

Mar 2, 25 "Putting on the New Self" – Ephesians 4:17-24
(Leader's Guide)

1. What are some of the things Paul is warning his readers to avoid in our passage? Do any of them strike harder than any others for you?

Futility of mind; darkness of understanding; ignorance; hardness of heart; callousness; sensuality; greed for impurity.

2. Why do you think Paul uses such strong language here?

Paul is offering a strong warning to his readers, many of whom are Gentiles who have left behind a pagan lifestyle: now that you know a different way, don't return to the old, futile way of life, because that way leads nowhere good.

3. What do you think 'hardness of heart' means?

Feel free to play around with different aspects of this from your group members – there is lots of room for exploration. One answer could be that it is the natural aging process in a life that isn't 'walking in balance', filled with the Holy Spirit. Mental and spiritual stiffness and inflexibility can set in, and a protectiveness against the pain of the world.

4. The Greek word translated 'greedy' literally means 'appetite for more', and is also translated elsewhere as idolatry? Where do we see greed in our society? In ourselves? How is that linked with idolatry?

Our culture and economy is largely driven by a quest for 'more', which leads to disaster in a finite world. Whatever we put at the centre of our lives and ascribe meaning to is what we worship, or aside 'worth-ship' to.

5. What are some ways that you have actively chosen to 'put off the old self'? Share as you feel comfortable.

Try to think of an example to share with your group. This can be great for accountability, but don't push any sharing that doesn't feel appropriate.

6. Chesterton's quote from Orthodoxy says "We have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we." What do you think of the idea of the Father being younger than we are? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not? How does that fit with being renewed in the spirit of your mind?

The word 'renewed' is akin to being made young again – like rejuvenated is in English. The concept of the Father being younger than we is a great one for discussion!