



THE CAMPUS CHURCH
LOVE AND SERVE GOD AND PEOPLE

Small Group Discussion Resource

One – A Contrast Community

Ephesians 4:17-32

1. A “Doppelganger” is someone who looks just like you on the outside but in actuality could be very different than you on the inside. Take a look at everyone in your group and suggest a celebrity look alike for each.
2. This passage paints a picture of how a Christian ought to look, in contrast to how non-Christians look. Read through the passage carefully and share any immediate insights that come to mind. Imagine if there was someone who looked just like you, but acted in the complete opposite way. Can you imagine all of the trouble they could cause for you? How well do we resemble the picture Paul paints of the redeemed?

¹⁷ So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

²⁰ That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”^[a]: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

3. When Paul uses the term “gentiles” who is he referring to?

4. Walk through this picture of those far from God. Paul lists 6 distinguishing marks. Discuss how you have seen these traits exhibited in those who don't know Christ.

- Unfocused thinking - Living without purpose
- Distorted in understanding
- Separated from God
- Hard hearts
- Insensitive to God
- Debauchery

5. Review the meaning of the word "debauchery". Give examples from our culture. The Biblical word "debauchery" means this. Debauchery: intemperance, licentiousness, lasciviousness, insolence, and outrageous behaviour.

Intemperance: Lack of moderation or restraint

Licentiousness: Promiscuous and unprincipled in sexual matters

Lasciviousness: An overt and offensive sexual desire

Insolence: Rude and disrespectful

Outrageous: Shockingly bad or excessive

6. Read through Romans 1:18-32. What impressions immediately come to mind when you hear these words? What questions emerge from this passage?
7. How would you define and describe "spiritual cognitive dissonance"?
8. Now set your mind on this picture of the redeemed. This is how we are to look as Jesus followers. Re-read 4:20-24. Reflect on each of these characteristics and discuss how you have experienced these traits.
- Living with purpose.
 - Experiencing a meaningful thinking pattern
 - Living in the light of truth
 - Rejecting the former ungodly values
 - Embracing a new attitude
 - Experiencing a new identity
 - Being like God in righteousness and holiness

Wow, we are now the righteousness of God, saved, redeemed and cleaned up for the purpose of bringing him glory. The result? Satisfaction, joy, clarity, purposefulness, cleanliness, meaningfulness. What a contrast! This is how we are to walk. This is our identity. The moment you find yourself going back to the futility of your old ways, read this passage and rejoice in how God, through Christ, has transformed you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Take a moment right now to pray and thank God for this work of transformation he has done in your life.

9. Paul begins this section by saying - *So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do.* Is he being a little too harsh and bossy? Why does he speak this way?

10. Look at verses 25-32 again. Notice that all of these characteristics concern relationships. As someone said – holiness is not a mystical condition experienced in isolation. Rather, holiness happens among people in relationship. Review these traits and give examples from your experience.

- We are to put off falsehood and put on truth
- We are to put off anger and put on self-control
- We are to put off stealing and put on honest labour
- We are to put off hurtful speech and put on helpful speech
- We are to put off bitterness and put on kindness, compassion and forgiveness

11. Think of this teaching into the broader context of Ephesians. What is the correlation between grace and godliness?

12. As you wrap up, reflect on Titus 2:11-14

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Titus 2:11-14
The way we live does not earn God’s grace. But what we look like in our character is a reflection of God’s grace.

13. The world needs to see the difference Jesus makes in a person’s life. That will be our greatest testimony. Spend some time praying that God would transform each of you into the image of Christ.