

## Small Group Guide:

**\*\*Based on Ephesians 4:17-32\*\***

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### ## Opening Prayer & Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

**\*\*Ice Breaker Question:\*\***

Think about a time you had to completely change your wardrobe for a new season, job, or life stage. What was that transition like? How does that compare to the spiritual transformation Paul describes?

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### ## Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **\*\*The Gospel Call:\*\*** Our highest call and greatest challenge is to abandon our old life in the world and embrace our new life in Christ.

2. **\*\*The Downward Spiral:\*\*** Without Christ, there is a tragic progression: futile thinking → darkened understanding → alienation from God → calloused hearts → unrestrained lifestyle.

3. **\*\*Three-Fold Transformation:\*\***

- **\*\*Put Off\*\*** the old self (deliberately casting aside sinful patterns)
- **\*\*Be Renewed\*\*** in the spirit of your minds
- **\*\*Put On\*\*** the new self (created in God's righteousness and holiness)

4. **Daily Renovation:** The Christian life isn't a one-time wardrobe change; it's daily renewal and transformation.

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## ## Discussion Questions

### ### Part 1: Understanding the Old Self (15-20 minutes)

**1.** Paul describes the unbeliever's life as "futility of mind" - like spinning wheels in mud. What are some modern examples of this kind of empty, purposeless living you observe in culture today?

**2.** Read verses 18-19 again. Paul describes a progression of spiritual hardening. Have you ever experienced or witnessed this "callousness" forming in someone's heart? What does that look like practically?

**3.** The sermon mentioned that "it's not that people don't know of God; it's that they won't submit to Him." Why is submission to God so difficult for the human heart?

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### ### Part 2: Learning Christ (15-20 minutes)

**4.** Paul says we "learned Christ" - not just learned ABOUT Him. What's the difference? How would you describe your own journey from knowing about Jesus to actually knowing Him?

\*\*5. The sermon compared spiritual transformation to iron in a blacksmith's forge - repeatedly heated and hammered. What "furnace moments" or trials has God used to reshape you into His image?\*\*

\*\*6. Paul calls us to "put off" the old self and "put on" the new self. Why is it necessary to do both? What happens if we only focus on stopping bad behaviors without replacing them with godly ones?

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### ### Part 3: Practical Living (20-25 minutes)

\*\*7. Paul gives five specific areas of transformation. Let's discuss each one:\*\*

\*\*a. Truthful Speech (v.25)\*\* - Why does lying fracture fellowship? Share an example of how speaking truth (even difficult truth) has built trust in a relationship.

\*\*b. Holy Emotions (vv.26-27)\*\* - How can we be angry without sinning? What's the danger of letting anger linger overnight?

\*\*c. Honest Labor (v.28)\*\* - Notice the progression: from stealing → to working → to sharing. How does the gospel transform us from takers into givers?

\*\*d. Sanctified Speech (v.29)\*\* - The sermon described words as "seasoning salt" that enhances grace. When have someone's words given you grace? How can we be more intentional with our words this week?

\*\*e. Sensitive Spirit (vv.30-32)\*\* - What does it mean to "grieve the Holy Spirit"? How does bitterness wound the Spirit who sealed us?

**\*\*8. The sermon emphasized three qualities at the end:\*\***

- **\*\*Kind (chrēstos)\*\*** - actively useful to others
- **\*\*Tenderhearted (eusplagchnos)\*\*** - deeply compassionate from within
- **\*\*Forgiving (charizomenoi)\*\*** - freely releasing others as Christ released us

Which of these three is most challenging for you personally? Why?

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#### ### Part 4: Personal Application (15 minutes)

**\*\*9. The Life Change Challenge states: "The Christian life isn't a one-time wardrobe change; it's daily renovation." What does daily spiritual "re-clothing" look like practically in your morning routine?\*\***

**\*\*10. Look back at verses 25-32. Which specific behavior is the Holy Spirit convicting you about right now? What would it look like to "put off" that old pattern and "put on" the new this week?\*\***

**\*\*11. The sermon mentioned that "each morning is an opportunity to re-clothe your soul in grace, truth, and holiness" - even after we mess up. How does this truth give you hope? How does it guard against both legalism and license?\*\***

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#### ## Practical Application Exercise (10 minutes)

**\*\*Personal Inventory:\*\***

Take 3-5 minutes of quiet reflection. On a piece of paper, draw two columns:

**\*\*PUT OFF (Old Self)\*\* | \*\*PUT ON (New Self)\*\***

- What specific attitudes, habits, or patterns do I need to remove? | What Christ-like qualities do I need to intentionally cultivate?

Share one item from each column with the group (only what you're comfortable sharing).

**\*\*Accountability Partnership:\*\***

Pair up with someone in the group. Exchange one specific way you want to "put on" the new self this week, and commit to checking in with each other before the next meeting.

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**## Closing Reflection & Prayer (10 minutes)**

**\*\*Reflection Question:\*\***

The sermon ended with Isaiah 61:3 - "He gives beauty for ashes, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Where in your life do you need Jesus to exchange your "ashes" for His "beauty" right now?

**\*\*Group Prayer Focus:\*\***

- Thank God for the gift of new life in Christ
- Confess areas where we're still clinging to the "old garments"
- Ask the Holy Spirit for daily strength to live as new creations
- Pray for specific transformation in the areas discussed tonight

- Pray for each other's accountability partnerships

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## ## This Week's Challenge

### \*\*Daily Wardrobe Check:\*\*

Each morning this week, before you get dressed physically, take 2-3 minutes to "dress" spiritually:

1. Confess any "old garments" you're still wearing
2. Ask God to renew your mind
3. Intentionally "put on" one quality from verses 25-32
4. Journal briefly about your experience

### \*\*Memory Verse:\*\*

"Put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." - Ephesians 4:24

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## ## Additional Resources for Deeper Study

- Read the entire book of Ephesians this week to see the full context
- Study Colossians 3:1-17 (parallel passage on putting off/putting on)
- Reflect on Romans 12:1-2 regarding mind renewal
- Consider reading: "The Gospel According to Paul" by John MacArthur or "Putting On the New Self" by Jerry Bridges

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**\*\*Leader's Note:\*\*** Create a safe, grace-filled environment where people can be honest about their struggles. Remind the group that transformation is a process, and we're all works in progress. The goal isn't perfection but progression toward Christlikeness.