



SERIES: Beyond Nice

Week 2: Grown Up Relationships	
<p>Connect</p>  <p>5 – 10 min</p>	<p>Intergenerational Interactive option: Divide into teams of 2-4 people. Each team gets 3 sheets of A4 paper (or equal amounts of newspaper) and a roll of sticky tape or masking tape. Who can build the tallest freestanding tower in 3 minutes? Put the timer on and break out the tape measure!</p> <p>Question option: When you were a kid, what did you want to do when you grew up? Did you ever do anything like that, either for work or fun?</p>
<p>Gratitude</p>  <p>10 – 15 min</p>	<p>What is one way you have felt loved this week? Pray and give thanks for these different expressions of love and the truth that God is Love. (1 John 4:8)</p> <p>Read Romans 8:35-39 out loud together.</p> <p>Dare Share: How did you see God at work as you took on the Dare to Go Beyond last week?</p>
<p>Discover</p>  <p>25 min</p>	<p>God gave us one another to help us mature and “attain the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13) or as the Message version puts it, become “fully alive like Christ”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Eph 4:11-18. Does this sound appealing to you? Why or why not? <p>Growing up in our relationship with God and one another means we need to put off some things and put on others. Swapping out what’s damaged and damaging for something new and life giving.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Eph 4:22-32. Make two lists: 1) What we are instructed to put off, 2) What we are instructed to put on. Include a note on the “why” or motivation of each if indicated. What strikes you from these lists? • With the help of the “Digging Deeper” notes attached, take a closer look at concepts in the verses highlighted, one at a time. Discuss how have you seen these things impact positively and negatively on relationships.
<p>Act</p>  <p>10 min</p>	<p>What action is God asking of you in response to what you have just discovered in God’s word? Is there something that that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to you as an area for personal change? Take time to pray for one another and a move of the Spirit in these areas. Be as specific as you are comfortable to be.</p> <p>Dare To Go Beyond</p> <p><i>Each week of this series we ask you to accept a challenge “dare to go beyond” in your daily relationships. Give it a go during the week, and report back next week.</i></p> <p>The Dare: Intentionally share something with someone in need this week. It might be a material thing, but it also could be something like a life building word, a kindness, or forgiveness.</p>

Digging Deeper

Adapted from Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, "Ephesians" by Francis Foulkes.

Ephesians 4:25 – 32

In this section the apostle turns from general terms used in the verses before to speak quite specifically of the sins that are to be put off, and the positive qualities or types of action that must be found in the Christian's life. There is a pattern of negative prohibition, positive command and motivation in these verses.

Verse 25: "Speak truthfully to your neighbour" is a quotation of Zechariah 8:16, but with a significant little change. In Ephesians the preposition "to" is more accurately translated as "with", in line with the inter-personal relationships that are emphasised in the following clause "for we are all members of the same body." For his argument against falsehood, Paul does not simply appeal to the moral law that his readers knew well. Rather he insists that Christians break the bonds of love and fellowship by which they have come to be bound when they try to deceive one another. Without openness and truth, there can only be disunity, disorder and trouble in human community.

Verse 26-27: Anger. Another mark of the old nature is plain bad temper, unjustified anger. Here Paul quotes the Old Testament again, Psalm 4:4 "In your anger do not sin." Christians must be sure that their anger is that of righteous indignation, and not just an expression of personal provocation or wounded pride. Paul has a sure knowledge of human nature and is aware that what begins as righteous anger 'against sins' very easily becomes perverted and is turned against others. Therefore he adds the wise practical instruction "do not let the sun go down on your anger." The word used here is more like "provocation", the personal resentment that righteous anger can become when harboured and brooded over in the heart. Passionate feelings against people or their actions are not to be kept long lest they break down the love that seeks to bring good out of evil.

Verse 28: Honest, useful work. Instead of robbing others of the fruit of their labour, Christians are to work for their own living. More than that, they are to work to be able to give to those in need. The Christian motive in earning is not merely to have enough for oneself and one's own, and then perhaps for comforts and luxuries, but to have in order to give to the needy. Giving becomes the motive for getting.

Verse 29: Helpful talk. The Greek adjective *sapros*, translated in the NIV as "unwholesome" basically means "rotten" and then a derived sense of "worthless". Unwholesome talk is talk that is rotten and spreads rottenness like bad fruit, worthless and leading others to think on the worthlessness. The test of conversation is not just "Am I keeping my words true and pure?" but "Are my words being used to impart grace to those who hear?" The utterance of the Christian is to be characterised by the same grace as the Lord's own words and the love and blessing which they conveyed. (eg. Luke 4:22)

Verse 32: Kindness, Compassion & Forgiveness. Kindness is love in practical action – "the disposition of mind which thinks as much of its neighbour's affairs as it does of its own." Compassion (or tender-heartedness) is added to emphasise that acts of kindness require a heart of sympathy and love prompting them. Paul knows that the obstacle to kindness and compassion is often the sense of wrong done to one, or a grievance nursed; so he goes on to speak of forgiving one another. There is to be a real likeness between the forgiveness of God and the Christian's forgiving.