

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

**COMMUNITY GROUPS WILL BE ON A 3-WEEK BREAK AFTER THIS WEEK.
OUR SPRING QUARTER STARTS ON APRIL 6.**

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

After making sure that the Ephesians knew God's plan for uniting them as ONE body, the apostle Paul starts turning his attention to how that truth should impact everyday life. And because he knew that it would be too easy for the Ephesus believers (and us) to see the next few chapters as simply things to do, Paul takes the time in these 8 verses to show that living for Jesus is the result of following the right person, not doing the right things. He talks about 2 natures and what makes the difference between them.

1. **The old way is bad:** Paul spends a lot of time and paints a whole lot of pictures to make sure we understand our condition before salvation. Aimless, dark thinking. Lonely, hard hearts. Sinful, unrepentant lives. And, according to Paul, the really bad news is that people in this sinful condition can't really feel remorse. They are calloused. It sounds harsh, but the Bible describes them as a kind of spiritual sociopath.
2. **The new way is good:** What great news to know that there is a different way, a better way, a good way! It leads us to softer hearts and minds that are being renewed. We have new life, a new path, a new hope. The problem is that we have no way to get on this new way.
3. **The way from old to new is Jesus:** Too often, we treat salvation as a simple choice. We decide we're tired of walking the bad way and figure we'll walk the good way. But if it were just a choice, then all the people on Dr. Phil's show would change. Before we can learn, we need a Savior to remove the calloused heart and replace it with a new one (Ezekiel 26:26). Once we have received the gift of salvation (Ephesians 2:8), one of the results is a mind that craves learning about Jesus. The way from old to new is following Jesus in a discipleship culture and relationship!

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- As you've thought back through this week's message, what one thing – if any – inspired you or maybe even confused you?
- What is your response to the truth in Ephesians 4:17-19 about the sinful heart? Does it sound too harsh? How does being honest about the dark side of sin enhance the grace of God shown to us in Jesus?
- Go back and read Ephesians 2:8. It is easy to read passages like this and forget that salvation is a gift. Sinners do NOTHING to earn Jesus, but the saved will do EVERYTHING to learn Jesus! In Ephesians 4:21-22, Paul describes a discipleship relationship. Disciples followed their teachers around and observed them, listened to them, and hung on every word so they could be like them. Does this describe you and Jesus?
- Read Romans 12:2; Psalm 119:11; 1 Peter 1:13; Colossians 3:2 and John 8:32. What can we learn from these verses about our minds and how important it is to "be made new in the attitude of our minds?"
- How can being in a discipleship relationship keep us from feeling condemned when we don't "put off the old and put on the new" as fast as we think we should? Is discipleship a class or a lifestyle? Discuss.