

James 1:19 NLT - 19 Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.

Philippians 2:3-4 NLT - 3 Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. 4 Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

Walking worthy of our call requires both personal discipline and a shift in our “cultural mindset”. Leading with humility and gentleness and putting others first can only come from a changed heart.

Paul says make every effort to be united and bonded together in peace. *Where do you see an opportunity for you to look out for the interests of others and bolster the bonds of peace in your neighborhood, your family, or in the weekend service?*

WRAP-UP

The world may disagree with our beliefs, but they should be inspired by our love. We are challenged and blessed to have many generations within the body of believers. God has brought us together as one body and all of us need each of us. Living life together can get messy, but God calls us to relentlessly pursue unity. That means being quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger. It means putting the needs of others ahead of our own. We can do it because Jesus did it for us, and our response to His calling in our life is to align with him so that we are a reflection of the love of God in this world.

Memory Verse

Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. -Ephesians 4:3 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: _____

Challenge- It is easier to give “I’m Against” list than “I’m For” list. What is on your “I’m for” list?

“Generations” Chapters #1

INTRODUCTION

On any given weekend, New Life has attenders from newborn to nearing one hundred. Being a multigenerational community is difficult. But we are a richer expression of the kingdom when we learn how to live life together. What if we didn't view our generational world views as a division but as chapters adding to our understanding of the story of God each of us is telling. New Life is blessed to be celebrating our 70th anniversary this year. It is a fitting time to reflect on who we are, and where we are heading.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

How long have you attended New Life?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. Generations

Looking around in our service this weekend you probably saw five different generations represented. Of course, there are many ways to define generations, but here is one to use as a framework:

Builders (1929-1945)- Defined by the Great Depression and WWII;
Values: Practical; Generous; Disciplined; Dignified; Faithful

Baby Boomers (1946-1964)- Defined by JFK assassination; Civil Rights Vietnam; Cold War; Values: wisdom, strong work ethic, team work

Gen X (1965-1976) – Defined by AIDS epidemic, Crack epidemic, Iran-Contra affair, Energy crisis; Values: Honesty, Hopefulness

Millennials or Gen Y (1977-1995)- Defined by 9/11, Columbine, Y2k, Facebook's +social media, the Great Recession; Values: Confidence, lead with passion, tech savvy, optimistic

iGen or Gen Z (1996-TBD) – trends include diversity, technology

Which generation is yours? Can you name individuals from each of the other four generations?

The story of God's people is messy when it comes to some intergenerational connections.

Acts 15:36-39 NLT - 36 After some time Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit each city where we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new believers are doing." 37 Barnabas agreed and wanted to take along John Mark. 38 But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in their work. 39 Their disagreement was so sharp that they separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus.

What happened in Acts 15 when Barnabas wanted to give a young Christian, John Mark, a second chance in ministry?
What's your experience with churches divided over generational issues?

Challenges arise when the younger generation doesn't respect the older and the older generation resents the younger.

1 Peter 5:5 NLT - 5 In the same way, you younger men must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, serve each other in humility, for "God opposes the proud but favors the humble."

1 Timothy 4:12 NLT - 12 Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.

Which do you feel is most challenging for you, to respect the older or accept the younger generation?

2. All of us need Each of us

1 Corinthians 12:12, 26-27 NLT - 12 The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. ... 26 If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. 27 All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul reminds the church that they are all part of one body. One aspect of living life together as a unified body involves managing our expectations. We all feel things are "going right" when it meets our expectations. But what happens when there is a gap between our expectations and reality?

What is one thing at church you have noticed that has adapted to a generation other than your own? What is one thing that you feel is working well for you and others in your generation?

We are going to find that the various generations of our church have different styles and expectations. But when we recognize that our body is made up of many unique parts, without any of which we would be less complete, then we can be glad that others are honored in our services and ministries, and not feeling resentful because we were not the ones being honored.

3. We Live Our Calling

Ephesians 4:1-4 Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. 2 Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. 3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. 4 For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.

Our "calling" has somehow become understood to mean our vocation, however the word used for calling¹ refers especially to God's invitation to salvation. We are "called" to salvation and we are "called" to eternal glory with God in heaven. Nothing we have done or will do on our own qualified us; it is the gift of God's grace. But the way we live our lives should be in response to that calling. We don't walk worthy so that God will love us, but because He does love us.

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At the heart of Paul's encouragement to walk worthily is the way we treat one another.

As Christians, whatever you do, think, speak, love, or react should align with Christ. What are three things James says believers must do? Jas 1:19