

TALK FOUR: Our Individual Lives as Living Witnesses

Ephesians 4: 17 – 6: 9!

Introduction:

BUZZ GROUP: Put a number from 1-10 as to how spiritual you think each of these activities is (1 being not at all spiritual and 10 being incredibly spiritual!).

Going to the pub with friends; giving a talk in pastorate; attending a meeting at work; playing sport; being in the worship band; washing up; watching T.V.

Briefly feedback.

The point of this exercise is that everything is spiritual. Everything that we do, say, get involved in etc is part of our life with Christ, and it is therefore spiritual. Our whole lives are a part of our life with Christ. And therefore it is our whole life that matters, every area of our life that counts when it comes to living as children of light.

KEY POINT: In this passage, Paul encourages, more than that, he implores the Ephesians and us to walk in the way of love, just as Jesus himself has demonstrated. He calls us to live as children of light.

So how do we do this and what does this look like?

1. Lifestyle – Let your everyday life reflect Christ:

In this passage, Paul looks closely at the changes that occur when we cease to live in the darkness – he particularly focuses on what we should no longer be putting into ourselves, and what should no longer be coming out of us.

BUZZ GROUPS: Look through the passage – list the things that Paul mentions that he doesn't want us to be putting into ourselves and what he doesn't want to come out of us. Feedback these lists.

ILLUSTRATION: Try to think of a story in your own life where you have seen a change in your behaviour as a result of becoming a Christian/God working in your life.

KEY POINT: As we walk in the light of Christ, our everyday lives, what we do, say, and think should all begin to reflect the light of Christ and be directly the opposite of the darkness we have been living in.

KEY VERSE: Ch. 5 v. 8-10: 'For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.'

2. Relationships – Let Christ's love infiltrate your relationships:

ILLUSTRATION: Think of a time when you have had to choose to love someone, despite it being a cost to yourself.

One of the fundamental aspects of living as children of light is loving others.

KEY VERSE: ch. 5 v. 1 -2: 'Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children 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.'

KEY POINT: Paul lists sacrifice as a key component to loving one another. So often we can fall into the trap of thinking that love is something that we give to people when we *feel* it – but actually often loving others come through us sacrificing our own desires and feelings. Real love costs, it often involves making a choice to love when we feel like doing the total opposite! When we do this, we begin to see a glimpse of what it meant for Christ to love us on the cross.

3. Work – Work as though you were working directly for Christ:

ILLUSTRATION: Tell a story about a time when perhaps you found it hard to see your work as working for the Lord.

KEY VERSE: ch. 6: 7-8: **Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people,** because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

The Message version is helpful: 'Don't just do what you have to do to get by, but work heartily, as Christ's servants doing what God wants you to do. And work with a smile on your face, **always keeping in mind that no matter who happens to be giving the orders, you're really serving God.'**

It can be so hard to keep an attitude of working for the Lord on an everyday basis, particularly if our boss and those we work for aren't Christians.

KEY POINT: Paul doesn't suggest that we work as though we were working for the Lord as a helpful tip to help us work better. He says it because regardless of who we work for, we ultimately are working for the Lord in all we do.

APPLICATION: **How do we do this?** It would be impossible to achieve this standard of working on our own – we have to ask for the Spirit's help with this!

MINISTRY IDEA: Ask the spirit to examine the 'hard-drives' of our lives and show where perhaps we need to repent. Repentance means 'to turn and walk in the opposite direction'.