

Word One Bible Study

A Radical Break with the Past

by Linda Behrendt

Text: Ephesians 4:17-5:2 for the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

1. Gain a renewed understanding of the importance of lifestyle choices to overall faith life.
2. View Christ as the ultimate role model in choosing a lifestyle.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bibles
Newsprint
Markers

GROUP GUIDELINES

Form small groups of 4-6 people. Choose as a leader the person who went to bed the latest last night. The leader's job is to keep the group moving through the material and ensure that everyone has a chance to share. Participants always have the right to pass if they do not feel comfortable sharing a response.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

1. What is your favorite junk food?
2. What are the characteristics of healthy foods?
3. Describe the characteristics of a healthy lifestyle.

LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

1. Read Ephesians 4:17-24.
 - a. In verses 18-19, Paul addresses the lifestyle of the Gentiles. What is the problem?
 - b. What are the modern day equivalents of the Gentile's behaviors?
 - c. In verse 17, the word mind means attitude, or way of thinking. What attitudes cause futility in your life?
 - d. What exactly is the truth, referred to in verse 21? In what ways have you heard and been taught the truth?
 - e. The Christian life is a constant struggle to put off the old self (verse 23). What help does God provide? (verse 24)
2. Read Ephesians 4:30-5:2.
 - a. Look at verse 5:1, and relate it to this statement: "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery."
 - b. Reread verses 4:30-32. In what way do these verses address the instruction to imitate Christ? List specific examples.
 - c. In verse 31 we see sinful behavior grow from the inside out. List those five behaviors, noting how they are displayed:
 - i. Bitterness
 - ii. Wrath
 - iii. Anger
 - iv. Slander
 - v. Malice
 - vi. In what way(s) do these behaviors impact our Christian life?
 - d. In response to verse 5:2, "and live in love, as Christ loved us. . .," make a list of five alternative behaviors to the ones you listed in question four.

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

1. Divide a piece of newsprint in half. Focusing on verses 23 and 24, on one side list the "old clothes" (behaviors) that we should discard. On the other side, list the "new clothes" (behavior) that Christians should wear.

2. Who is our model for these new clothes?
3. What gets in your way, keeping you from putting on these new clothes?
4. **Our** motivation for living a Christian lifestyle comes from the fact that Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as an offering (verse 5:2). Our desire to imitate Christ is a response of love. Ask each participant to complete the following statements:
 - a. The strongest part of my walk with Christ is . . .
 - b. One area in which I could grow closer to Christ in my daily walk is. . .

CLOSING

Close with prayer, thanking God for Christ's example, and asking Him for strength to live a God-pleasing life.

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