



SG | Small Groups

Group Prep

In preparation for small group, read Ephesians 4:17-32, then answer the following discussion questions.

Introduction

As Christians, we are often called hypocrites because our choices and actions are no different from those of unbelievers. Christians are just as likely to visit a porn site, get drunk, gamble, or gossip behind someone’s back. Why do Christians struggle to live like Jesus?

Discussion Questions

1. How should the life of a Christian and non-Christian look different? Oftentimes, we see very little differences between the life of Christians and non-Christians. Why is that? Why aren’t more Christians changing?

2. What impacted you most from reading Ephesians 4:17-32? Explain the battle you fight between your old and new self. How can we ensure the new self wins the battle? What does it look like to “let the Spirit renew your thoughts and feelings?” How do our thoughts and feelings impact our behavior?

Describe the behaviors listed in Ephesians 4:17-32 that are opposed to God’s will for our life. Which of those behaviors (or any others) do you struggle with? What are the God-honoring behaviors needed to replace them?

3. Three things need to change in your life to be a “good Christian.” We open our heart. – Read Psalm 139:23-24 aloud. How often do you ask God to search out your heart? How can we make space to allow God to search our heart and show us what thoughts, feelings or behaviors are not part of His will for our life? Since becoming a Christian, describe one way your heart has changed over the years.

We repent. – Read Matthew 4:17. What does it mean to repent? What are the benefits of repenting? If you haven’t already shared, where in your life do you need to step into the process of repentance? Who could help you stay accountable to God’s will for your life in this area?

We take God’s truth into our mind. – Share what you are currently doing to prioritize learning what God has to say about how you should think and how you should be living? What could be better about your current process? What keeps you from prioritizing growing in your knowledge of Scripture?

Action Step

4. What’s keeping you from making the changes you know God wants you to make? What steps can you take this week to begin changing your thoughts, feelings, and actions to experience more of your new self in Christ?

My action step is _____

_____.

I will encourage and pray for _____ to follow through, and their action step is _____

_____.

My memory verse is _____.

This coming week, I’m praying for _____

_____.

Outreach: Groups in Action

With your group, sign up to help sort and organize the books that were collected for Rosa Parks from all three campus, on October 3.

As a group, come and help cheer on the Emmanuel Team World Vision running group at one of their trainings at Freedom Park: mornings of October 6, 20 or 27. Provide snacks, help at a water station, and come encourage the members as they are training.

For more information about these opportunities, please contact Kerry Carmichael at kcarmichael@eclife.org.

“Most of the lifestyle activities of [Christians] were statistically equivalent to those of [non-Christians].” — David Kinnaman

A good Christian is changing .

“Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else.” — C.S. Lewis

Ephesians 4:22-24

But the **fruit** of the **Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. *Galatians 5:22-23*

We have taken the wrong approach .

Mark 7:21-23

Lasting change happens when the heart is changed.

Matthew 5:20

External obedience to the law does not change the heart.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like **whitewashed tombs**, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. So you also **outwardly** appear righteous to others, but **within** you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” *Matthew 23:27-28*

We must take the inside - out approach.

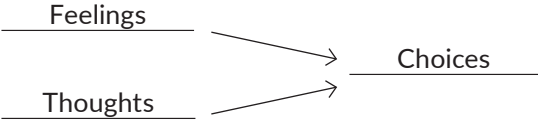
1. We open our heart to God.

Search me, O God, and know my **heart**; test me and know my anxious thoughts. **Point out** anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. *Psalm 139:23-24*

2. We repent .

From then on Jesus began to preach, “**Repent** of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.” *Matthew 4:17*

3. We take God’s truth into our minds .



...Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my **disciples**. Then you will know the **truth**, and the truth will set you **free**.” *John 8:31-32*

Where do you need change?