



The Week of February 12, 2023 This Church Has a Past Conversation Guide

Take-Aways

- **What we should believe:**
 - **About the Church:** (Ephesians 4:11-16) The church is a body of baptized believers who have been bought by the blood of Christ and are bound together by the Holy Spirit. The church is the body of Christ and exists to carry out His purposes on the earth.
- **What we should become:**
 - **Goodness:** (Galatians 6:9-10) I will seek to do good to others even at great cost to myself.
- **How we should behave:**
 - **I engage in the missionary task wherever I am:** (Matthew 28:18-20) Through both my words and actions, I engage in gospel conversations with those around me. I take the gospel around the world by going, give, pray and send others

Intro Questions

- Have you ever wanted to give up on church?
- What is the definition of the church?
- How have misconceptions about the Church kept people from finding God?

Ephesians 4:11-32

And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head – Christ. From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part.

Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thoughts. They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts. They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more.

But that is not how you came to know Christ, assuming you heard about him and were taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, to take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.

Therefore, putting away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. Be angry and do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger, and don't give the devil an opportunity. Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear. And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit. You were sealed by him for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.

- Make a list of all the things we are called to do as part of the church.
- Why was it necessary for Paul to give these specific instructions?
 - The church at Ephesus was one of the strongest churches planted by Paul but it obviously had struggles. Do you see these struggles in the modern church?
 - What struggles is the modern Church facing? How can this passage help us navigate them?
 - What other verses can serve to help the Church stand strong and do what is right?

Next Steps

- Read 1 Corinthians this week and look at the issues that the church was facing early on. What was the answer to these issues?
- Do some research on the good that the church has done throughout history.

- The church is more like a hospital than a trophy case. Take time to encourage someone from church you know is struggling this week.
- One of the best ways to strengthen and grow your faith is by faithfully reading the Bible!
 - Create your own plan for daily Bible reading and implement it.
 - Join the Celebration family and read through the book of Luke during the Processing Doubt series (<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/87>)
 - Search the YouVersion Bible App for a “Through the Bible” reading plan and commit now to read through the entire Bible.