

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Give No Hold to the Devil

EPHESIANS 4:25-28

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 4:17-24

1. Read Ephesians 4:17-24.
2. Before diving into Paul’s instructions in chapter 4, discuss/rehearse several of the truths Paul covered in the first three chapters (cite specific verses)?
 - a. Why is it important that we first understand our identity before moving toward action?
 - b. Why is it important that we help each other be “rooted and grounded in love” not just focus on behavior?
 - c. How might you use the truths of Ephesians 1-3 to motivate those who minimize the importance of joyful obedience?
 - d. How might you use the truths of Ephesians 1-3 to encourage those who feel overwhelmed by the call to obedience?
3. In a couple of sentences, summarize Paul’s instruction in verses 17-24.
4. In verse 17 Paul calls upon his authority (“say and testify in the Lord”) and speaks boldly (“you must no longer walk”).
5. Is Paul arrogant in saying “we must no longer walk as the Gentiles do”? Discuss how this should inform the way we see those who do not know Jesus, and how we should view ourselves?
6. In verse 20 Paul says, “that’s not the way you learned Christ.” How can we tell if we/others are learning Christ or *only about* Christ?
7. Practically speaking, how can we help each other “be renewed in the spirit of [our] minds”?
8. Practically speaking, how can we help each other “put on the new self”?

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 4:17-32.
 - a. Identify the commands in these verses.
 2. Notice the first clause in verse 25 – “therefore, having put away falsehood.” What is Paul assuming by saying this? How does this inform his instructions that follow?
 3. What does Paul mean when he says we must speak the truth? Is this the same thing he meant in 4:15 where he says we should “speak the truth in love”?
 4. Where does Paul ground his command for speaking the truth?
 5. What does it mean that we are “members one of another?” How is this supported by what Paul has already said in previous chapters?
 6. In verse 26, Paul says “be angry and do not sin.” What does he mean by this? What does this tell us about anger? How does anger lead to sin?
 7. What does it mean to “not let the sun go down on your anger?” What is Paul's reasoning for not letting anger linger?
 8. How does anger give an opportunity to the devil?
 9. What does Paul tell the thief to stop doing (i.e. put off)? To start doing (i.e. put on)? What is Paul's reasoning for the thief to put off and put on?
 10. Notice that each of Paul's commands have a horizontal/neighbor love aspect. How do Paul's commands flow from love of neighbor?
 11. How are Paul's instructions in verses 25-28 informed by the gospel and love for God?
- 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: Identify ways the Spirit is renewing your mind and love for Jesus? In what ways has this resulted in “putting on the new self”? Identify areas where you see the “new self” in others.