

October 29 - Ephesians 4:17-5:2

Opening

What is one low that happened to you this past week? What is one high? If you're meeting with a group, take turns sharing them with one another, or write them down.

Where have you seen the Holy Spirit at work in your life over the past week?

Name a time when someone's words were an encouragement to you.

Prepare

Spend a minute in silence to center yourself and prepare to hear God's Word.

Read

Read Ephesians 4:17-5:2 twice. If you are in a group, have two people read it, one after the other, with a brief silence in between, and after the second reading. As you read and/or listen, look for a word or a phrase that catches your eye or moves your heart. Circle it or jot it down. Linger over it and give it your attention. If you are in a group, take turns sharing your word or phrase and what it means to you or what the Lord might be saying to you through it.

With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity. But that isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God-- truly righteous and holy. So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

Reflect

What is the modern-day equivalent of “living like the Gentiles do?”

How do you let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes?

How does anger give a foothold to the devil? When have you experienced or observed that?

What are some practical ways you can imitate God?

Pray

Spend time in prayer for yourself and others. If you are meeting in a group, share prayer requests and pray for one another.

Practice

Use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need...

Each day this week, give generously from the work of your hands. Here are some ideas to try:

Bake a treat and give it to a neighbor.

Make a homemade card and send it to a loved one.

Pay for the person in line behind you at a coffee shop.

Pay for someone else’s groceries, or make/buy a meal for someone.

Closing blessing

You are created to be like God...you are his dear children!