

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Way of Life

Ephesians 4:20-24

1. Begin by reading our theme verses for the sermon series. **Ephesians 4:20-24 [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 in this scripture jumps out to you?

   What might God be saying to you in your current season of life from this scripture?

2. In verse 20, Paul tells the Ephesians that they are not living in the way of life that he taught them. Living the Christian life means that we need to adopt a new way of life. It is not about making one or two small changes or adding in a five-minute devotional in the morning. Following Christ is a way of life. Do you agree?

   How would you define the phrase "way of life". Can you give some examples of a way of life?

3. If our desire is to follow Christ, we need to know what the Christian way of life looks like. Living a Christian way of life begins by narrowing your focus to one priority: PLEASING GOD. **2 Corinthians 5:9 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.** I believe adopting this single priority gives us great clarity on how to live. It allows us to use a simple question to determine what we should or should not do; that question is, "Does this please God?" The question is not, "How I might please the people in my life; or how do I please myself?" The priority for all those in Christ is to please God.

   Reflect for a moment on this verse. **Galatians 1:10 Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.** What is your immediate reaction to this verse?

   Be honest. Do you feel more pull towards pleasing other people or pleasing yourself than pleasing God?

   Tell the story of a time you tried your best to please yourself or someone else and it just didn't work.

4. Throughout the centuries, people who follow a Christian way of life have worked hard to develop a specific practice in their daily life. That practice has many names, but in essence it involves making time, daily, to be alone with God, to worship, to pray, and to study His Word. Jesus was the very first Christian to model this practice. **Mark 1:35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Luke 5:16 But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.** What are your thoughts on these verses?

   Have you ever attempted to daily set aside time with God? If so, how effective is this practice in your life?

   If you struggle with this practice, let me make some suggestions:

   1. Build up to seven days a week. I would suggest that doing this practice once a week is better than zero times a week. So, as you are beginning this practice, focus on one to three times a week where you retreat into silence and solitude to meet with God in prayer and in His Word. From there, you can build towards five and eventually seven days a week.
   2. Do not be frustrated if you find yourself distracted during this time. Most modern people rarely choose silence and solitude. As you find the time and the place to be alone with God, you will no doubt, find your mind wandering. My suggestion is to make a quick note on a to do list of anything that comes to mind when you are distracted and then refocus on your prayer.
   3. Try to meet with God in the same place and at the same time every day. This will help you to be more consistent in the time that you spend with God.

   What do you think of these three suggestions?

   NOTE: If you are unsure what to read/study in the Bible, get input from another person in your group who consistently uses this practice.

5. The third component of a Christian way of life is to ensure you have the right people in your life. In the sermon I said, the people who surround you have a huge impact on how you think and how you live. Do you agree? How important do you think it is to have the right people in your life?

   I also said in the sermon that living in authentic Christian community means having people in your life who are willing to encourage you, invest in you, and lovingly correct you. How important do you think those three concepts are: encouraging, investing, and correcting? Are you willing to encourage, invest, and lovingly correct others? Which of these comes easiest for you? Which of these is most difficult?

   Tell the story of a time you were able to effectively encourage or invest or correct someone else.