

LIGHTHOUSE GROUP CURRICULUM

Ephesians 4:25-32

LEADER'S STUDY

Members of One Another

Ephesians 4:25-32

What is happening?

Paul is writing to help believers understand how the church is called to live as God's people (1:4), His chosen bride (5:30-32), in the midst of a world that's broken by sin (5:8). In the first three chapters, he gave a clear explanation of *why* we are to live differently than the unredeemed world, and chapters 4 – 6 provide some practical examples of what this new life in Christ looks like.

The instructions Paul gives in 4:25-32 are useful for helping us get along with the people around us—including, but not limited to, our spouses. As God's people, we're members of the same body of Christ, as married people are one flesh, v. 25.

Being members of the same body, we should be honest with one another (v. 25) but not unkind (vv. 29, 32); we will be irritated by one another, to be sure, but we dare not let ourselves be controlled by our anger (vv. 26-27); and so on throughout the passage. All the examples Paul gives here are applicable to our relationships in the world, in the church, and within a marriage—not to mention, our relationship with the Holy Spirit Himself (v. 30).

Where is the gospel?

Verse 32 sums it all up: we forgive others in the same way God has forgiven us. If we're honest about our sin, we must admit that we are unworthy of God's forgiveness; but He accepted Christ's payment for our sin and grants us full forgiveness because of what Jesus did on our behalf. Having been fully forgiven by God on this basis, then, how dare we consider others unworthy of *our* forgiveness?

Understanding of the gospel in this way dissolves bitterness and wrath, transforms the way we speak to and about others, and enables us to deal with our fellow sinners with tenderhearted compassion.

As you prepare for this week, ask yourself questions like these: Do I feel justified in holding a grudge? Do my words build up others, or tear them down? How might a person grieve the Holy Spirit, and how often do I do that? How is God calling me to think and to live differently? How does this change my perspective today? How is God calling me to respond based on this scripture?

Spend some time reading and meditating on this passage as you prepare for your meeting. Be willing to share this with your group and invite them to join you in sharing how God is asking them to respond to His word. Be willing to share areas that He is calling you to "follow Him" and make clear "I" statements about how you are going to align with Him.

Some helpful scriptures: Psalm 37:8; Zechariah 8:16-17; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:15-16; Colossians 3:8-15; Titus 3:3-7. What other places in scripture speak this same truth?

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INTENTIONAL BIBLE READING

READ Ephesians 4:25-32

and meditate on it.

Read in the ESV or similar word-for-word translation.

Read it again in the NLT to get a thought-for-thought perspective. (The New Living Translation is particularly helpful with this passage)

Try to summarize the passage in your own words.

Every verse of scripture points to the gospel. Look for how this passage points to Jesus and what He has done.

POTENTIAL STUDY QUESTIONS

These are just questions you might ask to help your group discussion. Don't feel like you need to answer all of these as a group

What is significant, surprising or confusing from these verses?

What seems to be the main point of this letter?

How does this portion of scripture point to Jesus and the gospel?

What parts of this passage are challenging to your current way of thinking?

What did you discover or learn about God and His character from this passage?

What parts of this passage can you relate to?

Look at one or two key words and define them really clearly, then look at them in context with that definition. Does this change your understanding?

Why did God bring me to this scripture today?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

How is God calling you to obey, based on this passage?

or

What is your "I will" statement?

(Encourage everyone to steer clear of "we" or "us" or "Christians" statements)

With whom are you going to share what you have learned?

(This is a critical part of growth that is often overlooked. If we can share it with someone else it means we really understand it, it cements it in our own minds, it makes us accountable to the truth and it blesses the one who hears it. Rom 10:17)

Based on this passage, what can we pray about and how should we pray?