? What about the old way of feeling? Of acting?
- In what ways does God change us when we put off our old self?

Read Ephesians 4:25-32 (getting practical)

- According to these verses, what are seven characteristics of the “new self”?
- Which of these seven has been the easiest for you to put on? Which has been the most difficult for you?
- Looking over these characteristics of the new self, does spiritual maturity seem to be more of a private matter or public matter? Or both? Explain.

FINAL APPLICATION

Of the following aspects of the old self (lying, being angry, stealing, speaking critically to others, holding grudges), where is an area that you want to grow in the coming weeks? What is one thing you can do to put on the new self in that area?