

Main Passage: Ephesians 4:25-32

Purpose: To understand that there are expectations that go along with our transformation in Christ.

Session Snapshot: God doesn't transform us and leave us alone. Maybe sometimes in our lives, when our sin nature is strong, we may wish that He did. But He doesn't. God transforms us through faith in His Son, Jesus, and then He expects that we would grow into people who imitate His character and ways. This session looks at one of the many places where the Apostle Paul highlights God's expectations for us as His children.

GETTING STARTED

Kick off your time together by checking in and/or reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, remind your group that this is week 3 of their video series looking at the transformation made possible by faith in Christ that must be present in every disciple's life. As a reminder, this section is part of a larger series on defining discipleship called Be Disciples.

THEN, if you want to start with asking men for prayer requests, checking in on how their weeks have gone, or any other housekeeping tasks, do so.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

THEN, when the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **This passage, and Rick's video, are all about our morality as Christ-followers. Think for a second: what are some possible sources of a man's ethics and morals who does not know Christ?**
- **What is the problem with these sources?**
- **For the man who has been transformed by faith in Jesus, what is his source for morality and ethics? Think about your answer; there may be a few different ways to phrase it.**
- **God's Word and God's character form the basis of the morality of the transformed man. How does this reframe the discussion around the importance of knowing the Bible?**
- **Is there a difference between being good and Godly? Explain your answer.**

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **Disciples of Christ who have been transformed by saving faith in Jesus seek to know God and His Word. Why? Because unless we live according to God's ways, we are left with simply trying to be**

good men, trying to fulfill some form of what we THINK godliness is. To have our morality look like the morality of God, we must know Him, follow Him, and strive to be like Him, godly in all of our interactions with each other and the world.

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a closer examination of Ephesians 4:25-32. But before you do, you'll want to make sure to review the context for the passage. You're in Ephesians for the second week in a row, so see if one of your group members can remember the context. Use the following bullet points to guide you:

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letters to the Ephesians. Of course, we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
- **Time frame:** Ephesians was probably written by Paul from prison in the latter years of his life, sometime around 60 or 61 AD.
- **Purpose:** Paul had a very close relationship with the church in Ephesus. It seems as if the motivation for the letter was simply that the church would know how he was faring in his imprisonment. But, true to form, Paul couldn't help but teach. The letter covers general teaching on the work of Christ to redeem believers, unity among believers, and how believers are supposed to conduct themselves.

THEN, remind your group that you looked at the first part of this passage last week. Then, read or have a volunteer read Ephesians 4:25-32. When the volunteer has finished, direct your group's attention back to the beginning of the passage. Lead them in a brief discussion by asking something similar to the following:

- **Let's do something. Paul essentially gives us a list of behaviors that have no place in the life of a transformed follower of Christ. While not an exhaustive list of EVERYTHING we should or shouldn't do as Believers, it's a pretty thorough list. Let's go verse by verse and put together a list of all the things Paul said we are to do or avoid. (You'll want to write these down on a dry erase board or your participant's guide.)**
 - *Answer:* Put away falsehood; speak the truth; be angry and do not sin; don't steal; do honest work; share with others; no corrupting talk but only talk that builds others up; do not grieve the Holy Spirit; put away bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, along with all malice; be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving.
- **OK, so look at that list. That's essentially a list of God's expectations for you as a man transformed by saving faith in Jesus. When Paul says we're new creations in Christ, this is what the new creation looks like. Let me ask you one question: How does it make you feel?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **If we're honest, it can feel like a daunting list. But there are a few truths to consider. The first one is that if we exhibit any of these, it's because the Holy Spirit is working inside of us to see these good qualities shine through. We're not left alone to do these things on our own. Second, each of us is strong in some of these areas. This may feel odd to you, but I want you to give me an example of a few of these things Paul listed that are your strengths.**
 - Answers will vary. Encourage men not to see this as bragging but to see it as boasting about how God is at work in their lives.
- **The third truth is that undoubtedly, there are some of these areas we struggle in. If you're brave enough, share some of the areas on the list that are areas in your life that still need work.**

- Answers will vary. Be prepared to share your own to encourage men to open up.
- **When we consider this list, and the expectations God has for us that we see elsewhere in Scripture, we have to remind ourselves of two things. One, following these commands doesn't earn us salvation. We don't do good works to get saved; we do good works because we're saved. Second, whether you struggle with two things on this list or ten, it doesn't change your status in God's eyes; you're holy in God's eyes because Jesus makes us holy through the blood of His sacrifice on the cross. So, if both of these things are true, let's dare to ask ourselves this question: why does it matter how we act? Why does God have an expectation for us when it comes to the way we conduct ourselves in the world?**
 - Answers will vary, but there are at least a couple of important points. First, God has always desired that His children be set apart from the world by how they conduct themselves. That's one of the main reasons God gave the Israelites the Law so that they would be a people after His own character, separated by their actions from the people groups around them. Second, our lives point people to God (or at least they should). So, when we act in godly ways, we bring glory to God. We might call this lifestyle evangelism.

FINALLY, remind your group that this is the result of God saving us from our sins through faith in His Son. He changed us in order that He might begin a work of change in us—no Christians masters all of these attitudes this side of heaven. But the longer we walk faithfully with Christ, the more powerfully the Spirit can work in and through us.

Ask if there are any questions about what you have discussed so far, then move to *Accepting the Challenge* so that you can begin applying what you've learned.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on the takeaways from your time together.

FIRST, remind your group that what you will do each week is to ask them what they think are the main application points from your session. The goal is to allow the group to supply the takeaways from your time together. So, encourage discussion and allow it until there are no more suggestions.

As always, we've provided some bullet points below to supplement your discussion if you choose to use them. Say something like:

- **Here's a question: how seriously do you take God's expectation that your life would look like the one Paul described?**
 - If we're honest, many times in our lives, we don't actively try to be the kind of person Paul described here. What will it take for you to get serious about shaping your life to meet God's expectations?
- **How can you ensure this week that you focus on at least one area of weakness from Paul's list?**
 - Do whatever it takes to begin to work on areas of your life that need work.
- **How can you focus on one area of strength this week to bless others and glorify God?**

FINALLY, encourage men to continue to marinate on these points in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them and respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.