

COMMUNITY GROUP WEEKLY DISCUSSION GUIDE
WEEK OF JUNE 29, 2009

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS
Living Renewed Lives

The Priest: "You do not love Him [God] at all?"

Lieutenant Henry: "I am afraid of Him in the night sometimes."

The Priest: "You should love Him."

Lieutenant Henry: "I don't love much."

The Priest: "Yes", he said. "You do. What you tell me about in the nights. That is not love. That is only passion and lust. When you love you wish to do things for. You wish to sacrifice for. You wish to serve."

—Ernest Hemmingway, *A Farewell To Arms*

"Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God..."

1 Pet 1:22-23

THIS WEEK'S TEXT

Ephesians 4:17-24

RELATED TEXTS TO EXPLORE

1 Thes 2:12; Eph 2, 4; Col 3; Rom 1, 12; 2 Pet 2:18; 1 Cor 1:18-25; Heb 3, 12

STUDY GUIDE

- **What observations can be made about:**
 - Paul's motivation for speaking
 - The "Gentiles" (that is, those outside of Christ)
 - The object of the "Gentile's" greed
 - The "old self", or "old humanity"
 - Natural desires
 - The "new self", or "new humanity"
 - The way Ephesian believers may have learned about Jesus
- **What does each of these things mean? What did they mean for the church at Ephesus then, what do they mean for us now?**

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Use any or as many of these questions as will be helpful for your discussion.

- What has God spoken to you about this week regarding the sermon or passage?
- What does this passage reveal to us about Jesus?
- How does this passage enhance our understanding of the Gospel?
- What does this text mean for us as a community? Individually? How does it free us to be the people God intends for us to be?
- How do we need to live out the meaning of this text in our city?
- What does it mean to go from "hardness of heart" to having a "regenerated heart"?
- In what ways are you pursuing the renewing of your mind? What are the primary educational messages forming your worldview right now?
- Do you view sex, money, entertainment and time as gifts from God for the worship of God, or as entitlements to be used as you see fit? How would someone else answer that question about you?
- What parts of your "walk" are in need of restoration? How will that happen cooperatively with God in the context of community?

"Transformation is not switching from the to-do list of the flesh to the to-do list of the law. When Paul replaces the list – the works – of the flesh, he does not replace it with the works of the law, but the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:19-22). The Christian alternative to immoral behaviors is not a new list of moral behaviors. It is the triumphant power and transformation of the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ – our Savior, our Lord, our Treasure."

-John Piper

MEMORY VERSES

Last Week: Eph 4:15-16

This Week: Eph 4:22-24

PRAYER FOCUS

For the Vision and Direction of the church (May):

Apostles Church wants to be a people who intentionally connect others to Jesus. We will authentically, compassionately and intelligently dialogue with the culture about the Gospel of Jesus.

In Response to the Text:

- Praising God for revealing all Truth in Jesus
- Praising God for providing for us new life in Jesus
- Confessing that we have failed to pursue the renewal of our minds
- Confessing that we so often walk in the way of the world
- Thanking Jesus for taking our "old life" upon himself and giving us his "new life"
- Thanking God for recreating us in his true righteousness and holiness
- Asking to be freed from the deceitfulness of our desires and to be enraptured by the beauty of the Gospel
- Asking to be strengthened, as a community, to walk as a "new humanity"
- Asking God to regenerate the hearts of those in our city who do not yet live in the freedom of new life

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDY AND PREPARATION

- *Life Together*– Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- *The Pursuit of God*– A.W. Tozer
- *The New Man*– Thomas Merton
- *Darkness and Light: An Exposition of Ephesians 4:17-5:17*– D. Martin Lloyd Jones
- <http://tinyurl.com/nwo49u> - On the renewed mind from Desiring God

NEXT WEEK'S TEXT

Ephesians 4:25-5:2