

Ephesians 4:17-32

Week 8 - Renewed In The Image Of God

Learning Objectives

- To explore what it means to put off our old self (which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires) and to put on our new self (created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness)
- To better understand what it means to live as renewed image-bearers in the areas of our mind, emotions, actions, tongue, and heart

Leader's Note: The second part of the passage has a table activity that you will fill in with your group. Please look ahead for that so you are aware of it.

Pray for your time together as a group.

Read Out Loud: In Ephesians 2, we saw that God has taken us from being spiritually dead and made us alive in Christ. He then brought us into His family, the Church. We are a people who have been created by God for good works. This passage shows us how we can be renewed in the midst of God's people, and how we can walk in the good works God prepared for us. We have been shown mercy in order that we can show mercy, and this passage helps us unpack what it means to live this way.

Section One: Renewed

Read Out Loud: Ephesians 4:17-24 (NIV)

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.

? What does it mean to have a hardened heart? How does that play out in our modern lives?

Possible Answer: The Greek word for hardening is 'pórosis' which refers to a callous or hardness, metaphorically applied to organs of feeling, meaning insensibility, numbness, dulling, deadness (Strong's, 4457). Unempathetic, doesn't care, rebellious, unfeeling, unrepentant

? How does being 'made new in the attitude of our minds' lead us to live distinctively from the world?

Possible Answer: Because we have been renewed in our thinking, God's perspective on the world helps inform how we live and act. When we live in the ways of God, we are able to put His glory on display as people see His work in our lives in the ways that He changes us and makes us new.

? What does it mean to 'put off the old self' and to put on the 'new self?' How do you see this at work in your life today?

Possible Answer: Answers may vary

Section Two: Renewal In Action

Read Out Loud: Ephesians 4:25-32 (NIV)

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": 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.

? What does it mean for us to be 'members of one body?'

Possible Answer: Being members of one another means there must be a dramatic change about how we think about each other and how we think about the church. We are not a social club. This is not a hobby. We are a family. We are members of one another. We are to be connected together.

ACTIVITY: Lead the group through this passage (v. 25-32) with the goal of filling in each of these 5 categories (MIND - EMOTIONS - ACTIONS - TONGUE - HEART) with the different characteristics marked out in the passage.

1. Step One: Point out the 5 categories as they are seen in the passage to your group.
2. Step Two: Ask your group to fill in the ideas, themes, and words that belong to each category. Do this one-by-one, starting with mind, then emotions, then actions, then words/tongue, and ending with heart.
3. The questions to your group may sound like this, "How do we see the mind of the old self?" or "How do we handle our emotions as the new self? How is that different from the old self?" and so forth.

Leader’s Note: This is a sample table. The table on the handout is blank. Some ideas, themes, and words may end up in more than one category and might not follow exactly the table provided for you here. This doesn’t need to be perfect. The goal is to get group members thinking about the juxtapositions within each of these different areas and to apply this to their lives for each category.

Table: “Out with the old, in with the new.”

	Old Self	New Self
Mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Futility of thinking ● Darkened in understanding ● Ignorance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learned/Taught by Christ ● New attitude of mind
Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anger ● Bitterness ● Rage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do not let sun go down on anger - slow to anger, not harboring, quick to forgive
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stealing ● Brawling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working, Use hands, Share w/ those in need ● True Righteousness ● Holiness ● Kind ● Compassion ● Forgiving
Tongue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Falsehood ● Lies ● Unwholesome talk ● Slander 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Speaking truthfully to neighbor ● Build others up ● Benefit those who listen
Heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deceitful Desires ● Sensuality ● Hardening of heart ● Impurity ● Greed ● Malice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Desires of Holiness

A Renewed Mind

? What does it mean to ‘be made new in the attitude of our mind’? How do you see this in your life?

Possible Answer: The passage also talks about being taught by Christ and learning about Christ. Our minds are renewed when we let the truth of Scripture permeate our thoughts and replace the futile thinking, darkened understanding, and ignorance we once had. We think differently as falsehood is replaced, consistently, by the truth that we find in Jesus.

Renewed Emotions

? The passage highlights two ways we can handle our emotions differently. We can be slow to anger and we can be quick to forgive instead of harboring anger. What emotions are sometimes a challenge for you to handle well?

Possible Answer: Emotions are not inherently bad. God is spoken of as having righteous anger. Our emotions were created by God and given by God to help us understand our world. This passage convicts us that we are not to let responding to our emotions drive our actions and we are not to sit in our emotions without finding ways to process them well.

Renewed Actions

? Why is generosity a mark of people who have been made new in Christ? How do you see generosity playing out in your life?

Possible Answer: He is showing a practical example of the imputation of the gospel. Christ not only died to take away our sins; He in turn gives us His righteousness. The good news, therefore, is not negative to neutral; rather, negative to positive! We likewise cannot just not steal, we can be generous like our Father in heaven is generous. This example, as well as the tongue example show us a change from corrupting ways to life-giving ways.

A Renewed Tongue

? How should our speech be changed by the gospel?

Possible Answer: All of these ways that we live a renewed life take place in the body of Christ. We are renewed, along with other believers, to live in community.

A Renewed Heart

? How does a renewed mind impact what we desire in our hearts? How do we still struggle with affections in this life?

Possible Answer: The truth in Jesus helps us to see ourselves as new creations, who have been forgiven of our sins and renewed in our minds, emotions, actions, tongues, and hearts. This leads us to live more repentant, obedient, and merciful lives in response to all that God has done for us.

For Discussion And Accountability

? How should we be helping each other walk in the truth of Jesus, especially as it relates to putting on the new self?