

# GROWTH GROUPS WEEK 5

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 12TH

## EXPRESSING HOPE

THE SPIRIT OF  
THE CHURCH

### GROWTH GROUP WINTER 2017 – EXPRESSING HOPE WEEK 5 – FEBRUARY 12, 2017 - EPHESIANS 4:29-5:2

#### GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

- 1) Did your parents have rules about using bad language when you were growing up?

#### SETTING THE CONTEXT

It is not certain when Paul wrote the letter of Ephesians but it seems to have been written around 60 AD when Paul was in prison in Rome. The city of Ephesus was the most important city in western Asia Minor. It was at the center of a major trade route and had become a major commercial center. It also was the site of the temple for the Greek goddess Diana/Artemis. Paul had made Ephesus the hub of his ministry for about three years so he was well connected with this community.

In this passage of Scripture Paul talks about the way in which we use our words. We know that God spoke as he created and that speech is an incredible gift from God. Speech distinguishes humanity from the rest of creation. Thus, Paul knows there is power in language.

The Greek word that Paul uses for “evil” talk is the word the Greeks used to speak of “rotten” trees or fruit. Literally, Paul is saying let no “rotten” talk come out of your mouth. Instead we are to use our words to build up one another. Our words should be filled with grace and we should want to encourage one another. Proverbs 12:18 says ‘The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing’.

Paul brings up the topic of grieving the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, Paul may be concerned that our words not only cause damage in Christian community, but they also offend and grieve the Holy Spirit.

Paul goes on to list six attitudes and actions we are to get rid of. It is these things that must be rejected in Christian community. Instead, we are to put on the attributes of Christ. We are to follow God’s example. We are to be compassionate and literally “act in grace” towards one another because this is what God has for us through Jesus. Paul reminds his readers that their sacrificial love becomes a fragrant offering and acceptable sacrifice to God



# EXPLORING THE TEXT

## Read Ephesians 4:29-5:2

<sup>29</sup>Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. <sup>32</sup>Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. <sup>5:1</sup>Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children <sup>2</sup>and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

- 2) What do you think it means not to let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth?
- 3) What do you think it means to grieve the Holy Spirit?
- 4) In verse 31 there is a list of actions and attitudes that are not pleasing to God. Which of these is the hardest to avoid? If none of these actions or attitudes apply to you, is there another behavior you want to work on avoiding?
- 5) Share a story about when you have experienced, or witnessed, someone else being unexpectedly kind or compassionate.
- 6) What does it mean to walk in the way of love and to be a fragrant offering to God?

## BRINGING IT HOME

- 7) Where do you need to work on being more kind and compassionate?