

Ephesians Series – Autumn 2020 Including Life **Group Leaders Brief**

Taken from the book **Ephesians: How Jesus creates a New People in a New World** by Brad Wilson

'How Jesus creates a new people in a new world'

A major series preaching through this book, with each message formed of three parts:

- Head – Renewal of our minds by the knowledge of God
- Heart – Restoration of our souls by the application of this truth
- Hands – Transformation of our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit

There are eight parts (weeks) each has a reading(s) a brief synopsis and some suggested questions.

Please note that the first three parts all have two sections, the remaining parts one section each.

Suggested questions for life groups have been **highlighted**.

Part 6 - A church living out the truth (5:1-21)

Head

Up to now Paul has stated the truth about God, the gospel of what he has done, your identity, adopted as children of God, His masterpiece, His people.

Identity: we live from the position of our identity; it is the reference point for our thoughts and actions. We need to keep revisiting our identity in Christ, a bit like a mental fitness exercise to get ingrained in our thoughts. We have to pursue it relentlessly. We are safe in His hands; our identity does not come from the responses we get from our interaction with others.

There are two extremes: Those who think how we behave defines who we are, if we obey God, He will love us, if we are good enough, we can belong, this is legalism. Some go the other way and think that God loves us, gives us a new identity and so it doesn't matter how we live. This is apathy, not just to our lives but to the gospel as well. If how we live doesn't matter then why did Jesus die?

To be imitators of God we need to know what God is like. See 1 John 4:8. Sacrificial love.

How do we balance love and godliness? Ephesians 4:15

We need to ask God to show us where our thoughts are wrong so we can change our thoughts so our behaviour is right. God wants us to be free from the destructive effects of sin. We can't tolerate a bit of a house fire.

Quote "in our freedom we make ourselves slaves" in relation to the thinking of our age.

The call, in these verses is to be vigilant in our thoughts and behaviours, to be aware of how our behaviours look or may look to others. To cognitively take stock of how our life style may appear to others even if we know we aren't sinning, we are called to try and look objectively at ourselves through the eyes of our culture and ensure there isn't even a hint of sin. If we love God we don't want to dishonour Him by our behaviour, if we love others we don't want to lead them astray.

Heart

Paul calls out apathy, or sleeping (v14), and calls us to wake up! Apathy is one of the indicators of a disconnect between our heads and our hearts.

We need to change our affections from ourselves to others, do we need to give things up/alter our life style so God is honoured.

Have we been in a season of “sleepwalking”? Knowing the gospel in our heads but not experiencing it in our lives?

Hands

The commands of Paul (Jesus) are not random, they are purposeful for our good and the good of those around us, they say something about Jesus to the world around us.

Our actions speak louder than words.

What you do reveals what you believe.

How we live flows from who we are.

Vs 15: how do we live with wisdom?

What would be the impact of living a life completely submitted to Jesus look like, how would it affect those around you / our town?

What does it mean to live a life without even “a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity or greed” in our culture today?

How is the Holy Spirit stirring our hearts in response to what you have heard today? Is there an area of your life where He is asking you to take a step of obedience?

What does it mean to live a life of love?

What is real love? (think about God’s love to help shape your thoughts).