

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,  
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,  
To GROW as followers of Jesus.  
- CG Mission Statement

## Worship: John 15

*(Here is a passage to help your group as you worship. You can go through it together or in groups in meditation and/or in prayer)*

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Read John 15 using the prayer practice of Lectio Divina. Read the passage aloud 3 times. After each reading, spend a few minutes reflecting. After the first reading, open yourself to the presence of God. On the second reading, listen for a certain word or phrase that stands out to you. On the third reading, listen to what God's invitation might be for you.

## Icebreaker

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When is the last time you changed your mind about something (not spiritual)? Was it hard? How long did it take?

## Text for Discussion: Ephesians 4:22-24

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Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

## Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

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*"Why do we spend our lives striving to be something that we would never want to be? If only we knew what we wanted. Why do we waste our time doing things which, if we only stopped to think about them, are just the opposite of what we were made for?"* Why do Thomas Merton's words ring so true for us?

Each of us is bruised by life, but we are also bruised by an awareness of our sins and limitations. We are mired in these habits of thought and action. We are stuck. God calls us out of this way of life and into another – to put off the old self and put on the new self (Eph 4:22-24). We are to have *how* we see things transformed and renewed. We need a new mindset with new values, changing what we used to tell ourselves, "Good job." But to do this, we must first accept that we have competing voices within us, clashing to tell us how to look at the world, how to judge ourselves, how to live. How do we distinguish between these voices? What is the old self, and why is it so destructive?

The Old Self is our ego – the need to be *better than, more than, recognized for*. We have enthroned this desire for self-justification. We don't see anything wrong with it because it comes so naturally to us. But it is our enemy. It corrupts and corrodes us from within. The desires of our ego deceive us, telling us lies about the way things are, what really matters, and what will make us happy. Our aspirations tempt us to be self-centered; our success tempts us to think too highly of ourselves; our failure tempts us to be ashamed. We follow these lies with worshipful devotion, not realizing that in doing so, we move further and further away from what we were made for: a life defined by what Christ has done for us, not one that seeks justification through our own accomplishments.

We learn to put off this old self through recognition and repentance. How do we measure our success and failure? What are we sacrificing ourselves to pursue and protect? What fruit is our life producing? Every day, these questions drive us, and our answers reveal which voice we are listening to. For we either value the Kingdom of God where Christ is king, or we value the Kingdom of Self where we are enthroned. When we abide in our own resources, the fruit is exhaustion, discouragement, fear, pride, anger and anxiety. When we live out of Jesus' love for us, the fruit is love, joy and peace. As this truth sinks in and we repent of our ego we will begin to live into the new self that God has given us.

## Guiding Question of the Week

*(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)*

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**How can we put to death our deceitful desires and live the life God intends for us?**

## Questions for Discussion

*(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)*

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- 1) What stands out to you after reading Eph. 4:22-24?
- 2) What are the values you are measuring your life by? How do you measure success and failure?
  - What do you rush to protect when it is threatened?
- 3) **Guiding Question: How can we put to death our deceitful desires and live the life God intends for us?**
  - What are some ways of thinking that you would identify as from your "old self"? Some patterns of thinking that you struggle with? What are some practices?
  - What drives you in life?
- 4) Is your life producing the fruit you were made to produce (see John 15 and Gal. 5:22-23)?
  - How can we help each other strive to follow Christ with an undivided heart?
- 5) How can we, as a community, help one another live the life God intends for us?
  - What practices can we put into place this week that would enable us to put off your "old self"?

## Praying for One Another

*(Here are some ideas from the study to help focus your time in prayer as a group. Use by themselves or along with other prayer requests.)*

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- Thank God that He loves us and gives us grace, even when we struggle with our "old self".
- Ask God to help us identify our deceitful desires and change our hearts so that we can live the lives that God intends for us
- Pray that God would be working in our lives, developing the fruits of the Spirit in us.

## The Relationship Project

Do you want to revolutionize relationships within your CG? Is there a desire to cultivate healthy relationships in your personal life (i.e. marriage, friendship, dating, family, work, etc.)? We invite you to join the Hargraves on Saturday, Feb 4 (9am-12pm) as they illuminate the reasons for, and solution to, the relationship patterns that make us feel stuck and hopeless. This will be an interactive time of gaining new insights into healthy relationships of all kinds. Your CG can even attend this event together! Register here:

<https://pacificcrossroads.tpsdb.com/OnlineReg/708>