

New Standards AND the Power to Change...
How (Not) to Live in a Master Planned Community (4:17-5:2)
Small Group Study Questions for the week of April 12-18

Getting Started

Do you have a favorite movie or story where a character undergoes a significant character change (or perhaps tries and fails)? “My Fair Lady” or “A Christmas Carol” would be classic examples, but there are countless others, from “Star Wars Episode III” to “Groundhog Day.” What sorts of things cause changes in these stories? Why do these stories intrigue people?

Digging Deep

Read through Ephesians 4:17-5:2 together as a group

1. What two ways of life are contrasted in vs. 17-20?
2. What characterizes the lives of ‘Gentiles’ in vs. 18-19? What is the root of these characteristics according to Paul?
3. If Paul is writing to people who are already Christ-followers, why does he even spend any time describing how the ‘Gentiles’ live? Is it just to gloat, to say, “at least we’re not like them” or is there another reason?
4. What is the ‘that way’ that Paul is referring to at the end of vs. 20? What characterizes the ‘Gentile’ way of knowledge in vs. 18-19? What characterizes a Christian’s way of knowing in vs. 20-24?
5. How do you go about “putting off” the old ways and instead put on the “New Self,” being “imitators of God?” Do you feel you are getting better at it, fighting the same old battles, or what characterizes your efforts to be imitating God?
6. Since you have become interested in following Jesus, what changes have occurred of which Paul might say, “That’s what I’m talking about!” What has helped or hindered these changes?
7. Consider Paul’s concrete recommendations below:
 - a. How does being ‘members of one body’ naturally prohibit lying (vs. 25)?
 - b. How does harboring anger “give the devil a foothold” (26-27)?
 - c. How is theft the opposite of sharing with those in need (28)? What goes through the mind of a thief immediately before he steals? How does that contrast with what goes through the mind of someone who is going to share with someone?
 - d. What usually motivates ‘unwholesome talk?’ How would this contrast with the motivations behind speaking to help others?
8. Which of these four recommendations would you like to change the most?
9. What do you see in the life of Jesus that is in accord with what Paul recommends for believers? For instance, was Jesus ever angry? How did he deal with it? Was he ever tempted to steal, and did he work or share instead?
10. Activities for the upcoming week: Paul recommends here in 5:1-2, “Be imitators of God”. Throughout the next week, note some examples where people are obviously attempting to imitate someone else. Why do you think this person chose this role model? For “bonus points”, the next time someone has an unexpected reaction to something you do (positive or negative), ask yourself “who was I imitating, and why?”

Next Week: Ephesians 5:3-20