

**COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE****Put Off the Old, Put On the New**

EPHESIANS 4:17-24

**OVERVIEW**

Everything—literally everything—in heaven and on earth is being united in Christ (1:10). Only when we understand who Christ is can we begin to understand who we are. We often read Paul’s letters thinking about all Scripture calls us to do. But before Ephesians calls us to do anything, it reminds us what God has done in Christ.

Our identity is not based on what we do, but who we are. Our identity is not earned and achieved but declared and received. Our identity, as Christians, is found “in Christ.” We are united to Christ—and that changes everything about us! Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus explains what we were (apart from Christ), who we are (in Christ), and then how we should live as followers of Christ, all for the glory of Christ.

**APPLY // EPHESIANS 4:1-16**

1. Read Ephesians 3:14-4:16.
2. In verse 3 Paul says to be “*eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*” Why is it important to be eager/zealous/intentional about maintaining unity in Christ? What are some practical ways Restoration Church can maintain our gospel unity?
3. In verses 7-11, Paul begins to focus on the diversity within the church. Why is it important we not just focus on unity but also celebrate our diverse gifts from Christ? How have you seen the diverse gifts at Restoration strengthen the church?
4. Re-read verse 12-16. Identify all the places where the corporate aspect of the church body is referenced. How should this corporate focus impact the way we live out our faith in Christ?
  - a. Why is the pull toward individualism and consumerism so strong among our cultural context?
  - b. What are practical ways we can help each other fight against individualism and consumerism inside the church?
5. Verse 15 tells us to “speak the truth in love.” According to 1:13 and 4:20-21 this means we must speak the gospel of Jesus to one another.
  - a. How do Community Group, Discipling Relationships and a culture of “being in each other’s lives” make this natural and normal? How do relationships “outside of Sunday” complement our gatherings on Sunday?

**STUDY // EPHESIANS 4:17-24**

Study the passage of Scripture aiming to faithfully interpret and apply what you observe. Remember we study God’s word not just to increase our knowledge, but to increase our trust in and treasuring of Jesus Christ.

1. Read Ephesians 4:17-24.
  2. Notice how Paul starts his exhortation in verse 17 – “Now this I say and testify in the Lord.” What does this mean and why does Paul start with these words?
  3. In verse 17 Paul again uses the term “walk” to describe a way of life. Where have you seen this term before in Ephesians (cf. 2:2, 10; 4:1; also 5:2, 8, 15)? How do these references help us understand what Paul means here?
  4. In verse 17b-19, discuss the various ways Paul describes how the Gentiles live.
    - a. “In the futility of their minds.”
    - b. “They are darkened in their understanding.”
    - c. “Alienated from the life of God.”
    - d. “Ignorance that is in them.”
    - e. “Due to their hardness of heart.”
    - f. “They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality.”
    - g. “Greedy to practice every kind of impurity.”
  5. Notice in verse 20 Paul does not say, “But that’s not the way you learned *about* Christ.” Rather, he says, “But that’s not the way you learned *Christ*.” What the significance in how Paul writes this phrase?
  6. What does it mean that “the truth is in Jesus” (v. 21)?
  7. In verses 22-24, Paul contrast the “old self” and the “new self.” What do each of these terms reference?
    - a. Discuss the various ways Paul describes the “old self.”
    - b. Discuss the various ways Paul describes the “new self.”
  8. What does it mean to be “renewed in the spirit of our minds”? Notice that this is passive – something that happens to us. Why is that significant?
  9. But in verse 24 we are commanded to “put on the new self,” which is something we are to actively do. Why is this action by us significant?
  10. How does all that Paul has said in Ephesians 1-3 help us interpret what he says here in 4:17-24?
- General Bible study questions:
    - **God:** What does this passage teach me about the character of God?
    - **Humanity:** What does this passage teach me about myself and my need for God?
    - **Christ:** How does this passage teach me that God has met my needs in the person and work of Jesus Christ?
    - **Response:** How should I respond with my affections and my actions?

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Relationships developed and deepened during accountability provide regular encouragement, and when necessary admonition, to spur each other on to delight in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Ask one another heart-probing, clarifying questions, and help each other apply the gospel to your lives.

**QUESTION:** Are there areas of your life you are purposefully keeping “closed off” from community? How have you been built up by the diverse gifts at Restoration Church? Give God praise – and tell others how they have served and strengthened you.