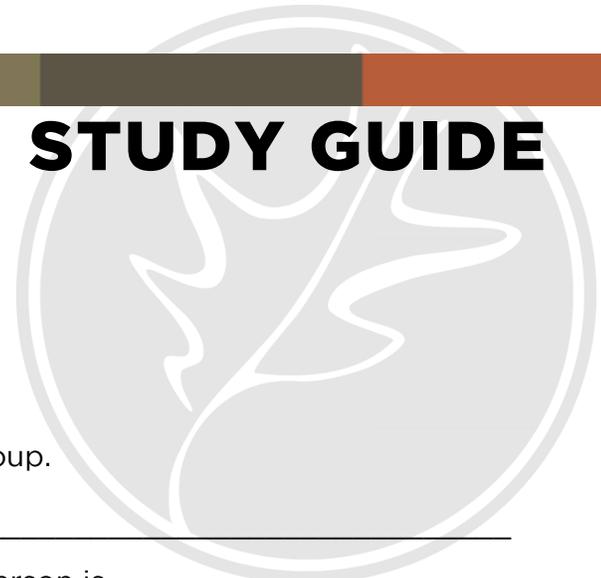


STUDY GUIDE



The Essential Gospel 03.21.21

[set up]

Fill in the blanks and share answers around your LifeGroup.

Before Christ, the old me _____

One way Jesus has transformed me into a new person is _____

[digging deeper]

Our mission at CVC is to “Invite people to new life in Christ.” What does that mean? Does new life in Christ only apply to conversion/salvation? Brainstorm a few different ways that “new life” can look for someone.

Read our Bible passage from last week in Ephesians 4:17-24.

The Ephesian Christians came out of a very pagan background, where worship could include sexual perversion, drunkenness, temple prostitution, even child sacrifice. For a quick snapshot of Ephesus read this brief description:

<https://www.thattheworldmayknow.com/ephesus>

Based on that, how are Christians today similar to the Christians that lived in Ephesus? What does it mean to “walk” according to this passage? Who is a “Gentile” according to this passage?

What are some of the descriptions of those who are outside the faith? Which one can you relate to the most? What are the descriptions of those who are made alive in Christ? Which one of those do you relate to most?

Notice the departure from immoral and corrupt living to the holiness and righteousness after the mind and heart have been touched. Why do many people still seem to try and get right with God by behavior modification rather than heart transformation? What would you say to someone stuck in that thinking?

During the message this last week, Pastor Chad said, “The living do not act like the dead.” What does that mean from a biblical understanding?

[living it out]

How have you struggled to live new in Christ? (To live alive in Christ rather than dead in sin.) How can revisiting the Gospel, who we are in Christ, and what we have in Christ help you “walk” in the new self that Christ has given you?

Take a minute and write three “I am” statements that capture the truth of the new you in Christ that you can say when the old self comes knocking and tempting.

(over)

[close in prayer]

Now, turn those statement into prayers. Take some time praying those statements with your group.

“Thank you, God that in Christ I am...”

“Lord, remind me when I’m tempted that in Christ I am...”

Also, think of your “one” and your neighbors, and take a couple extra minutes in prayer and pray for them by name (silently and individually, or out loud in the large group or smaller groups of 2-3). Use the language of Ephesians 4:17-24 as you pray for them (Lord, I pray for _____ that you would rescue them from a darkened understanding, that you would soften their hard heart, that you would enlighten their spiritual ignorance... etc.).

Also, don’t forget the weekly prayer associated with our text. You can also choose to adapt this prayer for your group (we/us) or for your “one” (he/she):

You alone are the Lord. You have made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them. And the heavenly host bows down before You (Nehemiah 9:6). With You is the fountain of life (Psalm 36:9). You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever (Psalm 16:11).

But I chose the path of death rather than the path of life. My understanding was once full of darkness. I was alienated from Your life, God, because of my ignorance and the hardness of my heart. My mind was closed. I had lost touch not only with You but with reality itself. I could not think straight. I became callous. I lost my sense of shame. I lived for lustful pleasures and eagerly practiced what was impure.

But You helped me see that this was no life for me! You brought me to Christ – the One who is the way, the truth, and the life. He died on the cross to forgive me, rose again to justify me, and sent His Spirit to enliven me. As I heard about Jesus, I came to know Him. I learned Christ! You helped me pay careful attention to Him. Because He is the truth, He has become my Source of truth. Thank You for instructing me in the life-giving word, will, and ways of Jesus.

Now, help me no longer walk as those who are unsaved do, for they are hopelessly confused, like I used to be. May I no longer go along with the ungodly, the empty-headed, the mindless crowd.

Thank You for giving me the ability to put off my old self, which belongs to my former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires. Everything – and I do mean everything – connected with that old way of life has to go. It’s rotten through and through. O Lord, help me to get rid of it! Instead, let the Spirit renew my thoughts and attitudes.

Thank You for not only giving me the ability to put off the old self, but for giving me the power to put on my new self, created after Your likeness, God. Make me truly righteous and holy. I want a life fashioned by You, a life renewed by You from the inside out. Please reproduce Your character in me.

May Your life work itself into my day-to-day conduct. As I experience new life in Christ, help me to invite others to experience that new life, too – a life offered, purchased, and secured by the death and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus. Lord, I believe and I receive all of who He is for all of who I am.