

# RICH *in* GRACE

## *Sermon Series in Ephesians*

**Preparing for Small Group:** Read the passage below, and answer the following questions.

- (1) What do these verses tell me about God?
- (2) What do these verses tell me about sinful humanity?
- (3) What do these verses tell me about Jesus?
- (4) What does God want me to know?
- (5) What does God want me to do?

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### **“Live the Life”**

*Ephesians 4:17-32*

**Main Point:** Believers are called to live out their lives in Christ.

*Characteristics of living out your life in Christ:*

**In Christ, your life should look different from the lives of unbelievers (17-19).**

Does your life look different? Different from those around you who aren't believers? Different from what your life looked like before you said that you believed in Jesus? It should, and this is the call in Eph. 4:17-32, connected to walking in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called. It's the call to live out your life in Christ, and the opening verses of this passage simply remind us that the lives of believers should look different from the lives of unbelievers! There should be a noticeable difference in the life of someone who has the living God living over them and in them and through them. Since believers are no longer alienated from God by their sin, the presence of God must and does change the way that they live their lives, if they are truly in Christ. Today, does your life look different because of Jesus?

1. What did your life look like before Jesus? Make a list of a few characteristics of how your mind was darkened and how you were alienated from God before your salvation. Put these characteristics together to share the testimony of your life before Jesus in a sentence or two.
2. In what ways is your life different from unbelievers who live around you? In what ways is your life similar? Why do some people say there's little difference between believers and "moral" people who are unbelievers? How does the Bible speak to this opinion?
3. Do you know an unbeliever who's life is marked by darkened thinking and alienation from God? Share, and pray. Commit to tell them about your life before Jesus.

**In Christ, your life is transformed as your mind is renewed with His truth (20-24).**

- *Abandon your old identity of sin (22).*
- *Embrace your new identity in Christ (24).*
- *Grow in Christ through His Word (23).*

In living a life that's different from an unbeliever, the key is living in Christ in your life! Paul reminded them that if they were true believers who have truly received Jesus through the gift of faith, then they know the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Believers know that the gospel is the good news that believers are new creations in Christ, adopted as sons and daughters of the King and transformed into citizens of the Kingdom of God. Believers are no

longer enemies of God, dead in their sin, but they have been raised to life in Christ to be the workmanship of God in the world. This isn't make-believe; this is reality! As a result, Paul called the believers to be who they were in Jesus. The call is the same today, which is that believers must abandon anything connected to their old, sinful life and that they must embrace everything connected to their new, forgiven life in Jesus. This work of transforming the believer's life is simple: The life of a believer is transformed as their mind is renewed by the truth of God's Word. As God's Word fills and renews the mind of a follower, their life in Christ grows! Are you growing through the Word in your life in Christ?

1. Is there anything in your life that is still connected to your old, sinful life? What do you need to do to deal with this and allow God to conquer this in your life? How does your small group play a role in this work in your life? How does accountability with other believers of your same gender help you put off the old self? Are you taking advantage of these gifts of God?
2. What do you need to put on in your life in Christ? What are some areas of your life that need more of the life of Christ to take over? Share, and pray for one another.
3. How are you allowing God to renew your mind daily through His Word? Is this important? What does your time in the Word say about this as a priority in your life? How can your small group or relationship with other believers help in your time and commitment to His Word?

### **In Christ, your life should display the life of Jesus (25-32).**

- *Speaking the truth (25).*
- *Taking action to preempt sin (26-27).*
- *Working for Kingdom work (28).*
- *Strengthening others in God's grace (29).*
- *Forgiving others as you've been forgiven (31-32).*
- *Allowing God to do His work in you (30)!*

In these verses, Paul laid out some beautiful elements of what life in Christ should look like, which is simply that our lives should look more like Jesus living in us and through us. In providing these commands, Paul said do this and don't do that, and he also gave some wonderful justifications for why these actions and attitudes should be evident in a believer's life. We should tell the truth because we are the body of Christ. We should deal with problems and anger because we shouldn't give temptation an open door. We should do honest work so that we'll be able to have resources to do God's work. We should share the grace of God to build up the people of God. We should forgive others as we've been forgiven by God through Christ. In all of these things, we should let the Holy Spirit live and work in us, not resisting God's work to extend the work of Jesus through us. In short, our lives should display the life of Jesus!

1. Review the list of things that we should do. Which of these do you struggle with or see the least of in your life? Share with your group, and ask each other to pray specifically for these elements of the life of Jesus in your lives.
2. What are the justifications that are given for each of the commands in these verses? Review, and discuss. Do any of these surprise you, or perhaps change the way that you think about the importance of these characteristics in your life? Why, or why not?
3. What does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit? How do we do this? Why is this statement in these verses? How does it connect to all of what God's Word is telling us in Eph. 4:17-32?
4. What did your life look like after Jesus? Make a list of a few characteristics of how your mind has been renewed and how your relationship with God has changed you. Put these characteristics together to share the testimony of your life after Jesus in a sentence or two. Who can you share your testimony with this coming week?