



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION FOR WEEK OF NOVEMBER 28-DECEMBER 4

INTRODUCTION:

We are entering the final week of our 'Be' series as we conclude our Be Rich emphasis. Throughout November, you have been challenged to Give, Serve, and Love our community. Many of us would not say we are rich but when you realize how God has blessed you and how rich you really are then you should have every desire to give, serve, and love those around you. Pastor Mark's message for this week is entitled, "Be Different" as he reminds us that as Christians, we are different to make a difference.

Before Your Small Group Meeting:

- Watch Pastor Mark's Message
- Read Ephesians 4:25-32

DISCUSSION

1. What jumped out at you the most from Pastor Mark's message this weekend?
2. Pastor Mark mentions that we must be courageous with heart felt honesty. What are some practical ways you have done this? Has it been easy or difficult to renounce these old practices? Explain.

3. We all know how powerful words can be. Would you say it is easier to tear someone down with unwholesome talk or build someone up with words of encouragement? Why?
4. Read Ephesians 4:26,31. Paul tells us not to sin in our anger but then tells us to get rid of anger. Is there a difference between the anger he mentions in verse 26 and the one he mentions in verse 31. Is it right for a Christian to be angry? Discuss

RESPOND IN PRAYER

Spend time reading and praying over Ephesians 4:25-32 and ask God to help you forgive others just as he forgave you.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Ephesians 4:25-32

4:25. First we are to stop lying. To be taught the truth in Jesus (v. 21) means to make truth telling a habit of life. We cannot attempt to fool or deceive one another as pagans do. We must create unity in the body with one truth because we are members of one another.

4:26–27. Sometimes a Christian may legitimately become angry. Jesus became angry at times. In those times we must be extra careful how we act, for anger gives no excuse to sin. Sinning in anger would include things such as saying unkind things or acting in harmful ways toward others. We may not always be able to keep from getting angry, but we can keep from sinning when we do. When we do get angry, we should deal with it before the day is through.

When we allow our anger to become sin or when we allow ourselves to keep our anger for more than a day, it gives the devil an opportunity to gain control over our attitudes, our actions, and our relationships. It gives him a foothold to lead us into greater anger and more sin.

4:28. Christians are not to steal. Stealing, in its most obvious form is, either by deception or force, taking the possession of someone else. In all civilizations, stealing is considered wrong. It is a timeless and universal value. Inherently, no one wants his possessions taken from him. We have no difficulty understanding or agreeing with this command at its most obvious level.

Rather than steal, we are to work. Work has benefits. (1) It is good. It allows a person to meet his own needs and the needs of his family. It allows him to do something meaningful with his time and to make a contribution to society. (2) Work allows a person to be able to give something to others who have needs. Rather than steal from others, work allows a person to give something to others. (3) Work allows a person to support financially the advancement of the kingdom of God. Working is thus a sign of Christian faithfulness, maturity, and unity.

4:29. This is the Bible's version of, "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." We are to speak only words that build up and encourage others. This one passage, if consistently obeyed, would eliminate the overwhelming majority of life's conflicts. Words of a mature Christian seek to help the listener, not harm

him. Thus the ministerial gifts of Christ's grace achieve their purposes, and the unity of the body of Christ is preserved and enhanced.

4:30. Not to limit speech to wholesome, helpful words makes the Holy Spirit feel grief because of our behavior. We are not saying that you can never say anything negative. Sometimes we are forced to talk about unpleasant things, particularly in solving problems in which people are involved. Teachers, ministers, employers, coaches, lawyers, police, and so on, all find it necessary to tell the truth about someone even if it is unpleasant. Whether you are solving a problem or not, you avoid speaking unwholesome words. Your intent is to build up, not tear down, to unify, not divide.

4:31–32. Christians are to “put away” five sins: bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander. In their place, they are to “put on” three virtues: kindness, tender-heartedness, and forgiveness. Because God acts this way toward us, we should act this way toward others. Then the church will be built up, the people will be holy, and Christ's body will be unified.¹

¹ Anders, M. (1999). *Galatians-Colossians* (Vol. 8, pp. 155–156). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.