

date: 9.14.14

Walking Dusty...

teacher: Scott

When I went back and read through Ephesians, I got hung up on 4:18 which says, “They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.” It made me reflect on times in my life when my hardened heart led me to deeply regrettable sins. Now, as a believer, there are still areas of my heart that are hardened, but God does not reveal every area of wickedness in our lives all at the same time. Slowly, patiently, mercifully, He exposes those parts of me that are not in line with His holiness, as demonstrated by Jesus’ example.

As Scott described, it’s important for us to move toward holiness, but how? Have you ever met someone you admired from afar, but as you got to know them, you noticed parts of their character or their speech or actions that kind of turned you off? I think that’s our human nature. But I have never felt that way as I read the Bible and learn about God’s character, His Son’s actions, or the Spirit’s teaching. In fact, when I read I’m amazed at the patience, the love, and the pursuit of our hearts that God shows. Sure, there are things I don’t understand, but that doesn’t turn me away from being drawn into a relationship and a desire to know Him more.

But it wasn’t always that way. If you’re a parent, I think you can relate to this example. When my kids ask for something and I know it’s good, then I want to give it to them. I believe God is the same way. For example, if I ask God to give me a desire to read Scripture, I think He is pleased and wants to give it to me. But, as Scott pointed out, we need to make an effort. For the most part, I don’t think God “magically” transforms our hearts without a little work from us. If I want to see a change, then I can “be made new in the attitude of (my mind)” (Ephesians 4:23) by listening to Christian music, reading Scripture, praying, attending Bible studies, and being in community with other believers. Because we are called to be holy – set apart – we need to take the first step. But first I have to want to see change in my life, and that is the challenge, isn’t it?

Questions to Consider:

The Greatest Commandment is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37, 39)

In what areas is my heart hard?

What am I doing to make my mind new?

How am I moving toward living a holy life, regardless of what I am doing or where I am working?

Verses mentioned in the message: Genesis 1:31, Leviticus 11:45 and 20:26, Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 4:19, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 4:17-5:17, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, 2 Timothy 1:7-9, Hebrews 12:11, 1 Peter 1:13-16 and 5:8