



GOD'S NEW SOCIETY

The book of ephesians

EEF discipleship guide

Oct 16 - Dec 25



GOD'S NEW SOCIETY

The book of ephesians

EEF discipleship guide

Oct 16 - Dec 25

How to use this Discipleship Guide booklet

This booklet provides some material so we can interact with the themes each week outside the Sunday gathering. Each week includes a summary of the main idea, questions for reflection, memorization verse, and related Bible passages. You can use it in a number of different ways:

- Use by yourself in your personal devotions or study
- Use with your community group
- Use with your family or housemates to have a regular devotional time together.

In whatever way you use this, our prayer is that you will be helped to grow deeper with the Lord Jesus as you “let the Word of Christ dwell in your richly” (Col. 3:16).

Week of October 16. Brought Near in Christ (Eph 2:11-13)

This section begins part 2 of Ephesians. Paul has just addressed the new life we now have in Christ; now he begins to explain the new community that God has created through that new life in Christ. He begins by addressing those people who were previously banished from the people of God, the Gentiles. They were not just separated physically by being uncircumcised, but Paul says they were shut out of salvation and the promises of God, “without hope and without God.” But through Christ these people who were banished strangers have been brought near and made into intimate friends. And this has happened through the blood of Christ, the bedrock of the new community.

Questions for reflection:

1. All of us who are not of Jewish origin are those Paul refers to as “Gentiles.” In what ways do you see that without Christ we are also “without hope and without God in the world”?
2. What does Paul mean that Christ’s blood brought us near? Near to what? How did Christ’s blood accomplish this?
3. How does it change your Christian experience to remember that you were not always “in,” but that you were once far away and now have been brought near through Christ’s sacrifice for you? How does it change your attitude toward others?
4. Think about some people in your life who are “far away” and pray that God through Christ would bring them near?

Memory verse: 1:13

Week of October 23. Death to Hostility (Eph 2:11-18)

Paul continues to talk about the new community that God has created through Christ. This community is made up of two groups of people that formally despised each other and were sworn enemies. There was a wall of hostility between them. But Paul says that when Christ died on the cross, he tore down the wall of hostility that separated them, and created “one new plan in place of the two.” This was to accomplish what God wanted all along, to unify a divided humanity under his grace.

Questions for reflection:

1. How did Jesus bring the Jews and Gentiles together?
2. What does it mean that Jesus “abolished the law with its commandments and regulations”? How do you reconcile this with Jesus saying he came to fulfill the law? In what ways did the ceremonial laws prevent Jews and Gentiles from being together?
3. What does it mean to have access to the Father through one Spirit? (v.18)
4. What individual Christians or groups of Christians are you separated from, because of theological, cultural, denominational, racial or economic differences? What is at the heart of this separation? How does the gospel empower an overcoming of these divisions? What does this look like practically?

Memory Verse: Eph 2:18

Week of October 30. Fifth Sunday Block Party.

Week of November 6 and 13. No Longer Aliens (Eph 2:19-22)

The final outcome of Christ destroying the wall of hostility is a new family, a new “household” where Jews and Gentiles are now family together. He uses several different metaphors to describe the new unity of these relationships: fellow citizens, members of God’s household, building blocks in a new temple. God now fills this new community with his Spirit. Note that this filling is a very communal reality. God fills us as we live out this new community together.

Questions for reflection

1. How are the apostles and prophets the foundation of this new spiritual building that is being constructed?
2. Why is Jesus the chief cornerstone of this new building?
3. How can we as a community at EEF live into this reality more fully? What role do you think you might have in breaking down barriers between yourself and others?

Memory verse: 2:22

Week of November 20 and 27. The Mystery of the Gospel (3:1-13)

In this section Paul speaks of the great “mystery of the gospel” that has now been revealed. He states the mystery plainly in 3:6: “this mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” The radical plan from the beginning of all time was that God would create a new international community, the church, that this church would be the body of Christ, organically united to him, and that people from every nation under heaven would be incorporated into Christ and his church on equal terms, without any distinction.

Questions for reflection:

1. The Old Testament has many hints and clues of what God’s purposes were for the nations. Can you think of examples in the Old Testament that point to the “mystery of the gospel,” God’s intent to bring in the nations to his community?
2. What does it mean that it is now the calling of the church to make known the wisdom of God to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places? How does this change your understanding of the role and calling of the church?
3. Some people’s Christianity consists entirely of their own personal relationship with God and has almost nothing to do with the church. How does this section challenge that idea?
4. How might your own attitude toward the church need to change? How can we help our church to live up to this calling?

Memory verse: 3:6

Weeks of December 4 and 11. May Christ Dwell in your Hearts Through Faith (Eph 3:14-21)

At the end of his section about the new community, Paul begins to pray. And the thing he prays for is love. Specifically, that we would more profoundly comprehend the amazing size and scale of God’s love for us in Christ. He prays that we the member of this new community would together know the dimensions of Christ’s love, so we can filled with the power we need to be the community he calls us to be. It takes the whole people of God together to understand the whole love of God, with all their varied backgrounds and experiences. He finally ends this section with a doxology, a praise to God, who alone can make this dream come true.

Questions for reflection:

1. Read Eph 3:14-19 and list out all the request that are in this prayer. What repeated themes do you notice?
2. Paul begins the prayer with “for this reason.” What was the reason for Paul’s prayer?
3. Of all the things Paul prays for, why does he ask that Christ might dwells more deeply in their hearts? Why is love such an important element of Paul’s prayer for others?
4. Paul says we can only more fully comprehend all the dimensions of Christ’s love “with all the saints”. How does experiencing Christ with others increase our own knowledge and experience of Christ that we cannot receive individually? How do you see this at work in EEF?
5. How does this prayer demonstrate the centrality of the church in God’s plan?
6. Spend some time praying this pray for yourself and for EEF.

Memory verse: Eph 3:17-19

Week of December 18. Service of Lessons and Carols, 4pm, Sunday.

Week of December 25. Christmas! Christmas Day Pageant, 4pm, Dec 25.