

Sermon Series: Why Do I Need the Church?
To be used with: We Encourage One Another
Sermon Title Possibilities: Becoming Together
Scripture: Ephesians 4:17-32

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “*Why Do I Need the Church?*” this sermon explains that we need to encourage one another to reject our old life and realize our new life, to crucify our old nature and cultivate our new nature. In this regard, we all need encouragement.

Introduction: In one of his leadership talks, John C. Maxwell said, “Encouragement is the oxygen of the soul.” The Christian life can sometimes seem to be unlivable, unrewarding, and unbearable. Other times the flesh seems to have such a demand on us. It is during these times that we need to encourage one another.

After sharing that the church has been graced, gifted, guided, groomed, and gathered to grow, the apostle Paul challenges us to grow out of our old ways of the flesh and grow into our new walk of faith. This never-ending transition requires encouragement from other saints.

1. Let’s Encourage One Another to Evade the Rebellious Life. (v. 17-19)

In these verses, people without Christ are described as having futile minds, hard hearts, callous emotions, and impure practices. Every person without Christ is naturally born in sin, bent towards sin, and bound by sin (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 3:10-18; 5:12). The prophet Jeremiah said that the heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9).

We must remember that we not only have a new man, but we also have an old man. Paul says, “Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer live as the Gentiles live.” Let’s encourage one another and pray for one another that we won’t have futile minds, hard hearts, callous emotions, and impure practices.

2. Let’s Encourage One Another to Embrace the Regenerated Life. (v. 20-21)

When Paul speaks of coming to know Christ, hearing of Him, and being taught by Him, he’s speaking of being regenerated—being changed by the Spirit of God, after hearing the Word of God, and placing your faith in the Son of God (Romans 10:9-17). We ought not be inclined toward or involved with the things that consumed us before Christ came into our hearts. This is not automatic, and it is

not always easy. That's why we must encourage one another to embrace the regenerated life.

Let's encourage each other to abide in Christ, to trust in Christ, to grow in Christ, and to serve Christ. With each other's encouragement we can live the abiding life (John 15:1-8), the abundant life (John 15:9-11), and the abounding life (John 15:12-16).

3. Let's Encourage One Another to Engage the Renewed Life. (v. 22-24)

In these verses we are instructed to put off our "former way of life." We used to function through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). We were dead in sin (Eph. 2:1), directed by Satan (Eph. 2:2), and dominated by our selfish desires (Eph. 2:3). Now, we must encourage one another to put off the former way of life and "the old man," and to engage in the renewed life.

Engaging in the renewed life is constantly putting on "the new self." We put on the new self by ingesting the truth of Scripture and implementing the truth of Scripture. Friend, as we engage in Scripture and obey Scripture, we see Christ more and more. Consequently, the more we behold Christ, the more we become like Christ (2 Cor. 3:17-18).

4. Let's Encourage One Another to Exemplify the Refreshing Life. (v. 25-32)

Paul gets practical in this section. He says, instead of lying, let's speak truth. Instead of stealing, let's give to those in need. Instead of escalating, let's be angry but do not sin. Instead of being resentful, let's forgive those who offend us, and instead of speaking filthy words, let's speak faith words that builds up the hearers.

Taking this high road is not always easy. That's why we need to encourage one another to exemplify the refreshing life. Our lives are like elevators, we are either taking people up or taking people down. Let's be so refreshing in the presence of other people, that we take them up and not down.

Conclusion: Let's encourage each other to evade the rebellious life, to embrace the regenerated life, to engage the renewed life, and to exemplify the refreshing life. Encouragement—we need it—for it truly is the oxygen of the soul.

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