

## Ephesians 4:17-5:20 (NLT)

<sup>17</sup> With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. <sup>18</sup> Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. <sup>19</sup> They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

<sup>20</sup> But that isn't what you learned about Christ. <sup>21</sup> Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, <sup>22</sup> throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. <sup>23</sup> Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. <sup>24</sup> Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

<sup>25</sup> So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. <sup>26</sup> And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, <sup>27</sup> for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

<sup>28</sup> If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. <sup>29</sup> Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

<sup>30</sup> And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

<sup>31</sup> Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. <sup>32</sup> Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

<sup>1</sup> Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children.

<sup>2</sup> Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

<sup>3</sup> Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. <sup>4</sup> Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. <sup>5</sup> You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.

<sup>6</sup> Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. <sup>7</sup> Don't participate in the things these

people do. <sup>8</sup> **For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light!** <sup>9</sup> For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.

<sup>10</sup> Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. <sup>12</sup> It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. <sup>13</sup> But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, <sup>14</sup> for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said,

"Awake, O sleeper,  
rise up from the dead,  
and Christ will give you light."

<sup>15</sup> So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. <sup>16</sup> Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. <sup>17</sup> Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. <sup>18</sup> Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, <sup>19</sup> singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. <sup>20</sup> And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**1. Throw off your old sinful nature (4:22)**

*...throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception.*

**2. Put on your new nature (4:24)**

*Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.*

**3. Live as people of light (5:8)**

*For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light!*

**NOTES**

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at [solanabeach.church](http://solanabeach.church) for sermon video, message outline, and small group questions print version.

### CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

If your group hasn't had the chance to share your SHAPE, begin your time together this way. Consider the following guidelines as you share with one another:

- Prompt: What surprised you about your SHAPE?
- Prompt: What did you learn about someone else through SHAPE?

**CONNECT WITH GOD** (Use one of the below practices or choose a practice from a previous week.)

- **Practice of Generosity:** The spiritual discipline of generosity is not simply a practice of financial giving, but it is a way of life. Today, we will engage in intentional reflection about "generosity of thought." How we think about and turn towards others is a practice of generosity as well. (The below practice was adapted from the Faith Practices Project - [www.crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject/generosity/practicing-generosity-individually](http://www.crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject/generosity/practicing-generosity-individually))
  - Pray: Begin your time by praying that the Spirit reveals to you things you don't see about your own habits, generosity and inward assumptions about others.
  - Journal: Reflect on the following questions.
    - Think of a person about whom you easily grumble or make assumptions.
    - Intentionally look for the image of God in that person.
    - When a critical thought enters your mind, what questions, words or practices might help you to reframe that assumption or negative thought?
  - Pray: Close in slow and expectant prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to cultivate a new impulse toward generosity in you, that encompasses every area of life—and especially towards others this week.

### CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Together: Pray:** Before digging into the scripture and message. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate scripture, and to speak to each one of you through the passage.
- **Alone:** Read **Ephesians 4:17-5:20** again. Spend a few minutes journaling and reflecting on the following prompt:
  - How have hymns and spiritual songs been important to you?
- **Together:** Read **Ephesians 4:17-5:20** as a group.
- **Together:** In pairs or as a whole group, share with one another your reflections from the prompt above.

### CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

Select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the main points from the sermon outline.
- How do Paul's words in this passage compare to the passages we've read in previous weeks (Ephesians 1-4:16)?
- How would you summarize Paul's words in Ephesians 4:17-32?
- What commands does Paul give to believers (5:15-20)?
- What does it take to "live as people of light" (5:8)?
- Based on 5:19, what role did psalms and hymns and spiritual songs seem to play in Paul's life? Why/How might that be applicable to our lives today?
- What questions do you have about the passage?

### ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: Reflect on the below quote from N.T. Wright about Ephesians 4:20-24.

*"If you don't want your mind and heart to go wandering off into the realms of darkness, one of the best ways is to keep them well stocked with wise and thankful themes, so that the words of comfort, guidance and good judgment come bubbling up unbidden from the memory and subconscious. Hymns and psalms today can still provide exactly this kind of Christian nurture."*

### PRAYER

Spend time praying that the Spirit cultivates generosity and gratitude in your lives, especially towards those of whom you are most critical. Close your prayer time by reading Psalm 136.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!  
*His faithful love endures forever.*  
Give thanks to the God of gods.  
*His faithful love endures forever.*  
Give thanks to the Lord of lords.  
*His faithful love endures forever.*