

Ephesians

Week 10 – Identity Makes Community

Transition: Last week, we began studying the practical application of Paul's teaching (which begins with chapter 4). The first subject he addresses is how the proper outworking of our being unified as one body (in Christ) ultimately leads to both individual and collective spiritual maturity through the body building itself up in love.

Context: This week we are picking up right where we left off by digging deeper into the idea of how to attain spiritual maturity. Specifically, Paul shares the "put off/put on" principle, which is based on knowing who we are in Christ (our position) and then living like it (so that our practice matches our position). He also illustrates what this might look like in the life of a believer by giving a number of examples.

Opening Questions:

- What is something that you stopped doing because you knew you needed to make a change for the better? How did you do it? Why did you do it? What have you learned from it?
- When has belonging to a team/group/community had a positive impact on your life? What was it and why was it so influential on you?

Scripture/Storying: Ephesians 4:17-32

Discipleship Questions:

- What is the main idea of this passage and how does 4:11-16 feed into understanding it properly?
- What is your reaction to Paul's description of the Gentiles' life before being saved by Christ (v17-19)? How many of the descriptions are linked to the mind/thinking? Do any describe your life before Christ? If so, which ones?
- Paul tells them, "...that is not the way you learned Christ." To what do you think Paul is referring (i.e., how did they learn Christ)? Why is it foundational for his teaching here?
- What does Paul mean by "be renewed in the spirit of your minds" (v23b)? Why does Paul address their thinking before he addresses their behavior? What meaning does this have for you as you strive to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (4:1)?
- Explain the put off/put on principle (v20-24). When have you practiced this principle yourself?
- Look over the various put offs and put ons that he names (v25-32). Which ones stand out to you right now? Why?
- What does it mean to "not grieve the Holy Spirit" (v30)? Why does Paul add this admonition specifically? In what ways does it impact you personally?
- What is God teaching you from this passage?

Prayer time: This week we are praying for Heading Home Ministries, a ministry Providence Church supports.

- Pray for the leaders...that they will have wisdom and discernment as they help the men grow in Christ.
- Pray that God would pour out His Spirit on the men in the prison...that there would be genuine revival.
- Pray for the men who attend the teaching...that they would grow in the knowledge and love of God.