

Small Group Material - Ephesians 5

Gracious and Humble Living

Ephesians 4.17-6.9

Welcome (10 mins)

Did you ever get your mouth washed out with soap? What were your parents rules about language? How did they deal with it?

Word (30 mins) Leader: you are unlikely to cover all these sections in any depth. So, choose what you want to focus on - and either leave out or skate quickly over the others. Make sure you do allow time for Section E and ministry if that seems needed!

From 4.17-6.9, Paul, the great apostle, teaches the Ephesians how they should live because of all that Jesus Christ has done for them and in them. There's a lot here about practical holiness, 'Putting off the old self and putting on the new self.' 4.22,23

Section A: Read 4.29 - 5.20

- What 3 standards does Paul set for Christian living? Cf 5v1,2,8.
- Aside from avoiding deeds of darkness, v11, what else should we do about them?
- 5v18-21, what are the characteristics of a Spirit-filled community?

For reflection and discussion

As you look back over your life since becoming a Christian, what positive changes have you seen in your motives and desires? Where have you seen the greatest change? What out of these verses challenges you? (Be as honest and as vulnerable as you can.)

Section B: Read 5.21 - 33 This is a section on marriage but it's something we can all learn from.

- From these verses, men, how do you feel about the standard set for husbands, v25,28?
- Women, how do you feel about the standard for wives in v22-23?

A bishop once said, the reason Paul told the husbands to love their wives and wives to submit to their husbands is because that's what they each found most difficult!

Reflection Compare the modern day view of marriage to this?

Section C: Read 6.1-4

What does God ask of all children and with what promise?

For discussion

How can parents 'bring up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord'?

Section D: Read 6.5-9 (if time)

What do you consider to be the ideal employer/employee relationship?

For reflection

What is God saying to you about your family or work situation?

Section E: Reflection and Ministry

How do you feel that, as a group, you are living as God's new community? Are there ways you could change/grow? Be honest! What has God been speaking to you about through these verses? Would anyone like prayer?

Worship (10 mins) We can only live like this with the power of the Holy Spirit. Listen to the song, 'Spirit of God' by Phil Wickham.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuY5hv1pBUw>
Turn it into prayer for more of the Holy Spirit

Witness (20 mins) *Ask someone in advance...!*

'This time tomorrow' Over the next few weeks, for the Witness section, we will suggest you ask one person from your group to share a bit about what their life is like day-by-day, what particular challenges they face and opportunities they have. *What is on their 'frontline'?*

Here are some questions which might help:

Presence: How and where do you sense God's presence?

Pressure: Where are you feeling pressured?

Purpose: What do you feel is your purpose?

Pray for that person, perhaps listening to see if God gives anyone a picture, Scripture, word of encouragement etc for them.