

becoming



vGroup Study



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Becoming: vGroup Study

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SELF-AWARENESS ALONG THE JOURNEY OF BECOMING

Who are we becoming? For the 'Becoming' series, each week in our worship gatherings Pastor Dustin has focused on this question by taking one of the virtues listed in 2 Peter 1:3–11 and exploring how we as Christians are to become a people that model that virtue.

How are we becoming who God wants us to be? What does that process look like? In our vGroup gatherings, the focus has not been on the *who*, but rather the *how* of becoming. The process is analogous to the undertaking of a long journey. In the third 'Becoming' vGroup video, Pastor Dustin talks about the importance of self-awareness along the journey of becoming.

- Every Christian's spiritual journey has the same starting point and the same destination. However, that journey is a continuum meaning that we are not all at the same point along the journey. Why is it important to be 'self-aware' of our general position along the journey?
- Self-awareness not only deals with our location along the journey but also deals with the self-knowledge of our created uniqueness. In what ways might understanding how God has uniquely created us (e.g. our personalities, spiritual giftedness) help foster growth along the journey?
- How does a self-awareness of our unique life experiences and the context of our upbringings affect how we relate to God along the spiritual journey of becoming?

Self-awareness acts as a diagnostic tool of sorts—like a car's dashboard. It allows us to know where we are and if we are going in the right direction. It allows us to avoid any dangerous pitfalls along the road. For the apostle Paul, self-awareness and self-knowledge were vital to a believer's development into a mature follower of Christ. Paul speaks to this in Ephesians 4:17–24.

¹⁷Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰But that is not the way you learned Christ!—²¹assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in

him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²²to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:17–24

- In verses 17–19, how does Paul describe the ‘Gentiles’ (non-believers)? What does he say about their self-awareness/self-knowledge concerning the things of God?
- Paul challenges the Ephesian Christians that they ‘*must no longer walk as the Gentiles do*’ (v. 17). What is Paul implying about the Ephesian Christians ‘*former manner of life*’ (v. 22)?
- How does Paul explain the good news of Jesus in verses 20–24? For Christians, why is our self-awareness of our new identity in Christ so key to our spiritual transformation?
- What metaphor is Paul using when he talks about putting off the ‘old-self’ and putting on the ‘new self’?
- How does Paul describe the ‘old self’? In contrast, how does Paul describe the ‘new self’?

In the verses that follow (4:25–5:22), Paul goes to great lengths to contrast the ‘old self’ with how a Christian is to live practically in the ‘new self’. For example, instead of stealing, a Christian should now perform honest work so that he/she can give generously to those in need (4:28). Or a Christian should no longer use abusive or foul language, but rather let your speech always be praiseworthy to the Lord (5:4). We all are guilty of sin, but if we are honest with ourselves, we often are prone to engage in certain sins more consistently. Paradoxically, those sins have blinded us to their destructive presence in our lives.

- Do you think that we as individuals have proclivities to particular sins? On the flip side, do you think that we each have certain inclinations to the various acts of service? How does self-awareness help us to disengage with sin and engage in service to others?

Like the Ephesian Christians, we also were once dead in our sins, darkened in our understanding, and living lives opposed to Jesus and his kingdom rule. We were outside of his kingdom and cut off from the family of God. But now, through faith, the apostle Paul declares we share in Jesus' resurrected life and have become members of his covenant family. As such, we are now called to live lives worthy of this great calling; this is the spirit journey of becoming.

Self-awareness and self-knowledge are key to progress and growth along the journey. They keep us moving forward towards our ultimate hope of eternal life with Jesus. They challenge us to make effective use of our time, talents, and treasures for the advancement of Jesus' kingdom. And just as important, self-awareness helps us avoid the dangerous pitfalls along the journey that stunt our growth into full Christian maturity.

- Where do you think you are along the continuum of your spiritual development?
 - Infancy, childhood, adulthood, or mature adulthood?
 - How does being self-aware of your spiritual development challenge you towards growth?
- God has uniquely equipped you for service in His kingdom. How can we become more self-aware of how has God uniquely made us?
 - Prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and renewal of our minds.
 - Take spiritual gift assessments and personality surveys.
 - Seek godly counsel. Our mentors, friends, and families know us well. Seek their wisdom concerning what your talents and giftedness might be.
 - Serve in your local church. There is no better teacher than experience.
- Spiritual habits (e.g., prayer, Bible reading, meditating on God's word, etc.) are tools for spiritual growth. In what ways does our personality drive how we in engage in these habits?

- Think about the sins of the 'old-self' that you may be prone to commit, even when you know they are destructive. What are some practical ways that you can 'put off' those proclivities to the 'old-self' and don the 'new-self' this week?