

Ephesians Series – Autumn 2020 Including Life **Group Leaders Brief**

Taken from the book **Ephesians: How Jesus creates a New People in a New World** by Brad Wilson

'How Jesus creates a new people in a new world'

A major series preaching through this book, with each message formed of three parts:

- Head – Renewal of our minds by the knowledge of God
- Heart – Restoration of our souls by the application of this truth
- Hands – Transformation of our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit

There are eight parts (weeks) each has a reading(s) a brief synopsis and some suggested questions.

Please note that the first three parts all have two sections, the remaining parts one section each.

Suggested questions for life groups have been **highlighted**.

Part 5 - A messy church (4:17-32)

Head

After all the encouragement to live well Paul has given us so far in Ephesians, we see him turn to the reality of the situation!

The people Paul describes here, as being ignorant and impure are not non-Christians but the church! Paul assumes the church in Ephesus had among them thieves (v28) people prone to anger, and foul language. We are all messy, redeemed sinners.

If we see the church as tidy, with the dust swept under the rugs, there is little room for God to work, but if we embrace the gospel, we will give room for the Holy Spirit to bring abundance and forgiveness to our lives and the lives of others.

We need God to show us the areas in our lives that need changing:

Psalm 19:12-13, Proverbs 28:13, Psalm 44:20-21, Hebrews 4:12-13.

New way of thinking, no longer futile: Psalm 139:23, Hebrews 3:1.

What is Paul telling us to do and not to do? Why?

How do we avoid futile thinking?

Heart

We are encouraged to put off the old life and embrace the new life as we grow into the likeness of Christ and live holy and righteous lives.

Our hearts must not be hard, they must be open to God to allow Him to change us.

Our outward actions readily overflow from our inward lives, they reflect what we believe.

Where are our affections: are they for being more like Christ or do they in reality want to conform to the standards of the world? It is often with our heart we make decision not our heads.

What is the root cause for: speaking falsely to our neighbour, for wanting to go to bed still angry, for stealing, for not sharing, for futile thinking, giving ourselves over to sensuality, not building others up, not forgiving, not being kind?

What are the effects on those around us when you live in the new self, not the old self?

How do we go about changing?

Hands

So, we have a renewed mind, new thought patterns, changed affections. We long for our behaviour to be like that of Jesus. How do we make sure that is how we behave and not just think?

We need discipline, ask God to show us where we are getting it wrong, remember Jesus died for everyone.

We have to remember it is a constant struggle.

Daily do Galatians 2:20 and Ephesians 4:23-24.

Keep our speech in check: no unwholesome talk.

Examples:

Falsehood vs. Speaking truth to Neighbours

Just anger vs. Judgmental anger

Stealing for yourself vs. Labour for others

Corrupt talk vs. Building each other up

Malice and wrath vs. Kindness and tenderness

Bitterness vs. Forgiveness

How will we pursue putting off our old selves and putting on our new selves in the power of the Holy Spirit?

What difference would this make to the village/town city we live in?

What do you find is your reactive natural behaviour? Does this change if you are more stressed/tired? Why does it change?