



# [study guide]

## RELATIONSHIPS: Week 4: Sand & Souls

### 10.21.12: Ephesians 5:15-17

#### [warm up]

It is more than likely that God used some key people in your life to love on you and influence you toward a relationship with Christ. Who comes to mind and what did they do that helped lead you to Jesus?

What are some behaviors and attitudes that you have experienced, observed or heard about that Christians have done to damage relationships with those who don't know Christ?

#### [digging deeper]

This weekend in our relationships series, we looked at how those who follow Christ can have increasingly meaningful and valuable relationships with those who do not know Christ yet. Our teaching passage was Ephesians 5:15-18. Please read through that passage.

For those of you that were at the service this weekend, do you remember the five ways a believer can live to have more meaningful and valuable relationships with those that don't know Christ? If you weren't at service, what insights can you draw from these verses to answer that question?

Interact with these two quotes from the book "UnChristian" by David Kinnaman, and connect them to the tension that Christians have in trying to remain faithful to Christ without damaging their influence with those who do not have Christ in their lives:

*"What are Christians known for? Outsiders think our moralizing, our condemnations, and our attempts to draw boundaries around everything. Even if these standards are accurate and biblical, they seem to be all we have to offer. And our lives are a poor advertisement for the standards. We have set the gameboard to register lifestyle points; then we are surprised to be trapped by our mistakes. The truth is we have invited the hypocrite image." (p. 52)*

*Being salt and light demands two things: we practice purity in the midst of a fallen world and yet we live in proximity to this fallen world. If you don't hold up both truths in tension, you invariably become useless and separated from the world God loves. For example, if you only practice purity apart from proximity to the culture, you inevitably become pietistic, separatist, and conceited. If you live in close proximity to the culture without also living in a holy manner, you become indistinguishable from fallen culture and useless in God's kingdom." (p. 133, quoting Mike Metzger from the Clapham Institute)*



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Much of the criticism that Christians receive from those who don't share their faith boils down to issues of hypocrisy, disingenuous care for others or disconnectedness from the world. Yet we are commanded by Christ to live holy, make disciples and live. Read through some of the following verses and elaborate on how and why God instructs us to lovingly reach out to those who do not know Christ.

How do the following verses give either (a) insight to the motivation of why Christians make the efforts to reach out to those who don't know Christ or (b) God's lifestyle instructions to help Christians be more effective in sharing the good news of Jesus. Feel free to share any other verses that come to mind as well.

Matt. 28:19      Matt. 5:16      Matt. 24:42      Mark 16:15      John 6:40  
Phil. 1:27      Col. 4:5      1 Tim. 2:4      1 Peter 2:12-16      2 Peter 3:9-15

## [living it out]

God is always putting people in our path or on our heart to reach out to. Lately, who has He been putting in your path or on your heart?

How has God shown you through this time of study, to best connect to this person and others around you who do not know Christ in an intentional and authentic relationship that can help them learn more about Jesus?

What adjustments in attitude, actions and lifestyle do you need make in order to be a more effective and influential witness for Jesus?

Take some time to pray for the people God has been putting in your path and on your heart as well as for the ability to be intentional, wise, urgent, sober and Spirit led as you live this life trying to genuinely care for others who do not know Christ.