

Ephesians 4

live the life

GOING DEEPER

WEEK ONE

Welcome to the discussion questions for the first sermon in this series, "Living the Life". These questions are designed to take you deeper. You can enjoy them by yourself, with a friend or in your community group. Begin this time with prayer and read Ephesians 4:1-17.

1. Take a moment to reflect on this quote by C.S. Lewis "Something deep in the human heart breaks at the thought of a life of mediocrity." The phrase "a life of mediocrity" clearly implies living like the vast majority of humanity, stuck and stagnant in mundane patterns. An ordinary mediocre life is ruled by fears and frustration with little or no real excitement, boredom and distraction ruling your days and anxious fears awaiting you at night.

- Does your heart break at the thought of living a life of mediocrity?
- Honestly appraise your life for a moment, are there some areas that would be best described as mediocre? Your love life or marriage? Your physical health? The quality of your friendships and relationships? Your career or schoolwork? And most importantly your Spiritual life? Be honest, are there some areas of your life that are breaking your heart?

2. Imagine the apostle Paul for a moment, he writes to the Ephesians from prison, probably damp and uncomfortable, he calls out to all believers when he says, **"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received."** (Ephesians 4:1) He is reminding us that how we live is really important and that we are called by God to live a certain kind of life. Not an ordinary, mediocre life ruled by fears and frustration, but an extraordinary life marked by peace and power through the Spirit of God. One of the words that jumps off the page to me in Ephesians 4:1 is 'urge', other translations use the words 'implore' or 'beg', when I read it, I feel the urgency and passion Paul has for how we live.

- What word or words in this verse stand out to you? Why do they catch your eye?

3. As we read through this passage, it eventually becomes obvious what Paul's worst fear is. He is deeply concerned that even after coming to faith in Christ, having all our sins forgiven by God and having the knowledge that we have access to God's power and presence, it might not really change how we live. He is deeply concerned and burdened that we will still live like the people that don't know Christ. That a casual observer of our lives might not see any difference in the way we live. Here is what he says in Ephesians 4:17, "So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking."

- Why do you think it's so important that we live in a distinct and different way from all those around us?
- What are some areas of your life that you feel are distinct and different?
- Being painfully honest, what are some areas of your life that, upon reflection, don't really seem very different from those without faith in Christ?

4. One of the questions you might have as you are reflecting on Ephesians 4 is, exactly how should we live? What are some of the things that should be distinct and different in our lives? A close examination of this passage clearly shows one of the things that should set our lives apart is how we treat others and the quality of our relationships. We see this just following verse one, here is the section in context: **As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Ephesians 4:1-2** Think about these words for a moment: humble, gentle, patient. Bible scholars point out two interesting things about these words, first, they are words that have been used to describe Jesus Christ, so Paul is saying in effect, live like Jesus. A second interesting point was that in the ancient world these words were never used in a positive way; to be humble was to be defeated, only servants were forced to be gentle, no one wanted to be patient, but early Christian writings for the first time in history turned these words into virtues. Paul is saying loud and clear live distinctively like Jesus, embracing His values and treating people the way He treated them. Of course, the best example of living like Jesus is to love, the phrase 'bearing with one another in love' means, love those who frustrate you. Bearing with them is loving them despite the difficulty they bring into your life. As you think about this point do you agree that one of the ways we should be distinctive from the world around us is to treat people like Jesus did?

- In your mind, does being humble, gentle, patient and loving like Jesus represent living an extraordinary life?
- How do you think a person begins to live this way? How do we become humble, gentle and patient, living a life of love?

5. If you want to live a life worthy of the calling you have received, what tangible changes, observable, measurable changes could you make to begin living that life?