

A Study of

Ephesians



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Introduction

Overview

The church at Ephesus had been a labor of love for the Apostle Paul. He had lived there more than two years, teaching and training this church how to follow Jesus together (Acts 19). Years later, Paul was arrested and imprisoned because his gospel message offended Jewish authorities in Jerusalem (Acts 21). At some point during his imprisonment, Paul sat down to write a letter to his friends in Ephesus, reminding them of the things he taught them.

Unlike so many of Paul's letters, there does not seem to be one big problem he is writing to address. As a result, Paul gets to pull back and speak to some larger themes. He reflects on God's purposes for the church, what He has done in Christ, and what God calls the church to live out.

One key theme throughout the book is that God's end goal is to build a community, not just individuals. It is easy to read a letter like this and think, "What does it mean to me personally?". However, Ephesians is written to a church, a community, a family. Paul fills this letter with metaphors that describe not just "who I am in Christ" but "who we are in Christ." We together are a temple for the Lord (2:19-21). We are the body of Christ (4:12). We are the bride of Christ (5:25-32). While Ephesians will have a lot to say about how I personally follow Christ, my walk with Jesus is always part of the people of God.

This new community God is building in Christ presents an alternative to the broken communities around us. Something radical happens when people who have formerly walked in all kinds of darkness and evil are redeemed and somehow learn to live in love and peace together! In fact, Paul says that this is his purpose, that “through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (3:10). God’s wisdom is put on display to angels when the church lives out its purpose.

As we walk through this letter together, we will explore how God’s purposes for us go beyond time and space (1:3-23), beyond the power of evil and sin (2:1-10), beyond ethnicity and nationality (2:11-22), and even beyond our own knowledge and understanding (3:1-21). This has implications for how we live. We value the various gifts and people God brings to us (4:1-16), we live transformed lives (4:17-5:21), we experience transformed relationships (5:22-6:9), and we walk in new spiritual power (6:10-24).

The church often gets a bad reputation. It *is* broken. It has failures and mistakes worth lamenting and correcting. But, the church is God’s project – Christ’s body and His bride. Christ loved the church and gave His life for her. The church is His masterpiece. And we are part of that.

How to use this Journal

Purpose

The accurate study and application of God's Word, the Bible, is a foundational part of the Christian life. The challenge of 2 Peter 3:18 is to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," and that is exactly what the Ephesians Study Journal is designed to help you do. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul instructs the young pastor that "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." A careful, intentional study of Ephesians will help you mature as a follower of Jesus. It will help you "be thoroughly equipped for every good work." It will help you express the real Jesus where you live, work, and play.

Plan

The Ephesians Journal is designed to help you understand and apply the Scriptures accurately to your life using the Inductive Bible Study Method. This method helps you make key observations in a passage of scripture, interpret it within its proper context, and then apply it to daily life. For a brief introduction to Inductive Bible Study Method, The Training Center of Fellowship Bible Church has prepared a helpful video to get you started. You can watch the video at fellowshipnwa.org/Ephesians or simply scan the QR code with your smart phone camera to access the link.

Additionally, The Training Center offers Personal Bible Study, a class that goes much deeper into this method of study. If you have not yet taken this class, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible to experience the riches that come from intentional exploration of God's written Word.

Visit trainingcenternwa.org/events to sign up for the next available Personal Bible Study class or contact our Training Center team at training@fellowshipnwa.org for more information.

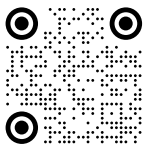
Particulars

The Ephesians Study Journal is laid out in weekly sessions with resources for daily engagement to help us all grow together.

Each session includes the following:

- Contextual introduction to aid in the study of the week's passage.
- Scripture passage for the week formatted with plenty of space to record insights and responses.
- Study prompts to systematically and thoughtfully engage with the passage to help us learn together.
- Notes page for recording insights from teachings as we worship together.
- Discussion questions to help you process the passage in personal and small group settings as we gather together.

We invite you to use this journal in your personal time with God; take it to your small group meeting; bring it when we gather for worship on the weekends. Our hope is that you will find this journal useful wherever you study Ephesians, and that you will discover how Paul's instruction and encouragement to the church at Ephesus can guide and encourage you today.



Introduction Video to Inductive Bible Study

Scan QR code to watch



Visual Inspiration

Red is a powerful color, bringing stark imagery of hurt, pain, blood, and sacrifice. Before we even knew of Him, Jesus lovingly gave His life for us, shedding His blood for our redemption.

A wax seal signifies a guarantee from the sender. As such, the Holy Spirit guarantees a promise of salvation, a future, and an inheritance for all who believe in Christ.

Who we are in Christ



Week

01





Ephesians 1:1-14

Who we are in Christ

Insights

This epic passage shows how believers fit into a plan that stretches from before time began to the completion of all things. It highlights the goal of that plan and what believers receive as a result. The entire paragraph from verse 3 to verse 14 comes in the form of a blessing or praise to God. He deserves praise for what He has done. This praise is Trinitarian, tracing the work of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Two ideas are kept in dramatic tension. First, we are blessed. The list of benefits that believers receive fills this paragraph. We have spiritual blessings, a chosen identity, a destiny of adoption, redemption, forgiveness, abundant grace, revelation of God's mystery, inclusion in Christ, the seal of the Holy Spirit, and a guarantee of our ultimate salvation. It is almost overwhelming, and each individual blessing deserves reflection and celebration. However, one could easily get the wrong idea that this paragraph is all about us. The other side of the coin is God's own purpose and glory. God receives praise. He is the source. He loves. He chooses. His will is what matters. He is wise and understanding, and everything comes together under Christ. We are most blessed when we step into a story that is all about Him.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Day One

Underline any words or phrases that stand out to you and circle any people listed.

Day Two

Note any descriptions of God in the passage. What do these verses reveal to us about God?

Day Three

Notice all the ways Paul describes the church in Ephesus. What does this reveal to us about the Church?

Day Four

Note how many times Paul uses the phrase “in Christ.” What is the significance of repeating this phrase?

Day Five

In your own words, summarize the main point of this passage and discuss it with someone today.

Day Six

What response does Paul seem to desire for his readers? How should you respond today?

Day Seven

What is one spiritual truth you see in this passage? Who is someone you can share that truth with?

Daily Prayer for this Week

Lord, we thank You for blessing, choosing, adopting, redeeming, including, and sealing us, Your church. We praise You, giver of every good and perfect gift. May we recognize Your many gracious blessings and share them with those whom You place in our path.

Amen.

What is your favorite song? Is there a specific lyric that stands out to you?

Paul begins Ephesians with what some believe to be a poem or song of praise to God detailing His gracious work to save us.

Read Ephesians 1:1-14

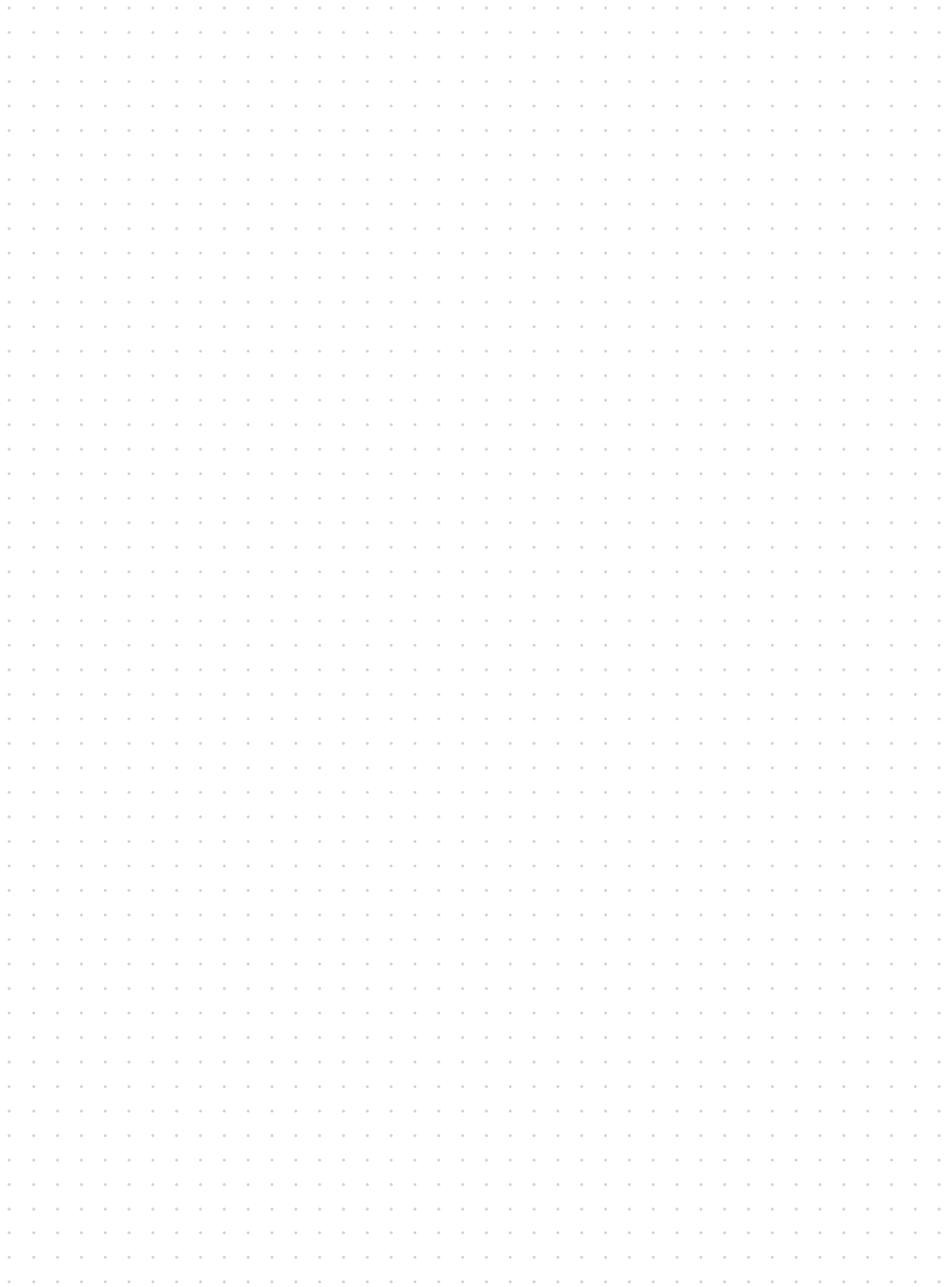
Is there a specific verse of this song that stands out to you or holds special significance? Why?

What do you notice about the different actions taken by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the process of our salvation? How does this help our understanding of the “three-in-one” God?

How could knowing that you’ve been chosen and adopted into God’s family give you a sense of identity, belonging, or purpose?

In verse 10, Paul says that God’s purpose is to “unite all things in heaven and earth under Christ.” How would you describe a world united under Christ? How have you experienced unity in Christ?

In what ways can we give God praise as we go about our lives? Consider ending time as a group by singing the Doxology together.





01

WHO
WE ARE
IN CHRIST



Who Christ is in us

17



Visual Inspiration

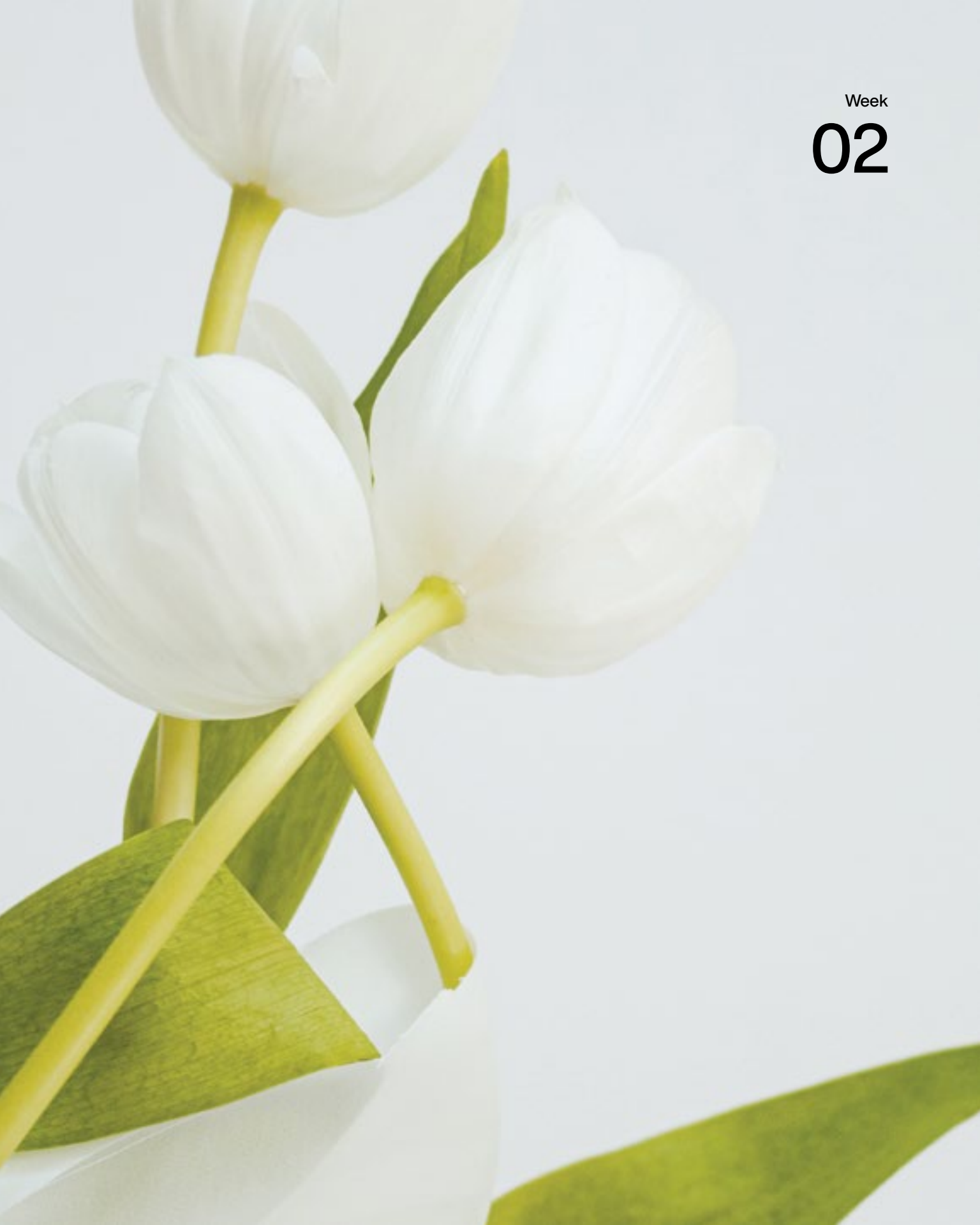
As a seed must be buried to produce new life, Christ's death and burial brings forth rebirth and beautiful growth. This work of new creation is accomplished through the powerful union of the Trinity, three-in-one, united in essence and purpose.

Through the power of God, Christ shed His garments from the grave and rose to a new glorious life. The Spirit enlightens our view to see the pure, holy Savior and brings us to knowledge of salvation.



Week

02





Ephesians 1:15-23

Who Christ is in us

Insights

After reflecting on the great glory of God working in us, Paul reflects more specifically on his prayer for the believers in Ephesus. There is a progression. First, Paul acknowledges what he is grateful for, namely the faith and love he sees in this church (15-16). These two qualities of faith in Christ and love for God's people stand out as the crucial qualities Paul looks for in all believers.

Second, Paul prays for the Ephesians. His prayer centers on his desire for them to know God better. He wants them to know the hope, inheritance, and power they have in Christ. This last thought leads Paul to reflect on the power we have in Christ, which is the same power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him as ruler of heaven and earth (19-23). If this power is in us, what could stand against us? This prayer sets a model for how to pray for all believers.

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Day One

Observe the passage and underline any words or phrases that stand out to you. Take note of any nouns or verbs.

Day Two

Are there any characteristics or qualities about God that you see in these verses? Circle them in the passage. Why might these be significant?

Day Three

Notice how Paul prays for the church in this passage. What does this tell us about the church?

Day Four

What does Paul mean when he prays that “the eyes of your heart may be enlightened”?

Day Five

In your own words, write out the main idea of this passage. What is Paul trying to communicate?

Day Six

How do you think Paul wants his readers to respond? What is a specific way you can apply this passage today?

Day Seven

List out five followers of Jesus who you know and pray verses 17-22 over them.

Daily Prayer for this Week

Lord, thank You for inviting us to know You more. We worship You for Your incomparably great power and love for us. May the eyes of our hearts be enlightened, so that we may know and worship You more intimately and enjoy Your presence.

Amen.

Can you think of a movie where good came from disastrous circumstances?

It is likely that those receiving Paul's letter would have been facing difficult circumstances and opposition to their faith. Paul himself was in prison as he wrote this.

Read Ephesians 1:15-23

As Paul was thankful for the Ephesians, who is someone whose love and faith has encouraged you during a difficult time? Thank God for them.

Rather than praying for the Ephesians' circumstances to change, Paul prays for the Ephesians themselves to be changed. Has there ever been a time when you asked God to change your circumstance, but instead He worked through the circumstance to change you for the better?

How might God be doing a work in your life right now to increase your knowledge of Him and your understanding of the hope we have in Christ?

Consider using Paul's prayer to close your time together, replacing all the times it says "you" with the name of someone in the group.





02

WHO
CHRIST
IS IN US







Visual Inspiration

As a sculpted bust is still and lifeless, so is the human condition apart from Christ. We are made in His image, but without Him we are hollow, spiritually dead, and broken in our sinful condition.

Like flowers growing in unlikely spaces, through a saving relationship with Christ, we are reborn and new life emerges from the shell of our former selves.

Made alive in Christ

Week

03





Ephesians 2:1-10

Made alive in Christ

Insights

In chapter 1, Paul speaks in cosmic terms about Christ's rule and accomplishments. By beginning chapter 2 with the phrase "as for you," Paul brings it back down to earth and applies Christ's work directly to believers. This work comes through a transformation that moves believers from death to life, showing how Christ's cosmic rule matters to our personal salvation as well.

Three themes come together: rule, life, and behavior. We were once under a different ruler ("the ruler of the kingdom of the air"), but now Christ reigns ("And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus"). We were once spiritually dead ("you were dead in your transgressions and sins"), but God made us alive ("God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ"). This results in changed behavior. We once lived in disobedience ("when you followed the ways of this world"), but now we live to glorify God ("created in Christ Jesus to do good works"). All of this is nothing we earn or accomplish; it comes as a gift of God when we trust Him.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Day One

Observe the passage and underline any words or phrases that stand out to you.

Day Two

Notice any repeated words, phrases, or themes in this passage. Why might these be significant?

Day Three

What does this passage reveal to us about God and His purposes? How is God described?

Day Four

What does it mean to be “God’s handiwork”? How does this change how you view yourself, others, and God?

Day Five

Write out any questions you have about this passage. What are some conclusions you can draw?

Day Six

What ideas are emphasized in the passage? In your own words, write out the main idea.

Day Seven

How do you think Paul wants his readers to respond? What is a specific way you can apply this passage today?

Daily Prayer for this Week

Lord, we thank You for Your great love, kindness, and Your grace that gives us life. We praise You for this gift of grace that saves and transforms. May we, as Your handiwork, walk in the good things You have planned for us today.

Amen.

Think of a gift you've received that still has special significance to you. Who gave it to you and why was it special?

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

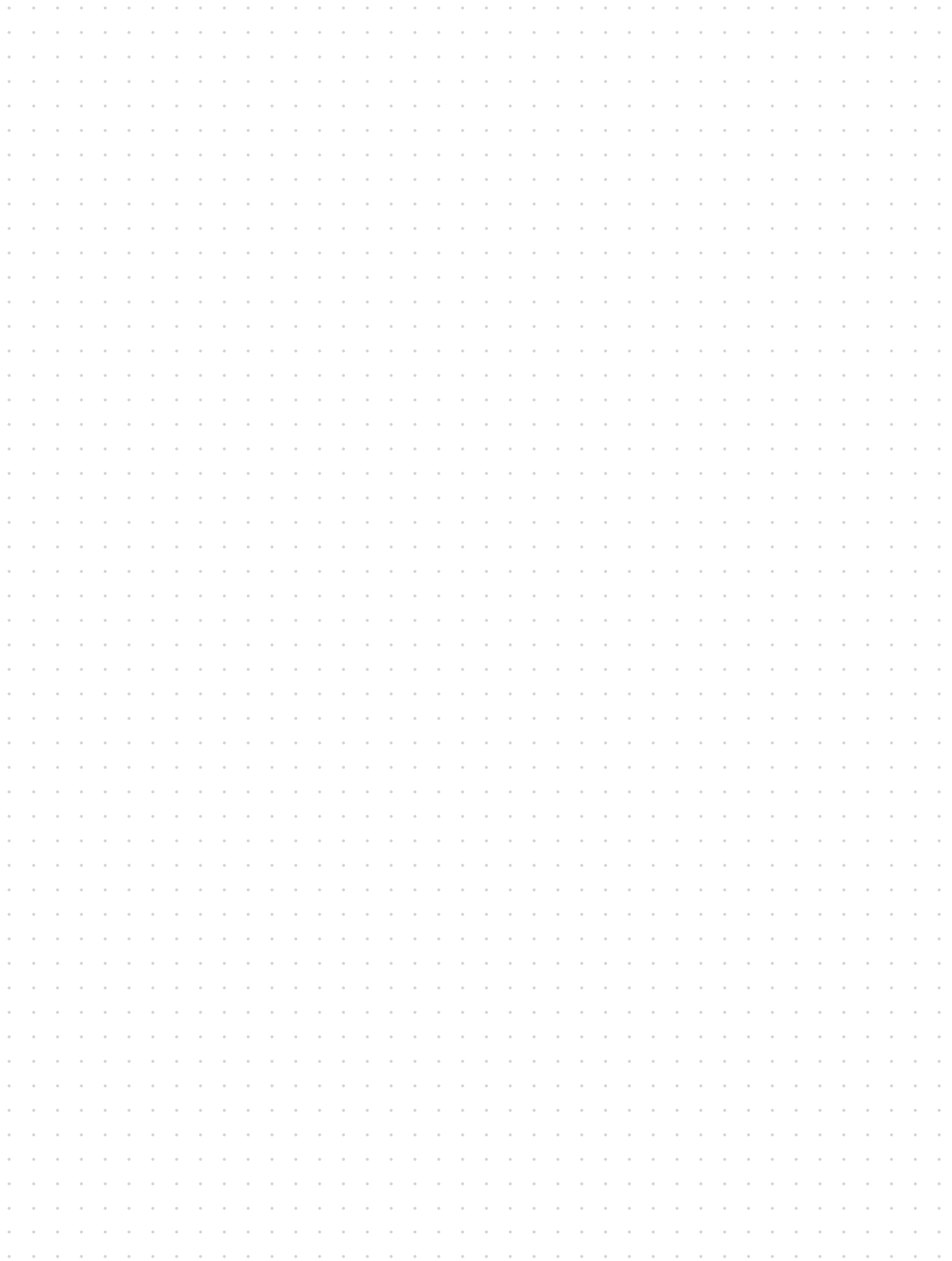
How do verses 1-3 describe our lives before Christ? How does living according to the "ways of the world" and "following your desires and cravings" leave you feeling "dead" or "deserving of wrath"?

According to verse 4, what motivated God to save us? What has God's love, mercy, and grace looked like in your life?

Verse 8 refers to our salvation as a gift. What does this gift say about the One giving it? Is this how you typically view God?

How does grace motivate our good works differently than guilt or fear? If we are not saved by good works, but for good works, then what good works do you feel God may have in mind for you to participate in?

End your group time in prayer for one another to be motivated to good works by the grace of God who loves us.





03

MADE
ALIVE IN
CHRIST





Made one in Christ



Visual Inspiration

The shattered pieces depict the brokenness that often exists in our relationships with God and others. In Christ, we have everything we need to heal and restore those relationships.

We are brand new in Him, children of His kingdom. His reconstruction of the heart provides a place for the Spirit to dwell and guide us as His Church.



Week

04





Ephesians 2:11-22

Made one in Christ

Insights

Paul's thought continues to flow smoothly from one section to another. 2:1-10 focused on the amazing work of salvation accomplished for us in Christ. It pictures a kind of upward movement, beginning with us trapped in sin under the prince of the kingdom of the air (Satan) and ending with us raised to the heavenly realms with Christ. Now, in the second half of chapter 2, Paul challenges us after looking up at Christ above to look to those standing beside us. We are to note the community that God has saved.

In last week's study, verse 10 spoke of the works God has planned for us. Apparently, the first work that came to mind was that of reconciliation within the church. Jews and Gentiles had previously lived separate lives, culturally and religiously divided. However, these divisions could no longer be allowed to continue since Christ had made one people out of them. While we may no longer face as much Gentile/Jewish separation in the church, this principle still stands that seeking to live out the unity Christ died for is of first importance for His church. No ethnic, cultural, economic, or social lines should divide the people of God.

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Day One

Observe the passage and circle all of the people listed. How are they described?

Day Two

Underline any repeated words, phrases, or themes in this passage. Why might these be significant?

Day Three

Are there any descriptions of God in this passage? What does this teach us about God?

Day Four

What does Paul mean by the “dividing wall of hostility”? What does this teach us about Jesus?

Day Five

What do we learn about Jesus through Paul’s description of Him as “chief cornerstone”? What does this teach us about living in community?

Day Six

In your own words, write out the main idea of this passage. Why is this significant to us?

Day Seven

How do you think Paul wants his readers to respond? What is a specific way you can apply this passage today?

Daily Prayer for this Week

Lord, thank You for bringing us near to You and reconciling us while we were far away. We praise You, King Jesus, for being our peace and our access to the Father and Spirit. May we, as Your new humanity and members of Your household, share Your peace with those around us today.

Amen.

Describe a time when you felt welcomed into a new community (school, job, town, etc). What did people do to help you feel included?

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

In verses 11-12, why were the Gentiles formerly excluded from the people of God? In verses 13-18, what did Jesus accomplish for both the Jews and the Gentiles by His death?

Where do you sense hostility or “walls up” between social, political, ethnic, or religious groups in our world right now or even in your own personal relationships? How could Jesus bring those separate groups together in unity?

In verses 19-21, Paul uses the metaphor of a temple to describe our community of faith. How might our group experience the power and presence of the Spirit if we aligned with our “chief cornerstone”?

Can you think of a person or group of people who feel like “foreigners or strangers” among the people of God? How can we extend God’s invitation to be part of His unified people?

Pray as a group for opportunities to be people of peace to those in need of community and belonging.





04

MADE
ONE IN
CHRIST





The mystery of Christ



Visual Inspiration

As we explore new life in Christ, what was once hidden is now revealed. The stream of new light exposes that God has always been and always will be. Through the gospel, we were in darkness but now have been shown a great light, His revelation.

As the church, we can now move forward confidently to share this light with others around us, spreading what we now see.

Week

05



Ephesians 3:1-13

The mystery of Christ

Insights

In chapter 3, Paul pauses to consider his place in this great work God is doing. The astounding work of saving sinners by grace and bringing Jews and Gentiles together in one Church is the culmination of a plan that goes back to the beginnings of Israel in the book of Genesis. Paul recognizes that his ministry fits into a much larger story.

This significance continues today for the Church. “[God’s] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (10). When the church lives out its calling in Christ, God’s wisdom is displayed to angels in heaven. God’s salvation does not have its final goal in saving individuals only but in creating a new kind of people, the Church.

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

Day One

Observe and circle any descriptions of God in the passage. What does this reveal to you about God?

Day Two

Underline any nouns or verbs that you see in these verses. Who is doing what? How are people described?

Day Three

Put a star next to any repeated words, phrases, or themes in this passage. Why might these be significant?

Day Four

Identify a few questions you have from the passage. Where else in the Bible is that question addressed? Write out a few conclusions to your questions.

Day Five

Note how Paul describes the Church in this passage. What do you think it means that “the manifold wisdom of God is being put on display through the church”?

Day Six

In your own words, write out the main idea of this passage. Why is this important for us?

Day Seven

How do you think Paul wants his readers to respond? What is a specific way you can apply this passage today?

Daily Prayer for this Week

Lord, You are amazing and what an honor it is to know You and have the freedom to approach You with confidence in Your love for us. Thank You for Your grace and boundless riches. May we be strengthened and encouraged today, as You dwell within us.

Amen.

What's your favorite movie with a surprising twist at the end?

Read Ephesians 3:1-13

In this case, the word “mystery” doesn’t mean something that no one knows. “Mystery” means something once unknown that is now revealed. According to verse 6, what mystery has been revealed to Paul?

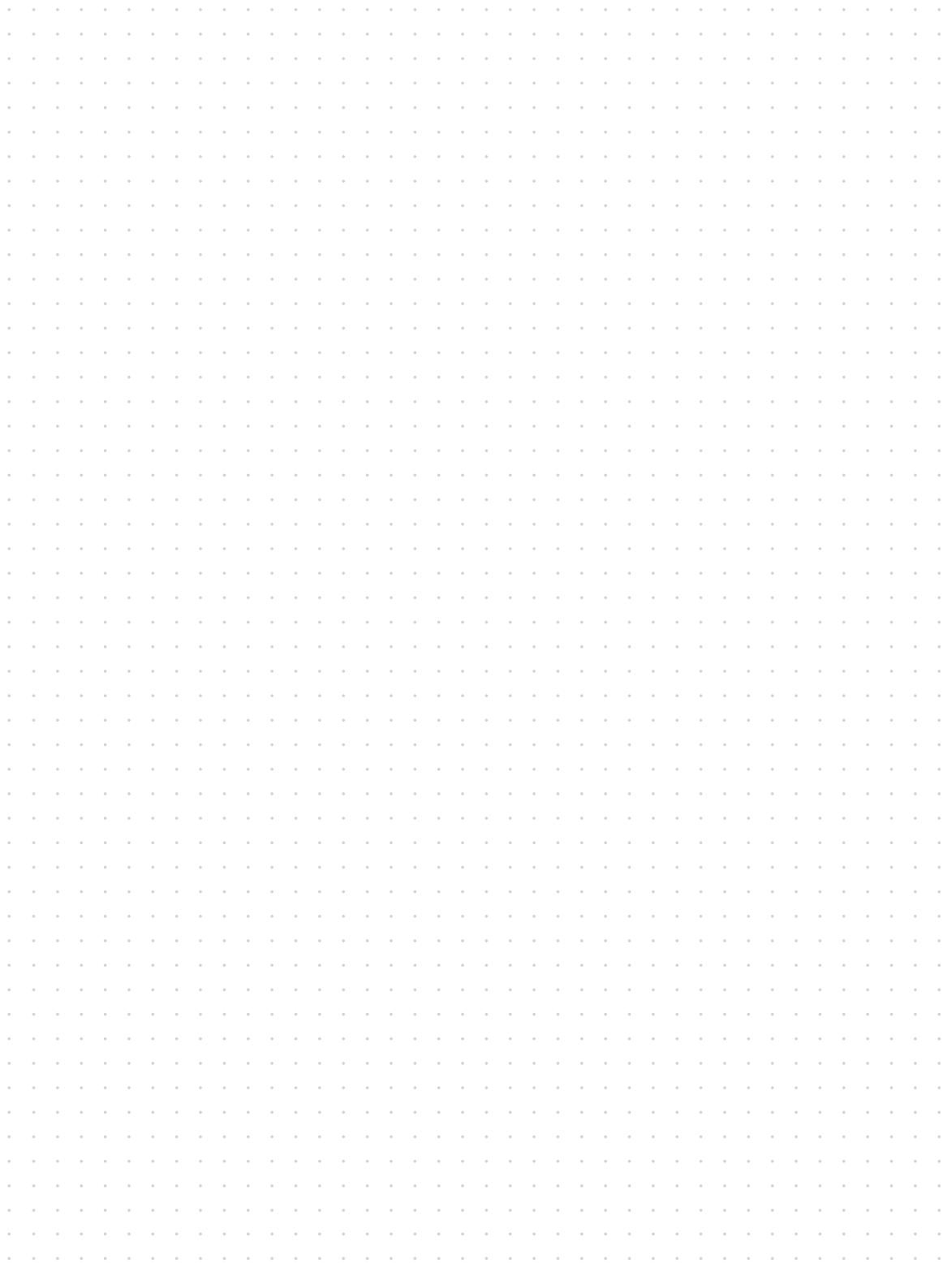
Why do you think Paul was so compelled by this that he would devote his life to making it known even if it caused him suffering?

According to verse 10, the unified Church displays God’s power over the spiritual powers of evil. How does a multiethnic Church united under Christ reveal God’s victory over the “rulers and authorities” that would keep the world divided?

How might we experience opposition by taking up the same gospel mission as Paul, proclaiming that Jesus is bringing all things together?

Who could you share the good news of Jesus with this week?

Pray that we would have confidence to boldly proclaim the good news of Jesus. Pray for our fellow believers and missionaries around the world who are experiencing suffering for their faith on a consistent basis.





05

THE
MYSTERY
OF CHRIST



The love of Christ



Visual Inspiration

When our roots are established in Jesus Christ, our lives begin to produce fruit.

As we grow within His living body, the Church, we experience opportunities to be rooted and grounded in His love.

Just as plants reseed to sprout new life, so we must plant the good news into the next generation and water with the Word.



Week

06





Ephesians 3:14-21

The love of Christ

Insights

After discussing the mystery of God's plan to create the church out of Jews and Gentiles, Paul is again drawn to prayer. Paul begins by acknowledging that God is not the Father of one people but of all people. This grounds the prayer in the intimate love of God. This prayer is that the cosmic love and grace of God would be known in a deeply personal way by the audience. He describes a strengthening of our "inner being" that comes from the Spirit (16).

This power and strengthening creates a stability necessary for living in Christ. The spacial metaphors start spilling out. The people of God are rooted and established, reaching deep down for security. The love they know extends to height, depths, width, and length. Paul knows that knowing the love of God in a deeply personal way is the most transformative kind of knowledge possible, and it requires a work of the Holy Spirit. It is this kind of formation for which he prays.

For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Day One

Make observations. Circle all the people you see and underline what they are doing in the passage.

Day Two

Draw a star next to any repeated phrases or ideas that you see. What do these repeated ideas communicate about Paul's purpose?

Day Three

Observe how this passage describes God. What does it reveal to you? Why is this significant?

Day Four

Identify a few questions you have from the passage. Where else in the Bible is that question addressed? Write out a few conclusions to your questions.

Day Five

What does the phrase "dwell in your hearts through faith" mean? Why might this be important?

Day Six

In your own words, write out the main idea of this passage. Who is someone you can share that main idea with today?

Day Seven

How do you think Paul wants his readers to respond? What is a specific way you can apply this passage today? Pray verses 16-21 over people in your life.

Daily Prayer for this Week

Lord, thank You for Your love that has no limitation or end for us. We praise You for empowering us through the Holy Spirit and rooting us in Your love. May we be strengthened and encouraged today, as You dwell within us, and do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine.

Amen.

Name a relationship that has positively impacted your life. Describe that impact.

Read Ephesians 3:14-21

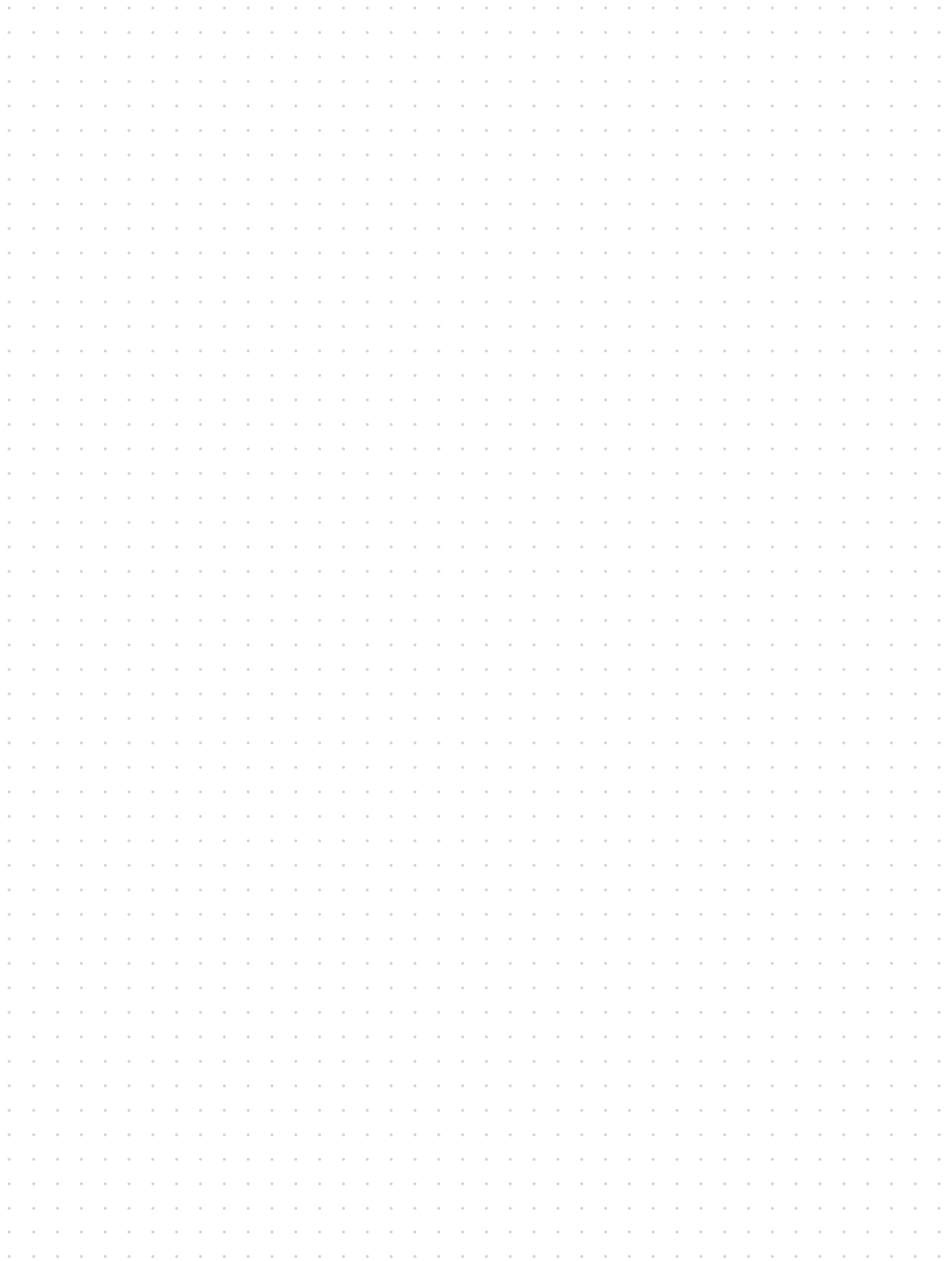
Considering verse 18, why would we need power to understand God's love?

How would a better understanding of God's love for us transform us individually?
How would it transform us as a community?

Who is someone you desperately want to know and experience God's love?

Spend extended time in prayer for one another to understand God's love. This is the most amazing thing we could pray for another human. Consider praying verses 18-21, replacing "you" with a specific person's name.

Ask God to increase our passion to pray this passage over others consistently and that our passion would match Paul's.



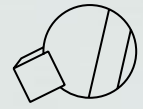


06

THE
LOVE OF
CHRIST







Unity in the body of Christ

Visual Inspiration

A mirror reflects both our true identity and our imperfections. As we gain a clearer picture of who we are in Christ, we try to bring the entirety of our life into focus with that identity.

Recognizing our imperfections and how we are often “out of focus” with our true identity, we need to adjust our lifestyles to be more consistent with the life God has called us to in Christ.



Week
07





Ephesians 4:1-16

Unity in the body of Christ

Insights

In chapters 1-3, Paul's focus was primarily on what God has done in Christ for the Church. With this still in view, in chapters 4-6 Paul shifts his focus to how the Church should live and behave. If the truth of God's love gets deep inside our hearts, it transforms us, making demands on how we live toward one another. Our lives should match the calling we have received.

The immediate application of this is to live in such a way that values other members of the body. If Christ died to save us and make us one, then our lives must preserve the unity the Spirit has created. To preserve this unity, God has gifted individuals with abilities for building up the Church. Every person contributes to the growth of the whole body. The leadership of the church exists to help equip each member for the work of service assigned to them until the body reaches maturity (12-13). This image of a functioning, harmonious community is the result of the salvation God accomplished for us in Christ. An individualistic, "do what's best for me," Christianity falls far short of the calling God has given us.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says:

“When he ascended on high,
he took many captives
and gave gifts to his people.”

⁹ (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Day One

Observe and underline any nouns or verbs. Who is being described and what are they doing?

Day Two

Notice what Paul is encouraging the church to do in this passage. Draw a box around any significant or repeated words/phrases you see.

Day Three

What does this passage reveal to us about God? What does it teach us about the Church?

Day Four

What do you think Paul's main point is in this passage? Write out in your own words the main idea of these verses.

Day Five

Write out any questions you have from this passage. Take some time to prayerfully write out a few answers.

Day Six

What do verses 11-13 teach us about the Church? Why is unity so important for the Church?

Day Seven

Paul wrote this for his readers, not simply to learn, but to respond with their lives. What is a specific way you can respond to God's word today?

Daily Prayer for this Week

Lord, thank You for Your grace and calling us to unity with You and one another. We praise You for joining us together to grow in maturity and the fullness of Christ. May we speak truth in love to build up one another, as You call us to humble, gentle, and patient opportunities to love others today.

Amen.

When working on something important, would you rather work alone or with a group? Why?

Read Ephesians 4:1-16

How does Paul describe a “life worthy of your calling”?

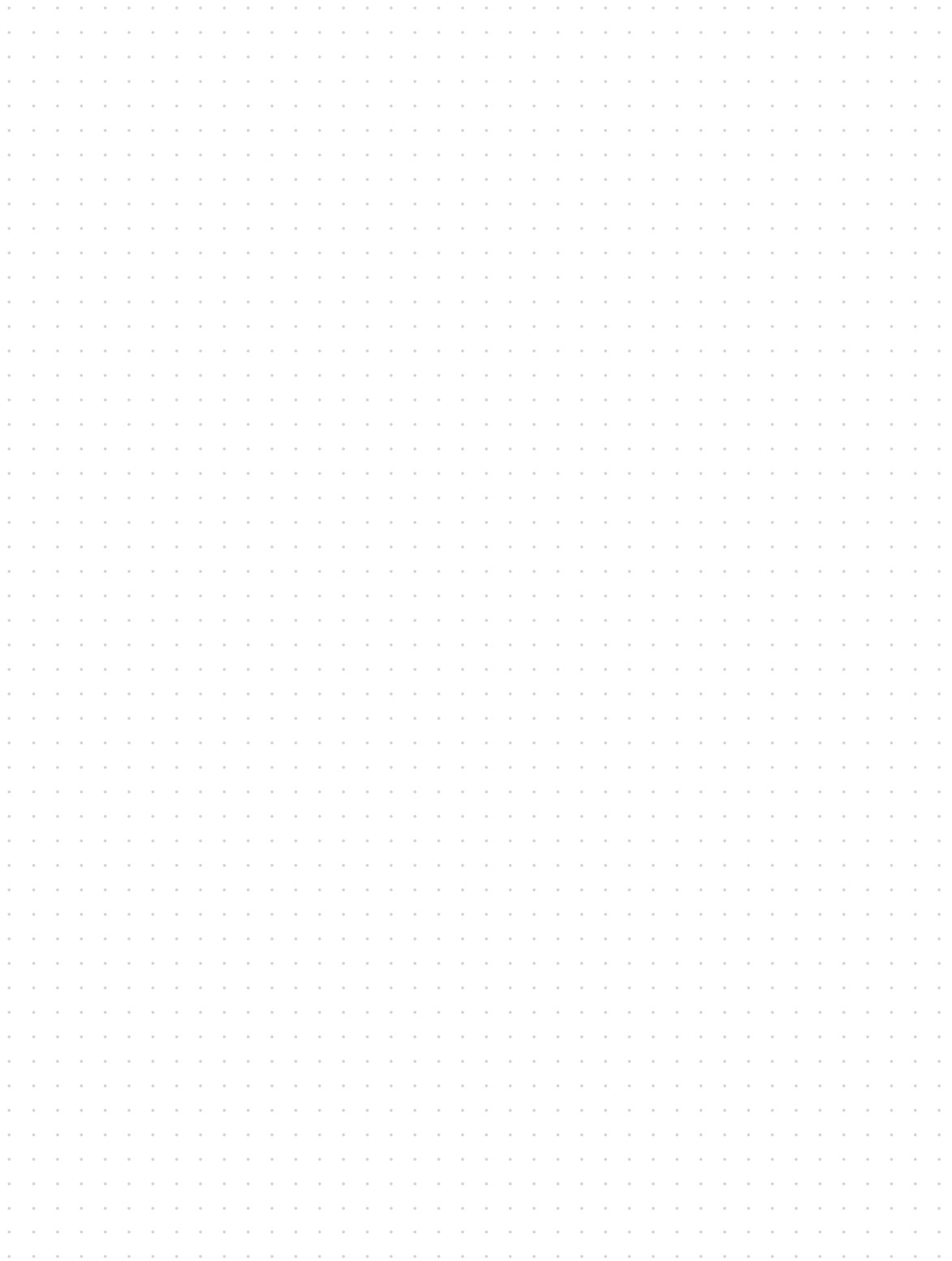
Verses 14-16 make it apparent that Paul is calling us to a communal maturity, not just individual maturity. The end goal is not numerous holy individuals, but one holy community. How does the communal nature of this make it easier? How does it make it harder?

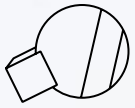
What often divides our small group drawing us back to immaturity? How can we bear with one another in love?

According to verse 12, God provides people to help us in our spiritual journey. Who has played this role in your life? How could you play this role for others?

Considering verse 15, how is speaking the truth in love key to experiencing unity in the Church? How does truth without love lead to division? How does love without truth prevent authentic unity?

Pray for God to grant our small group unity as we pursue maturity in Christ together.





07

UNITY IN
THE BODY
OF CHRIST







Visual Inspiration

The fallen human condition is all-surrounding darkness tainted with pain. We are separated from His presence with hardened hearts.

As we are brought to new life, enveloped by His perfection and holiness, our hearts move towards Him. The world becomes dim in its attraction, and our lives grow brighter within His pure love.

Living in the body of Christ

Week

08





Living in the body of Christ

Insights

To become the people God has made us to be, there is both a group and individual responsibility. Individual transformation takes place in the context of a loving community. At the heart of this is the transformation of our inner selves, our minds. Paul explains that we are not merely people who do bad things, but rather something has broken inside of us. Trusting in Christ does not instantly transform us completely. As part of following Jesus we must “put off our former way of life” and “put on the new man.” The means by which this is accomplished is the “renewing of the spirit of your mind.” This inner transformation takes place when the Spirit of God applies the word of God to our hearts in the community of Christ, the Church.

This internal transformation is not just about us as individuals. The result is changed relationships with our fellow Jesus followers in the church. Verses 25-32 describe this new community interaction that includes honest speech, wholesome speech, kindness, and forgiveness. These characteristics of community show that Christ is at work in us. The individual and the community cannot be separated. A community cannot function in a God-honoring way without transformed individuals, and transformed individuals will love those in the community of the church.

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

²⁰ That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Day One

Underline words or phrases that stand out to you and circle all people listed. How are they described?

Day Two

Circle all the verbs in the passage. What does this reveal to us about the church?

Day Three

Notice any comparisons/contrasts Paul makes in these verses. What is he trying to teach the Ephesians?

Day Four

Draw a box around any purpose statements in the passage (i.e. “therefore,” “for we are...,” “that they may...”). What ideas or thoughts are being connected?

Day Five

In your own words, summarize what you think the main point of this passage is.

Day Six

What is one spiritual truth you see in this passage? Who is someone you can share that truth with?

Day Seven

What response does Paul seem to desire for his readers? How should you respond today?

Daily Prayer for this Week

Lord, thank You for forgiving us, making us new, and inviting us to a life of holiness with You. We praise You for calling us to new life with You and one another. May we forgive others as we have been graciously forgiven by You, and live free from bitterness, rage, and slander, as we walk in kindness and compassion with one another today.

Amen.

What is the oldest article of clothing you have, and why do you keep it?

Read Ephesians 4:17-32

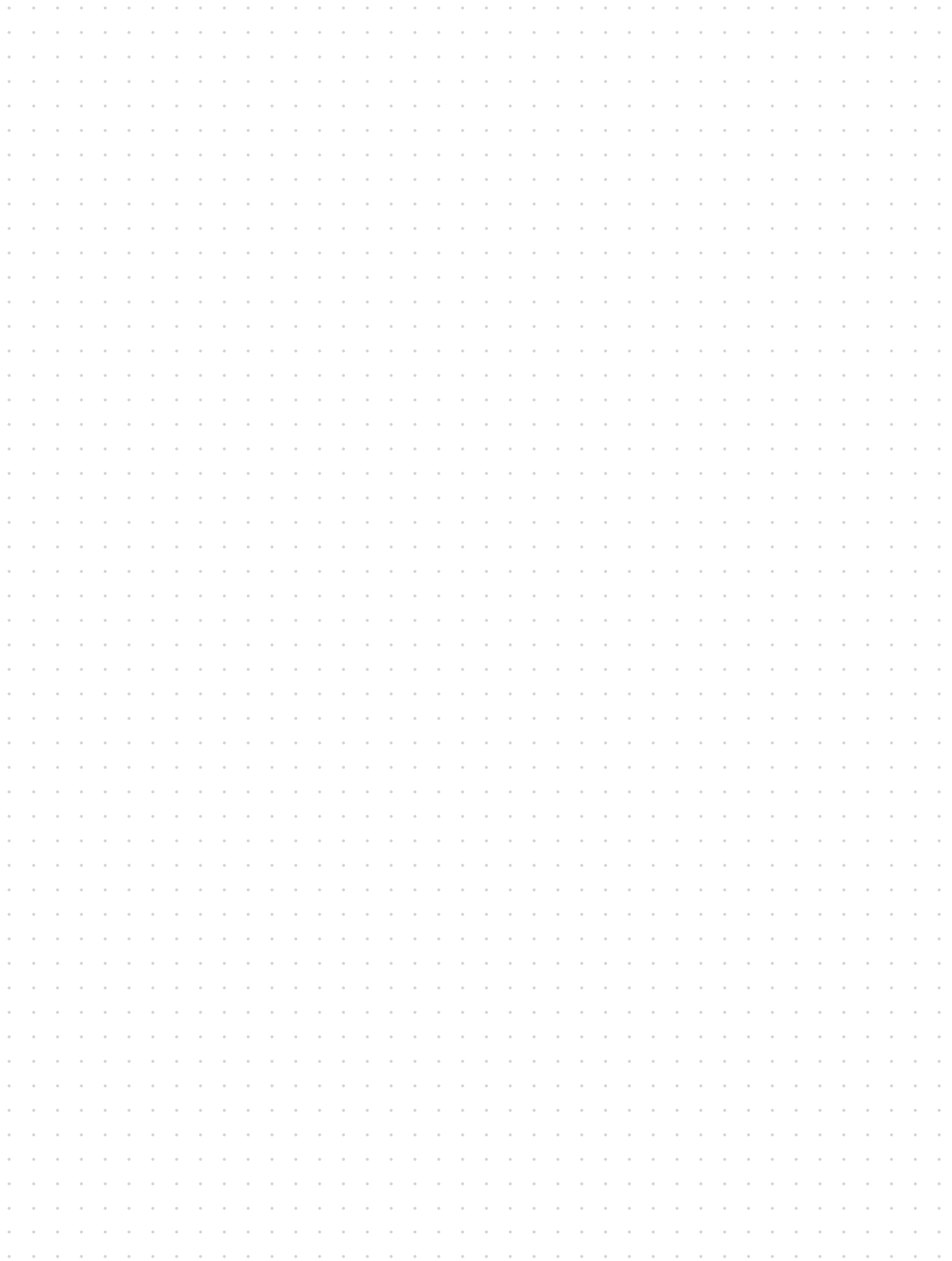
Paul uses the metaphor of clothing to describe our journey of learning to shed the old life and embrace the new. There are certain behaviors we need to “put off” and others we need to “put on” to be appropriately dressed for our new life in Christ. What behaviors does he say to “put off”?

Why would greed, lust, lying, unresolved anger, stealing, laziness, demeaning words, bitterness, hatred, etc. be inappropriate clothing for a child of God? Do any of the mentioned “old ways” of living still have a pattern in your life?

As a group, how have we helped or hurt one another in this process of putting on “the new self”? What commitments to holiness could we make as a group?

According to verse 32, why is forgiveness a defining attribute that we should wear as children of God?

Unity and holiness ought to mark our communities. Does this group motivate you to live more like Jesus? If not, what do we need to change? Pray that God would help this group grow in unity and holiness as we follow Jesus.





08

LIVING IN
THE BODY
OF CHRIST





Living as children of the Light



Visual Inspiration

Like vibrant color being injected into darkness, the Holy Spirit infuses our broken, calloused, sin-filled souls. Once filled by the Spirit we will no longer be the same – no longer consumed by empty and meaningless desires. The Word seeps and spreads through our hearts, impacting our outward actions and bringing to light any impure motives and thoughts.



Week

09





Ephesians 5:1-21

Living as children of the Light

Insights

If chapter 4 focused primarily on life inside the church, chapter 5 begins to look at how the church interacts with the world outside. A contrast is set up between the kind of behavior common to those who live in darkness and those who live in the light. There is a group of people who live in rebellion against God and on whom God's wrath is coming. Believers should no longer live like those who do not know God.

This does not come from some kind of arrogant self-righteousness that sees the church as better than the world. In fact, Paul reminds them that they "were once darkness" (8). Rather, because of what God has graciously done for us in Christ, we should live like the kind of people we in fact are. If we are children who are no longer in darkness, then we are no longer to live like it. This changed behavior is an offering of praise to God and makes the most of the time we have on earth.

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵ For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them.

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴ This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Day One

Circle all the references to people listed and underline what they are doing. How are they described?

Day Two

Note any repeated words or phrases you see. What do think Paul is emphasizing in this passage?

Day Three

Double underline any comparisons or contrasts you see. Why might these be significant to the reader?

Day Four

Draw a box around purpose statements in the passage (i.e. “For,” “therefore,” “because”). What ideas or thoughts are being connected?

Day Five

Notice how God is described in this passage. What about humanity? What does this reveal to us?

Day Six

What is one spiritual truth you see in this passage? Who is someone you can share that truth with?

Day Seven

What response does Paul seem to desire for his readers? How should you respond today?

Daily Prayer for this Week

Lord, thank You for loving us and bringing us from darkness to light. May we become like You as we confess the evil in our lives and follow You in the way of love. We love You.

Amen.

Do you have a family member or friend that you often find yourself imitating without realizing it? What about their influence has shaped you?

Read Ephesians 5:1-21

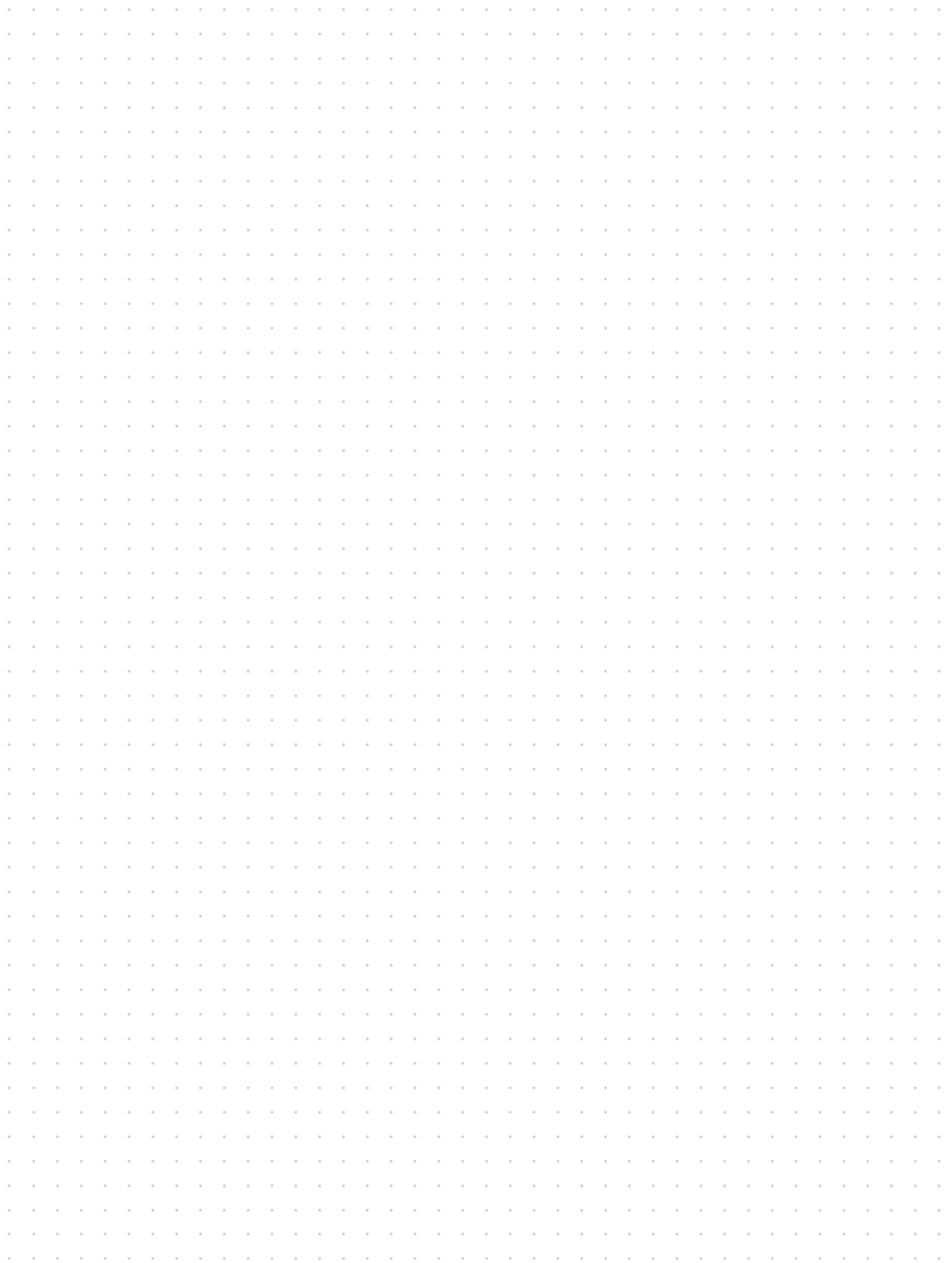
According to verses 1-2, as a child learns to walk by imitating their parents, who do we look to as our example for walking in love?

Paul makes clear in verses 3-6 that sexual immorality, demeaning language, and greed are signs that someone is not living as a child of God. How are these behaviors contradictory to imitating God's way of love?

Part of walking in the light is exposing our sin before the Lord and others through confession. Is there any sin struggle that you need to bring to light and confess to the group? (If in a co-ed group, consider splitting up by gender.)

In verses 15-21, Paul contrasts being drunk with being filled with the Spirit. How does being under the influence of the Spirit differ from being under the influence of alcohol?

Paul mentions singing psalms and spiritual songs together as a way to live under the influence of the Spirit. How does the practice of singing truths together help the church grow in unity and holiness? Consider ending your group by singing a verse of Amazing Grace together or another familiar hymn.





09

LIVING AS
CHILDREN
IN THE LIGHT





Visual Inspiration

God's Word is a clear and refreshing life source to the growing church and our renewed hearts. As the water flows from the person of Christ to His people, the Bride of Christ, sanctification happens, purifying the soul. Christ will one day present the Church in her perfection to God, shown pure and holy by His cleansing work and sacrificial love.

Marriage in Christ





Week
10



Ephesians 5:21-33

Marriage in Christ

Insights

This passage is one of the most extensive treatments on marriage in the New Testament. However, it is crucial to notice that this discussion on marriage is not the main idea of the passage! Verse 22 is actually a subpoint from verse 21, which is a subpoint from verses 18-20. Paul commanded the Ephesian church to be filled with the Holy Spirit. That filling should express itself in lives of praise and harmonious relationships.

So, when Paul talks about these principles of a godly marriage, it is assumed to be the expression of people filled with the Spirit and living lives of praise in the church. This discussion of marriage cannot be separated from the larger discussion concerning life in the church. For this reason, Paul concludes by seeing marriage as an expression of Christ's love for the church. A marriage that is lived in isolation from the community of Christ's followers will be lacking the resources needed to grow into God's design for that marriage.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Day One

Underline any words or phrases that stand out to you and circle all people listed.

Day Two

Note any metaphors or repeated words Paul uses in this passage. Why is this significant?

Day Three

Are there any descriptions of God in this passage? What does this reveal to us about God and the church?

Day Four

What is Paul's main point in these verses? In your own words, summarize the main idea of this passage and share it with someone today.

Day Five

What does Paul mean when he says "wives submit" and "husbands love"? Why would Paul write this?

Day Six

What is a spiritual principle you see in this passage? Who is someone you can share that truth with?

Day Seven

What response does Paul seem to desire for his readers? How should you respond today?

Daily Prayer for this Week

Lord, thank You for calling us to be a part of Your bride and body. We praise You for loving, cleansing, and uniting us to You. May our relationships with others be built upon our relationship with You.

Amen.

What is your favorite love story? What about that story is significant to you?

Read Ephesians 5:21-33

In our passage today, Paul says that the relationship between a husband and wife can be a reflection of Christ's relationship with the church. How are the ways Jesus loves the church likened to a faithful husband's love for his wife? What does this teach us about Jesus' love for us?

How could a husband's selfless love for his wife reflect the way Jesus relates to the church? How could a wife's willing submission to her husband reflect the way the church relates to Jesus?

What do you know about the marriage culture in Paul's day? How might Paul's message have challenged his culture then? How might it challenge our culture now?

The word "submission" can carry negative feelings for some. Have you ever seen that term misused or manipulated? How can a husband and wife "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" while still playing distinct roles in a family?

Pray for the marriages in your group and in our church to be healthy, reflecting the love of Jesus.





10

MARRIAGE
IN CHRIST





Visual Inspiration

Relationships are a key part of the abundant Christian life. God's will and His Word provide the foundation for healthy relationships to grow: children and parents, servants and masters, etc.

His order is intentional and sets boundaries that preserve and protect the health and influence of generations to come for the glory of God.

Relationships in Christ

Week

11





Ephesians 6:1-9

Relationships in Christ

Insights

Under the larger banner of living filled with the Spirit, Paul continues to describe harmonious relationships. Interestingly, after describing the behavior of the church, Paul turns his attention to the traditional household. Within a Greco-Roman household there would have been three primary relationships: husband/wife, parent/child, and slave/master. Paul urges the church not to let their spirituality remain confined to “religious gatherings.” A Christian household should be transformed.

Both the parent/child and the slave/master relationships are relationships of authority. Paul breaks with the conventions of his day by addressing children and slaves. In so doing, Paul acknowledges that they are personal agents in God’s eyes and were to be part of the church gathering. This is truly revolutionary thinking, as children and slaves would not normally have been given this dignity. While Paul does not go so far as to advocate a social reform of eliminating slavery, he laid the foundation for the end of slavery by treating slaves as equal partakers of God’s grace.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³ “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶ Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

⁹ And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Day One

Underline any words or phrases that stand out to you and circle all people listed.

Day Two

Draw a box around any themes or words that are repeated. Why might these be significant?

Day Three

What does this passage teach us about God and our relationships? How is God described?

Day Four

What is Paul's main point in these verses? In your own words, summarize the main idea of this passage.

Day Five

What is one question you have as you read the passage? List any potential answers to your question.

Day Six

What are two spiritual principles you can find in this passage? Who is someone you can share that truth with today?

Day Seven

What response does Paul seem to desire for his readers? How should you respond today?

Daily Prayer for this Week

Lord, thank You for being our Father, Master, and Friend. We praise You for showing no favoritism and being with us in our relationships. May our relationships with others be opportunities to worship and enjoy You as You work in our lives.

Amen.

Who was your favorite teacher in school? What about them helped you learn or succeed?

Read Ephesians 6:1-9

How does honoring our parents show God respect? How does nurturing our children show God respect?

In verses 5-11, how would showing submission, mutual respect, and familial love despite class or racial distinctions have challenged the ancient world? How might that challenge our world today?

What principles from this passage can we apply in our context by the way we treat those who have authority over us? That we have authority over? Consider how Jesus modeled godly authority by the way He led His disciples and modeled submission to His earthly authorities.

What does it look like to work as if for the Lord and not for man?

Pray that the way we show respect and dignity for others would reflect Jesus to our world.





11

RELATIONSHIPS
IN CHRIST





Spiritual battle in Christ



Visual Inspiration

Spiritual battles are real and strong but take place in another realm, blurry to earthly eyes. We may not see actual fiery arrows fly, but the enemy uses spiritual weapons to break us down and discourage our journey with Christ. We must be fully awake and aware, daily taking up God's armor to fight this unseen battle before us.

Week

12

Ephesians 6:10-24

Spiritual battle in Christ

Insights

Hovering in the background of the entire letter has been the idea that there are spiritual forces in the world, some aligned with God's purposes and others not. When speaking of the exaltation of Jesus, Paul wrote that He is "in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come" (1:20-21).

These "names" are likely the names of spiritual beings. We once lived under "the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient" (2:2). This spirit is none other than Satan himself, from whom we have been rescued. In creating the church, God's intent was that "the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms" (3:10). The life of the church is a message of God's wisdom to the spiritual world.

In chapter 6, Paul directly addresses the question of how we are to engage in spiritual warfare.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

²¹ Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. ²² I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

²³ Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

Day One

Underline the obstacles listed that the believer will face.

Day Two

Circle the “pieces” that make up the armor of God. How would you describe each of those pieces?

Day Three

What does it practically look like to “take up” and “put on” the armor of God?

Day Four

Recall circumstances in your life where the Lord has provided you with spiritual protection and give thanks to Him.

Day Five

What does it mean to pray in the Spirit? What in this passage helps to define that phrase?

Day Six

Note Paul’s request for prayer from the Ephesians. Choose a global worker you can pray for today.

Day Seven

What new rhythm of prayer can you commit to this week as you engage in the spiritual realm?

Daily Prayer for this Week

Lord, thank You for the grace and armor You provide us with in our struggles with the enemy’s schemes. We praise You for the peace, truth, and righteousness You provide. May we pray and struggle well as we live in full surrender to and dependence on You today.

Amen.

Do you have any articles of clothing that used to belong to a parent or family member? What significance does wearing their clothing have for you?

Read Ephesians 6:10-24

What does it look like to rely on God's power to help us stand strong in our faith?

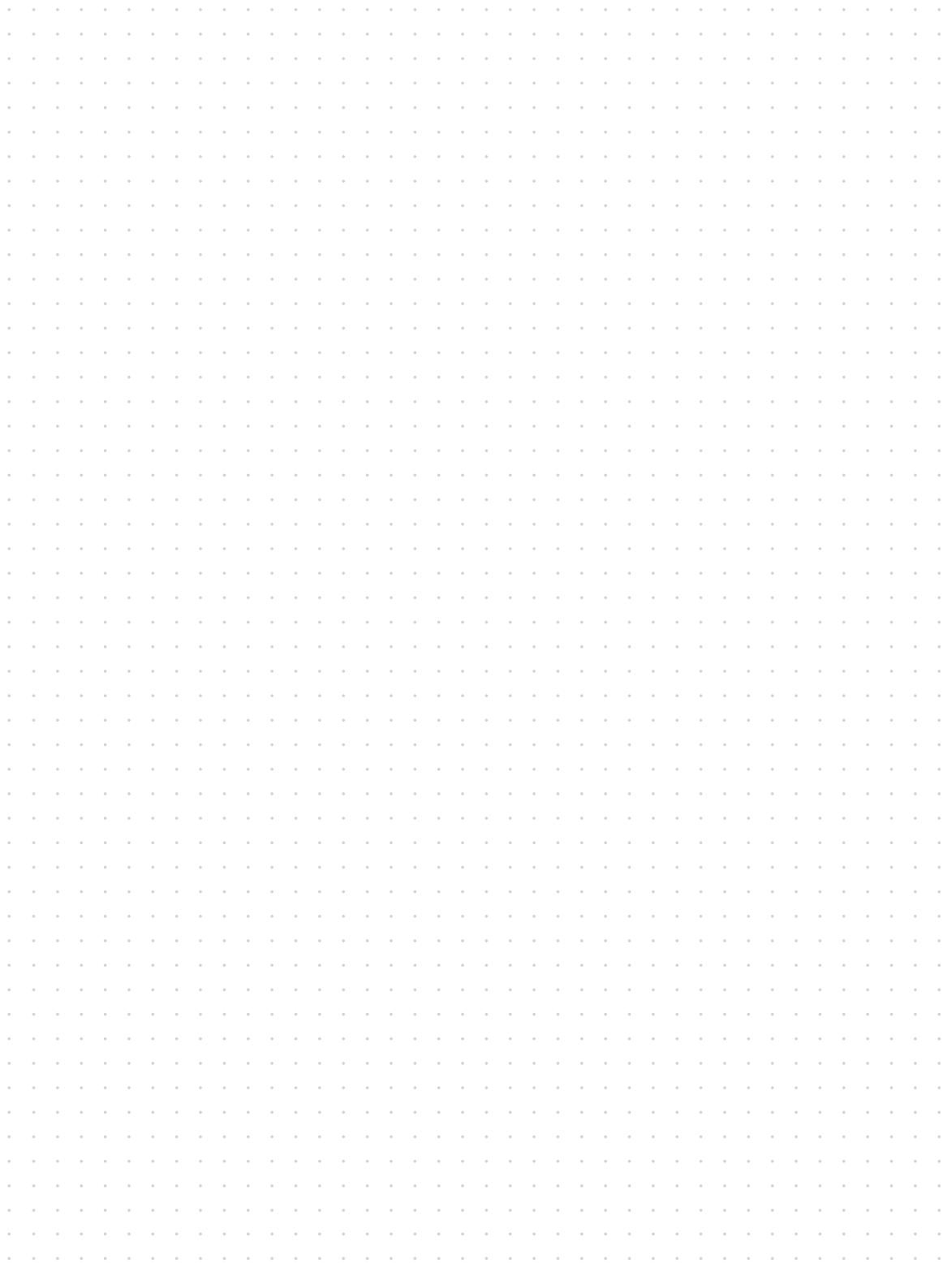
In verse 12, Paul says our battle is not a physical one, but a spiritual one. How should that influence the way we view the struggles we face?

Paul is referencing **Isaiah 59:17** in this passage:

"He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak."

Our Heavenly Father does not expect us to make our own armor but gives us His very own to wear for protection. How does having God's armor give us comfort and strength?

What is a current battle or struggle that you need strength to endure? Practically, how could each piece of God's armor protect you during this struggle? Close your time praying for the needs in your group.





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SPIRITUAL
BATTLE IN
CHRIST

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