

③Missional Community Life

INTRODUCTION | Renewal of Heart

In today's passage, Apostle Paul exhorts Christians to live a life contrary to the lifestyle of the Gentiles. The transformation of the heart is the result of the working of the Holy Spirit, and yet the Bible constantly reminds us to be active in putting off our old self and putting on the new self. Let's take a look at what kind of role the church and community group play in renewing a person to become more like Christ.

SCRIPTURE | Ephesians 4:1-16 (ESV)

¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ!- ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. ²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

QUESTIONS |

1. First of all, while Paul speaks of Gentiles walking "in the futility of their minds," he lists their symptoms as well as their lifestyles. What are they, and why are they futile(empty and vain)? (Ref. Job 20:12, 14)

Symptoms: (v18)

- ① Darkened in their _____
- ② Ignorance
- ③ _____ of heart

Lifestyle: (v19)

- ① Have become _____,
- ② Have given themselves up to _____
- ③ Greedy to practice every kind of _____

2. A person transformed by the Holy Spirit is said to be "created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" and has put on the new self (v24). How would you specifically describe the change taking place in a person who resembles the character of God pursuing what is righteous and holy? Also, have you had a similar experience of Holy Spirit working in your life before?

3. What kind of instruction does Paul give to the church in verse 25 and why does he do so? (Hint: The Body of Christ)

4. Let's suppose you noticed someone in the church (community group) who forgets the truth, and pursues after the things of this world walking in sin, would you genuinely be hurt(out of compassion) and try to approach him/her speaking the truth in love? On the other hand, if you were walking in sin, is there a brother or sister who will gently rebuke you for your spiritual restoration?

5. More than half of Christians in Japan do not attend church. Why would many of the Christians do not feel necessary to join the church? Also, how is that line of thinking unbiblical? (Ref. Hebrews 10:24-25, Matthew 5:14) Are you convinced that being part of the church (community group) is essential to your Christian life?

6. A church(community group) life is always accompanied by human relationship problems. However, how does the persevering work of the Holy Spirit attested in verse 30 challenge us to behave in the body of Christ? Also, how would our conduct with one another become a testimony to the people in Tokyo (or to the outside world)?

Reading (Reference)

Job 20:12, 14

¹² "Though evil is sweet in his mouth, though he hides it under his tongue,
¹⁴ yet his food is turned in his stomach; it is the venom of cobras within him.

Hebrews 10:24-25

²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Matthew 5:14

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

UPCOMING EVENTS |

GraceCity Gospel (22th)
Lunch Time Meeting: Marunouchi (24th), Otemachi (25th, 10/2), Kasumigaseki (10/1)
Tohoku (Ishinomaki) Volunteer Trip (26-28th)
Worship Service @ Hamarikyu Asahi Hall (28th)
Cross Road Bible Study @ Hamarikyu Asahi Hall (28th)
Bento Project (10/4)

*September is a community group month. Please take this opportunity to join a group.