

Word Notes Sunday 26/02/17
Clare Reed – NCC United: Red Cards

Summary *(read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday, listen to the podcast if you missed the talk <http://www.newmarketcommunitychurch.co.uk/podcasts.htm>)*

Key Text: Ephesians Ephesians 4: 17-32

Paul tells us about some “red cards” – behaviours which threaten our unity. Footballers may be prone to argue or be upset by red cards, but we know we are chosen, loved and accepted by God so we don’t need to feel condemned by these challenges.

In verses 17-19 Paul highlights how living in a world without God’s values, we lose our sensitivity to what is Godly or ungodly behaviour. We are now on God’s team, so we need to retrain our tastebuds to be sensitive. We retrain ourselves by putting off the old behaviours, and putting on new ones. If we only put off the old, as soon as we are faced with a challenge we will be prone to put the old right back on again. So we must also put on new behaviour, learn new habits.

Paul gives us four things to put off, and tells us what we should put on instead:

Falsehood, Truth - We may think “I don’t lie”, but we all have things we prefer to keep hidden. As those who are secure in God’s love and members of his body we don’t need to keep the things we are ashamed of hidden. Put on truth, start by telling God the truth about yourself, then find those you trust and be honest with them.

Bitterness, forgiveness - Anger in itself is not sinful. Anger is a right emotional response to wrongdoing. But anger that is allowed to stew turns into ongoing bitterness. We should be quick to forgive, choosing to put our anger aside

Stealing, giving - Stealing comes from a heart that is focused on what “I want” or “I deserve”. Instead we put on a heart that is focused on what “I can give”.

Rotten, growing - The word “unwholesome” is only translated this way in this passage. Everywhere else it is used in the Bible it is translated as “rotten” as in rotten fruit. Rotten fruit smells –if someone else heard what you are saying, would they wrinkle their nose? Rotten fruit is squishy –if someone prodded you or challenged you on what you are saying, would they find it has good, solid substance, or would it squelch to reveal a rotten heart? Rotten fruit spreads – be careful who you share with, choose those who will hold you accountable not those who will catch the rot.

Application *(this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)*

How do you feel when you are challenged about your behaviour? Are you more likely to become defensive, or despairing? Look back to Ephesians 1 and find verses that might help you feel secure when you are challenged.

For each of the behaviours Paul tells us to put off, how do they threaten unity in the church?

When we have lost our sensitivity it can be hard to recognise falsehood, Sinning in anger, Stealing and unwholesome talk. Can you describe what each of these might look like in our lives?

At the end of the talk, Clare challenged us to choose one of these behaviours to focus on “putting off” for the next month. If you are comfortable doing so, share with another person in the group which behaviour you are focussing on. Pray for each other in this and commit to checking in with each other next week to see how you are getting on.

Witness *(this is the bit where the cell talks, plans and prays about how to share the Good News)*

How is our witness affected by either not putting off or putting on the above? Is this an encouragement or hindrance to your personal witness?