

December 6/7, 2014

Off With the Old, On With the New

The Truth about our Life in Christ

Ephesians 4:25 – 32

Opening Discussion

1. Discuss the “clothes” you wore before you became a Christian and the “clothes” you wear now as a believer. What brought about the change in “fashion?”
2. Have you found the deepest and most profound changes in your behavior as a Christian to be primarily changes at the behavior level or at the thinking level? Explain?
3. What is the real danger of being surrounded by “old clothes” every day at work, school, relationships, etc...?

Bible Study

1. The “therefore” beginning verse 25 reminds us that the following behaviors are related to the previous discussion. Give a quick summary of what is true of you “in Christ” based on the previous chapters.
2. According to 4:25 we are to lay aside falsehood and speak truth. What evidence is there that “falsehood” has become an accepted way of life for many? Is falsehood limited to just an outright lie, or are there other ways we can communicate falsely? Why do people lie as a way of life according to Ephesians 4:17-19? How does lying or falsehood break down relationships and unity?
3. Why must we, as children of God, be people committed to truth? What does this mean for you in the most practical everyday situations?
4. Ephesians 4:26 is not commanding us to be angry but rather recognizing that it happens. The point of focus is that we should quickly resolve it and not be people of anger. Why are so many Christians angry? What did Jesus say should be the identifying mark of His followers in John 13:34, 35? How does the truth of Ephesians 1-3 affect our ability to resolve anger quickly in a sinful and hurtful world? How does our anger make us vulnerable to the enemy’s attack?

5. According to Ephesians 4:28 the truth of our position in Christ should make us generous not selfish. We should become givers not takers. What are ways people in our culture today steal from others? Just because something is legally permissible does that make it morally right? Explain. How do we become generous givers in a world of takers?
6. Compare 4:29 with Proverbs 6:19. The word “unwholesome” was used to describe rotten fish. Compare 4:29 with James 3:1-12.

Is this a serious problem? In what way? Have you been hurt by “rotten speech” in the past?

Give some examples of powerful words you’ve experienced both to build you up and tear you down. How would people describe your words?

7. These four issues that Paul discusses are about relationships. We can appear to be super Christian all alone isolated from deep community. Why does true community expose us? How is social media contributing to our ability to hide who we really are?
8. What do you think it means to grieve the Holy Spirit? Do you stop and consider the grief you cause the God of the universe when you fail to lay aside the old grave clothes? Does the Holy Spirit grieve because you disgust Him or because He wants so much more for you?
9. Ephesians 4:31,32 seem to summarize what Paul is trying to say. As a group, come up with your own summary based on Paul’s words in these verses. What does it mean to “put on” Christ?

Application

1. Prayerfully consider the “clothing” we are to put on to imitate Christ. Ask God to reveal to you which of these areas you need to work on. List those areas.
2. Share with the group those areas you need to address. Invite the group members to hold you accountable to “put on Christ” in these areas.
3. In what areas have you experienced growth from your former manner of life? Celebrate those areas together as a group.
4. Spend time in prayer asking God to help you imitate God as beloved children.