

Cultivate Reflection Guide

Different: How to be Unique in a Conforming World Pastor Matt Brown | October 1-2, 2022

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NEW SERIES: It can be hard to stand up for what's different, so if we want to live differently, we need to see life through a new lens. The apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians is a reminder and a challenge to us that we live differently because we belong to Jesus.

Our Reflection Guide is a tool to help you grow spiritually wise, relationally kind and emotionally healthy. Use it to start a REAL conversation in community or to cultivate God's word into your life through personal bible study. Choose the questions that encourage you to reflect and respond to what we're learning. Pair it with your bible, a journal or any resource that helps you learn. *It's not about getting through the content, but getting the content through you!*

Reflect: Pastor Matt challenged us to ask ourselves each week, how we want our lives to look different because of what we've learned. How are you personally challenged to stop conforming and instead live differently?

Read: [Ephesians Chapter 1](#). While written for the church of Ephesus, Paul opens his letter with reminders for all followers of Jesus, that we have been richly blessed by God's grace and kindness. As you read, underline, highlight or make note of the blessings – present and future – that are yours through Jesus.

Respond:

1. The lens Jesus offers shows us the **best version** of ourselves.
 - [Read Ephesians 1:4-5](#). Because of Jesus, how does God see you?
 - Uniquely creating you has given God great pleasure, and He doesn't compare you to anyone. How do you find yourself comparing the life you're living to the lives of those around you? This could be anywhere you're looking, longing or even conforming to what someone other than Jesus says you should be.
 - In contrast, what are you doing OR could you be doing differently to build the life God has set before you? This might look like growing, serving, giving or sharing. If you need accountability to live differently, be specific: I will stop _____ and instead I will _____.
2. The lens Jesus offers reveals the **secure future** God has for us.
 - [Read Ephesians 1:9-11](#). God's word promises us that our story ends in victory. But pain, fear and doubts can leave us discouraged and defeated. Is there anything, past or present, that is threatening to steal your hope, faith or security in God's promises to you?
 - Choose a verse from Ephesians 1 to remind you of a promised blessing that is yours in Christ. Write that somewhere you'll see it and cultivate it into your life – read it, believe it and claim it's power as your own. When discouragement comes, turn to the truth of God's word!
3. The lens Jesus offers opens our eyes to the **kindness** of God.
 - [Read Romans 2:4](#). God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance, not indulgence. Think about a time when remembering God's wisdom and kindness kept you from indulging in your own instincts or desires. What did God lead you to do instead? How did that save you from hurting yourself, God or others?
 - If rather than turn from sin, you've indulged, compromised or gone your own way, confess that to God right now. Be real and remember, His kindness has already purchased your freedom and forgiveness.

Prayer: Jesus, I'm living in a world that wants me to live like everyone else. But I'm your daughter. I'm chosen, loved and set apart by your promises and so, I want to live differently. I want others to see the difference in me, so that they see you in me. Forgive me for the comparisons I've made, for looking to other people or other things to validate and fulfill me. Instead, give me the courage and resolve to build the life that you have for me. I trust that I am safe and secure in your hands. Amen.