**ST LUKE’S HOME GROUP QUESTIONS - 124/5/15**

**“MORALITY – PERSONAL PREFERENCE OR PROVIDENTIAL PROVISION?”**

**Ephesians 4:15 - 5:2 and Matthew 5:13-20**

**Possible questions from which to choose:**

1. “What is it that most shapes your lifestyle, thinking, outlook, behaviour, choices, decisions, morality? What determines our ‘moral compass’ or ‘world view’? Is it our upbringing, education and what we read? Or is the powerful influence of the media and advertising, what is on television, what is fashionable, or popular role models, more powerful and significant? Or is it the opinion and behaviour of the world around us and particularly of our colleagues and friends?” Discuss these questions posed last Sunday?
2. *Read Romans 12:1,2.* Are we, and is our morality being conformed to or shaped by all sorts of subtle pressures that our secular culture dictates? How can we be Christianly counter-cultural?
3. What did you make of the various “isms” mentioned, or contemporary influences and idolatries that shape our culture? In what ways are Christians and many churches affected by some or all of the following and *“winds and waves”* of false teaching, or idolatries of our age (Ephesians 4:14)?

INDIVIDUALISM or ‘SELFISM’ – “Each one for themselves; ‘it’s my life isn’t it for me to do what I want? If it feels good and right for you, then do it’.”

NARCISSISM – Being excessively interested in or totally absorbed in one-self and one's appearance.

POPULARISM – “If the majority think that, then it must be right. Let’s go with the flow”.

CONSUMERISM – “Happiness depends on what you have and own; so why not get as much as you can for yourself?

MATERIALISM – “Science proves that there is nothing but matter and what you can see. Human beings are no more than their component parts.”

HEDONISM – “The pursuit of personal pleasure is the way to live; eat, drink and be merry while you can”.

PLURALISM – All philosophies, religions, moralities and ways of life are equally true and valid.”

SECULARISM – Religious observance and morality are private matters, not for the public & political arena.

RELATIVISM – “Make your own choices, because everything is just opinion, and of equal value.”

1. What is meant by the call to *‘put on’* and to *‘put off’* in Ephesians 4:20-32? How can we be *“made new in the attitude of your minds” (*v23)?
2. Paul gives six instances in 4:25 to 5:4 of how Christian holiness and morality works out in practice. What are they, and what features do they have in common? Which do we find most difficult?
3. What does 4:30 reveal about the Holy Spirit and our relationship with him?
4. Jesus makes clear in Matthew 5:17 onwards that the Old Testament Law is not abolished for his followers, because he came to fulfil it and to sharpen it (See 5:21-48). Some of the detailed rules for the Jewish people were abolished, but the basics commands of the moral law are underlined and amplified by him. What would we say to people who believe that the Ten Commandments are all very negative and judgemental, and that the primitive culture of those days is completely different from our own?
5. Is it right to say that God is interested in relationships not rules; in loyalty not legalism?”

Peter LeRoy – 24/5/15