

Ephesians 4:17–5:20

1 Read 4:17–24

- a What is immediately noteworthy is the apostle's emphasis on the intellectual factor in everybody's way of life. What does Paul mean? What practical implications of this statement can you think of?
- b Trace the downward path of evil depicted in 4:17–19. How does this sequence ring true in your experience?
- c 'They had been taught that becoming a Christian involves ...'. Look again at the passage and complete this sentence in your own words.
- d What are the two solid doctrinal foundations for Christian holiness which Paul has laid? What is the relationship between them?

2 Read 4:25–5:4

Paul now gives six instances of how Christian holiness works out in practice. What are they? What three features do they have in common?

3 Read 4:25

What reason does Paul give for putting away falsehood and speaking the truth? Can you think of occasions in your experience when this has been relevant?

4 Read 4:26–27

'... When we fail to [feel or express anger], we deny God, damage ourselves and encourage the spread of evil'. Has this been true of you recently? What should you have done? What safeguards does Paul give against anger becoming unrighteous?

5 Read 4:28

'It is not enough that the thief stops stealing' Why not? What more is required?

6 Read 4:29–30

- a What practical differences would obedience to 4:29 have made in your life over the last twenty-four hours?
- b What does 4:30 reveal about the Holy Spirit and our relationship with him?

7 Read 4:31–5:2

Are you aware of any of the attitudes of 4:31 in your own life? What antidotes does Paul recommend? How would they work out in practice for you?

8 Read 5:3–4

Christians have a bad reputation for being negative towards sex. Do you agree? Why? What does Paul say here to help us put God's gift of sex in perspective?

9 'Let no-one say that doctrine does not matter!' Why? How would you answer someone who claimed that 'doctrine is dull and irrelevant'?

10 '... holiness is not a condition into which we drift'. Look back over chapter 4 and the beginning of chapter 5. Identify the areas where you need to take action.

11 Read 5:5–7

Paul now moves on to give four reasons to help motivate his readers to live as those who belong to God's new society.

a Why should 5:5 'not be understood as teaching that even a single immoral thought, word or deed is enough to disqualify us from heaven ...'?

b How would you answer someone who claimed that 'God is too kind to condemn anyone'?

12 Read 5:8–14

What does Paul's use of the imagery of light and darkness teach us about living as Christians?

13 Read 5:15–17

What characterizes those who are 'wise'? How wise are you?

14 Read 5:18–20

a Paul gives 'four beneficial results of being filled with the Spirit'. What are they?

15 Spend some time thinking and praying about areas where you still need to '*put off your old nature*' (4:22) and '*put on the new nature*' (4:24).¹

¹ Stott, J. R. W. (1979). [*God's new society: the message of Ephesians*](#) (pp. 304–307). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.