

Ephesians 4:17-32

EPHESIANS GC DISCUSSION GUIDE

Ephesians 4:17–32

Putting Off the Old, Putting On the New

Big Idea

The gospel does not merely change what we believe; it changes how we live. Because believers have been made new in Christ, they must put off their old way of life and put on the character of Christ.

Main Theme

Christians are called to live differently because they have become new people through their union with Christ.

Opening Icebreaker

Have you ever had to learn a completely new way of doing something after years of doing it another way?

Transition: Becoming a Christian involves more than adding religious practices to our lives. It involves learning an entirely new way of thinking and living.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Paul describe life apart from Christ in verses 17–19?

Leader Notes: Notice the progression:

- Futility of mind
- Darkened understanding
- Alienation from God
- Hardness of heart
- Moral rebellion

Sin affects both thinking and behavior.

2. Why does Paul focus so much on the mind in this passage?

Leader Notes: Behavior flows from belief.

The battle for holiness begins with renewed thinking.

Cross Reference: Romans 12:2

3. What does Paul mean when he says, "That is not the way you learned Christ!" (v.20)?

Leader Notes:Christianity is not merely learning principles.

It is learning a person.

The gospel changes our identity and therefore our conduct.

4. What does it mean to "put off" the old self and "put on" the new self (vv.22–24)?

Leader Notes:Picture changing clothes.

Repentance involves both:

- Rejecting sinful patterns
- Embracing Christlike patterns

5. Why is simply stopping sinful behavior not enough?

Leader Notes:Paul consistently replaces sinful habits with godly habits.

The Christian life is not merely subtraction but transformation.

6. What examples of "put off" and "put on" do you see in verses 25–32?

Leader Notes:

Put Off	Put On
Falsehood	Truth
Sinful anger	Righteous responses
Stealing	Generosity
Corrupt speech	Encouraging speech
Bitterness	Kindness and forgiveness

7. Which of Paul's practical examples feels most relevant in today's culture?

Leader Notes:Many groups will identify:

- Speech

- Anger
- Truthfulness
- Forgiveness

Allow discussion of real-life examples.

8. What does Paul teach about anger in verses 26–27?

Leader Notes:Not all anger is sinful.

The danger comes when anger is nurtured, prolonged, or weaponized.

Discuss how unresolved anger gives Satan opportunities.

9. How can our words either build up or tear down others (v.29)?

Leader Notes:Words reveal the heart.

Encouraging speech is one of the most practical ways Christians display Christ.

Application: How might your speech change this week?

10. What does it mean to "grieve the Holy Spirit" (v.30)?

Leader Notes:The Spirit is a person, not merely a force.

Believers grieve Him when they live inconsistently with their new identity in Christ.

11. Why is forgiveness such an essential part of Christian living (v.32)?

Leader Notes:The motivation for forgiveness is the gospel.

We forgive because we have been forgiven.

Cross Reference: Matthew 18:21–35

12. Which command in verses 25–32 do you most need to apply this week?

Leader Notes:Encourage specific and actionable responses.

Ask:

- What needs to be put off?
- What needs to be put on?

Digging Deeper

Notice Paul's pattern:

- Put off the old self
- Renew your mind
- Put on the new self

Why are all three steps necessary?

Leader Notes: Lasting change happens when gospel truth reshapes the heart and mind, not merely behavior.

Gospel Connection

The commands in this passage flow from what God has already done.

Because Christ:

- Forgave us
- Made us new
- Gave us His Spirit

We can now live differently.

The gospel is not behavior modification; it is transformation through union with Christ.

Prayer Focus

Pray for:

- Renewed minds
- Victory over sinful habits
- Grace-filled speech
- Reconciliation in strained relationships
- Hearts that forgive quickly
- Growth in Christlike character

Closing Challenge

This week identify one specific "put off" and one specific "put on" from this passage.

Share it with the group and ask someone to pray for you and follow up during the week.