



Bible Study for Local Use Embraces Mutual Interdependence with the Indigenous Church (Sacred Circle)

Introduction

From the beginning, the deep listening process of the Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG) has been rooted in scripture. Every listening group session began with Bible study.

In that same spirit, you will notice the prominence of scripture in the Transformational Aspirations video series being released over Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 on anglican.ca/changingchurch.

Each video has an accompanying Bible study for use in dioceses, parishes, and other Anglican contexts across the country.

We encourage repeated reading of the scripture passage out loud as you consider each question in turn. We also encourage open sharing, uncritical listening, and welcoming acceptance of each participant's contributions.

A new Bible study will be made available each month on anglican.ca/changingchurch, alongside the release of each video in the Transformational Aspirations series.



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Lead a Life Worthy of Your Calling *Ephesians 4.1-32 (excerpts, NRSV)*

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, 'When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.' ... The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by

people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love...

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil.... Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Commentary from Archdeacon Val Kerr

A grandfather was walking in the woods with his grandson. As they walked along, every so often the grandfather would give his grandson a teaching about life. At one point, he said to the boy: "A fight is going on inside me. It is a terrible fight between two wolves. One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other wolf is good – he



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is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too.” The grandson thought for a few minutes and then asked: “But Grandfather, which wolf will live?” The old man replied simply: “The one you feed.”

We learn many things throughout our lives, and we do this learning in many ways. I share this teaching with you to highlight how important it is for us to listen to others, to be honest, open, and truthful with everyone, including ourselves. In this Epistle, Paul talks about how we should live our lives as followers of Christ. As we all know, this isn’t always easy, especially if we have been wounded, slighted, or damaged by someone. It is important to remember, as someone once said, “hanging onto hurt, anger and hate is like taking poison and expecting the person you are having difficulties with to die.”

As children, we were taught the Seven Grandfather Teachings: honesty, humility, respect, wisdom, bravery, truth, and love. I was very fortunate to have grandparents who lived their faith and taught us these “truths” by the way they lived their lives. I learned many years later that these teachings, which many know as the Seven Grandfather Teachings, came from the Anishinaabe peoples. In my community, which is Haudenosaunee, they were not called by that name; however, they were still part of the teachings we were given. I share them with you to highlight how closely they fit with what Paul is talking about to the people of Ephesus. It is always good for us to remember as Christians to what we are called, and to whom we belong, remembering to always “speak the truth in love.”

Questions for discussion

1. How have we been, or how are we being, equipped to explore and understand our calling and the gifts we have been granted?
2. How might we use the teaching shared to inform our faith?
3. Ephesians mentions several gifts that are given to different people. Similarly, there are seven different Grandfather Teachings. How can we each discern our individual calling, in a way that brings us together in our diversity?
4. What are some of the ways we can achieve or maintain unity, in all that diversity? What are the signs and characteristics of unity Paul is encouraging us to seek out and celebrate?



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