

Gospel
DNA

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to community group! We believe that people experience and grow in their faith when they get to spend time reflecting on God's Word, and also hearing from other Christians. That's what we're hoping for tonight. As we get started, here are some things happening in the broader life of the church:

• **Women's Retreat | November 1st & 2nd**

Registration is open for our annual Women's Retreat. It'll be a time of worship, learning, prayer, and fellowship! You can come for the whole time, just Friday night, just Saturday, both, you can spend the night, or not. In any case, we hope all the women of New City will be able to join us! You can register via the Church Center App. If the cost is an obstacle let one of the church staff know and we'll make sure we get you there regardless.

• **Thanksgiving Peanut Butter Drive**

It's October which means: PEANUT BUTTER FOR THANKSGIVING! Each Thanksgiving City Gospel Mission provides food for more than 400 families in need in their annual Thanksgiving Exchange. Our part is to collect 15oz containers of peanut butter (note: ONLY 15oz, please). Please drop off in the Commons when you are around the building.

• **IHN (Interfaith Hospitality Network) | November 17th-23rd**

Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) is a family homeless shelter located in East Walnut Hills that partners with the faith community to provide shelter and food for families in need. Each week different congregations in the city host 4 families for the week, starting Sunday at 5p to the following Sunday at 6a. In most cases this is done at IHN's own facility. New City will be hosting at Grace Place, which is located in College Hill: 6037 Cary Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45224. New City will begin hosting families starting Sunday evening, November 17th through Sunday morning, November 24th. This is a great opportunity for New City to serve those who are experiencing homelessness in our city. There are several ways to serve: Greeting/Dinner Volunteers, Activity Volunteers, Overnight Hosts, Food Provision. Check out the event on the Church Center App for more information on how you can help.

• **New City Guys Barbekubb | Sunday, November 17th 5p**

DATE CHANGE: we'll gather on Sunday the 17th rather than Friday the 15th. Gentlemen, come join us at the church building for an evening of food, fire, and pointless yard games like [Kubb](#), [KanJam](#), and [Cornhole](#). If you've got a favorite yard game, like the old dangerous classic Jarts, feel free to bring it along. Bring your own beverages and a side to share. Dan Sudlow will be smoking a copious amount of pork for us so RSVP on the Church Center App.

How Do We Change?

(Ephesians 4.17-24)

Open up with a prayer

OPENER: Is there some point in your life you think of as a “turning point?” Tell us about it. Or, if that seems too dramatic, tell us about a season of your life where things really changed for you.

STUDY/DISCUSSION

We believe that people experience and grow in their faith when they get to spend time reflecting on God's Word, and also hearing from one another. That's what we're hoping for tonight. This Fall we're in a series called Gospel DNA, and tonight we're looking at a passage from the Apostle Paul on “change.”

>> READ >> Ephesians 4.17-24

1. There are two metaphors for Christian growth in this passage? What are they? What do they tell us about a life with God? (HINT: see v.17 and v.22, 24)
2. The Apostle Paul insists that the Ephesian Christians make a break with a former way of living. How is that former way of life characterized?
3. On Sunday Josh said that repentance involves a “change of direction.” Has that happened for you? What was that like?
4. In verse 23 Paul talks about being “renewed in the spirit of your minds.” What role does the mind play in a changed life?
5. What habits or spiritual disciplines could be helpful in “renewing your mind” (see also Romans 12.1-2)?
6. John Calvin wrote, “God assigns to [believers] a race of repentance, which they are to run throughout their lives.” What implications does this have for our own discipleship? for the way we deal with one another?
7. Look again at verses 20-21. How is Paul's method *different* than behavior modification or moralism?
8. What's one takeaway from this passage or from our discussion tonight?

PRAY

Take some time and pray together. This can be done together as a whole group, or in smaller groups. A couple tips: 1. Be intentional with your prayer time. For example, you may set a timer on your phone during the sharing time so that you get to prayer rather than spend all of the time sharing. 2. Either take notes yourself or have someone else write down all the prayer requests so that you can share them with the group and so that you yourself can be praying for your group members.

Leader's Notes (from Gospel Transformation Bible)

[Eph. 4:11–16](#) Because Paul makes so much of our positional holiness in Christ and our secure inheritance through the Spirit, believers sometimes make the mistake of thinking it is improper to speak of growth or of differing levels of attainment in the Christian life. But Paul clearly teaches the importance of Christian maturity and our need to grow into it.

This maturation, which is aided by gifted teachers and leaders (v. [11](#)), is described in a variety of ways: as the fullness of Christ (v. [13](#)), as doctrinal stability (v. [14](#)), as growing up into Christ (v. [15](#)), and as strengthening the body (v. [16](#)). It is important to note that Paul is describing much of this growth corporately, not just individually. The church is Christ's instrument not only of world outreach and renewal but also of his sanctifying work in believers' own lives through Christian example, worship, and accountability. All of these contribute to our growth in grace. The good news of the gospel is not just that we can be saved by Christ but that we are being renewed into the image of Christ (v. [24](#); cf. [Rom. 8:29](#); [2 Cor. 3:18](#); [4:4](#)).

[Eph. 4:20](#) When we embraced Christ and received him, it was not to continue on in the same futile ways of thinking. If our lives do not differ from the lives of unbelievers, we have not truly learned of Christ. When Christ calls us to himself it is always a call to leave the world, die to self, and live for God. Let us never accept a false gospel which says we can have Jesus as Savior without also having him as Lord. It must be both or neither.

[Eph. 4:22–24](#) What does it look like, then, to have genuinely “learned Christ”? Paul mentions three things (using three infinitive verbs). Learning Christ means we are renewed in the spirit of our minds (v. [23](#)), we put off the old self (v. [22](#)), and we put on the new (v. [24](#)). These exhortations get to the heart of the New Testament view of sanctification. The moral imperative for the Christian is to “be who you now are.” We are new creations in Christ, so let us turn away from the old ways of the world and live like new people of the Spirit. When we sin, we betray our new identity as sons and daughters of God. Our obedience does not create our holy status but reflects it, honors God by it, and aids others through our expression of it.