What Are We Becoming?

Conviction Without Contempt Week One
Following Jesus When We Disagree

Study and Discussion Guide
Main passages: Ephesians 4:15-16; 4:20-5:2

Begin by reading **Ephesians 4:1-5:2**. Keep your Bible open and point to the words that shape your answers. Work through the guide over several days, or choose a few questions for one conversation. Families can take one section at a time and use examples from home, school, or friendships

1. Let Jesus shape your response

Read Ephesians 4:1-3, 11-16, and 20-24. For question 1, also read Ephesians 2:8-10.

1. Compare 2:8-10 with 4:1-3. What is the relationship between what God has done for us and the way Paul calls us to live? What difference does this make when we struggle to change?
2. In 4:11-16, what is the goal of the church's growth, and who contributes to it? What does this picture suggest about our responsibility for one another's growth?
3. Read 4:14-15 together. What dangers concern Paul? How does the surrounding passage help explain why truth and love belong together?
4. What stands out about Paul's expression "learned Christ" in 4:20? How do verses 21-24 explain what learning Christ involves?
5. Trace the changes described in 4:22-24. What is to be left behind, what needs renewal, and how is the new self described? Where might you need that renewal in the way you handle disagreement?
6. Think about a conversation you find difficult. What do you tend to assume about the other person before listening? What could you say or do to check whether those assumptions are accurate?

2. Use your words for their good

Read Ephesians 4:25-31.

7. What reason does Paul give for truthfulness in verse 25? How can a false statement about one person affect the wider community?
8. Suppose you share a claim about someone and later discover it is false. What would taking verse 25 seriously require? What makes correcting yourself difficult when the claim fits what you already suspected?

9. Read verses 26-27 alongside verse 31. What do these verses show about the dangers of anger? How could you address anger promptly while giving a difficult problem the time it needs?
10. In verse 28, what replaces stealing, and why? Compare this with verse 29. What do these commands teach us about the change Paul wants beyond simply stopping a harmful behavior?
11. Look closely at verse 29. What should guide our choice of words? Imagine someone has broken a promise: what could you say that addresses the wrong and helps the person take responsibility?
12. What does verse 30 reveal about God's Spirit and his relationship with these Christians? How does this deepen your understanding of why our conversations matter to God?

3. Give the mercy you have received

Read Ephesians 4:32-5:2.

13. What reason does Paul give for forgiving others in 4:32? How might remembering your own need for God's forgiveness affect the way you correct someone or receive correction?
14. Notice how Paul describes these Christians in 5:1, and what Christ has done in 5:2. How does being loved by God shape the call to imitate him? What kind of love does Jesus show us here?
15. Imagine you still believe your position is right, but recognize that you spoke cruelly. What would an honest apology sound like? How could you continue addressing the issue while practicing the kindness described in this passage?
16. How could a church, group, or household respond when someone admits a mistake in a way that encourages both honesty and responsibility? What might forgiveness look like when trust needs rebuilding or boundaries remain necessary?

4. Put it into practice together

17. Choose one conversation in which you need to follow Jesus more faithfully. Which part of this passage speaks most directly to your part in it? Name one specific response you will practice.
18. Who could help you prepare for that conversation, pray with you, and talk afterward about what you learned? How could you offer that same help to someone else?

Close in prayer: Thank God for his mercy in Christ. Use something you noticed in the passage to ask for help with the response you have chosen.