



A Study of Ephesians

THE GIFT OF GOD'S GRACE

LEADER'S GUIDE

Bishop Daniel G. Beaudoin

2017: The Year of Grace

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Northwestern Ohio Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Dear Friends in Christ,

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

Welcome to 2017: the **Year of Grace**. As we commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, the Northwestern Ohio Synod will celebrate the gift of God's grace through worship, Bible study, book reading, and other faith practices. A few years back, I was teaching an Adult New Members Class. As I covered some of the basic theological insights of Lutheranism, one of the students asked, “Pastor, if you were to pick 1 word to describe Lutherans, what would that 1 word be?” I didn't hesitate. The word is “grace”.

In the New Testament Letter to the Ephesians the writer focuses on the power and the gift of God's amazing grace. One of my “go to” Bible verses is Ephesians 2:8, and this will serve as our memory verse for 2017: the **Year of Grace**. ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8)***. This powerful Bible verse captures both God's intent and God's goodness. I would encourage you to memorize this Bible verse, so when I see you, and you recite this verse to me, you will be blessed.

What follows is an 8 session Bible study on the Letter to the Ephesians. I want to encourage you to open your Bible, gather with a group of friends, get outside the 4 walls of the church, and learn what God has to teach you. But, be careful. Be very, very careful, because God's Word has the power to transform people and communities from who we are into the people and communities that God longs for us to be. The church in Ephesus experienced this transformation. ***“For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8)***. May we also experience the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to renew and transform our lives and communities. God's Word has that power.

Let us pray: *God of goodness and grace, as we begin the study of your Word may we be inspired by your love and transformed by your will to be the people you long for us to be. Hold us always in the promise of your grace. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen*

Blessings,
Bishop Daniel G. Beaudoin
December 27, 2016
St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

TIPS FOR LEADERS

***“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness”
2 Corinthians 12:9***

You said, “Yes”. Thank you for your willingness to lead this Bible study. If this is something new for you, no need to worry. As God once said to the Apostle Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you...”, and this is most certainly true. These lessons are designed to be very “user friendly” and flexible. They may be used with a variety of groups and settings: congregational study groups, lunch studies with co-workers, gatherings with friends at a coffee shop, etc. Simply adapt the lessons to your group and context, but I would encourage you to follow the pattern of St. Paul and lead these studies out in the “market place” (outside the 4 walls of the church building). You never know who might be watching, listening, wondering. These studies are intended to last around 60-75 minutes. Please note that each lesson contains 2 to 4 Scripture passages under the Study and Conversation section, so if time is an issue, please feel free to cover only 1 or 2 of the Scripture passages.

Now, you don’t need to be a Bible scholar to lead a Bible study. These lessons are not designed to help you lecture, but to help you to facilitate group conversation. Below are some suggestions to assist you.*

Before the Study

1. Pray. Pray that God would guide you to lead faithfully. Pray for the participants (by name) who will gather for conversation and discussion. Ask God to open your heart and mind to hear God's Word that it may motivate you to a new way of thinking and being.
2. Read and then slowly re-read the assigned Bible passage. Write down particular and peculiar words and phrases. Use the notes from a Study Bible or a Bible Dictionary for insight.
3. Carefully work through both the leader and student lessons. Take time to meditate and reflect on each question. Write your responses in the space provided.
4. Consider ways to apply the assigned Bible passage to your life. Those who are gathered for study will follow your lead. They will not go any deeper than you.

During the Study

1. Be sure that everyone in your group has the necessary materials: Bible, student guide, pen, or pencil. It will be helpful to have a Study Bible and Bible Dictionary available for the group gathering.
2. As you gather for the first time, share with the participants that these studies are meant to be conversations, not lectures. Encourage everyone to participate. Refrain from putting pressure on those who may be hesitant to share, especially during the initial gatherings.
3. Begin each study on time and with a Bible verse. The assigned “memory verse” is a great place to start.
4. Ask for prayer requests and then lead an opening prayer. Pray for the concerns mentioned by the participants and ask God to help the group to understand and apply the Bible passage.
5. Take a moment to review some of the highlights from last week's lesson.
6. Have someone from the group read the Introduction. Having someone else (besides the leader) read is a great way to cultivate confidence and raise up new leaders.
 - A word about shapes: Each introduction includes an image or a shape. We live in an image based culture. Don't believe me? Just take a look at your I-Phone, computer screen, or Android device. I have found attaching the teachings of Jesus and Scripture to a few basic shapes and images help immensely with the teaching and discipling process. Use the shapes and images to go deeper into Scripture, the life of Jesus, and the Gospel. For a fuller explanation see the Shapes and Images Key found on pages 7-8 of this Leader's Guide or check out the work of Pastor Mike Breen and 3DM Ministries.
7. Discuss the “Opening Reflection” questions before the Bible passage is read. The “Opening Reflection” introduces the theme of the study and helps participants to “warm up” and begin to engage one another in conversation. Encourage as many participants as possible to respond to the “Opening Reflection”. Be ready to get the conversation going with your own response.
8. Have a group member read the Bible passage(s) to be studied aloud. One effective method is for one participant to read the passage at normal speed followed by another participant re-reading the passage at a slower speed. It is good to hear different voices.

9. Invite participants to read the study questions aloud and then share their responses.
10. Tips for Leading Discussion
 - A. Avoid answering your own questions. When the leader does most of the talking, other participants will become passive and silent.
 - B. Don't fear the silence. Some folks need time to think through a question before responding. Moments of quiet are ok. Learn to savor them.
 - C. Encourage multiple answers. Ask, "What do the rest of you think?" or "Does anyone have anything else to share?"
 - D. Try to be affirming. Especially affirm participation. Never shut someone down. If an answer is clearly off the mark, simply ask, "Which verse led you to that response?" Or "What do the rest of you think?"
 - E. During the initial sessions most answers will be directed to the leader (you). As participants become more comfortable, they will begin to interact with one another. This interaction is the mark of a healthy group. Cultivate it.
 - F. Don't shy away from controversy or conflict. It is one of the ways we grow. If an issue cannot be resolved, don't become frustrated. Explain that the group will move on and that God may enlighten all of you by the time you meet again.
 - G. Periodically pause to summarize what the participants have said about the passage. This helps bring together the various ideas and gives continuity to the study. The goal is that folks will leave with 1 or 2 "nuggets" from the study to apply in their daily lives.
11. Conclude your time together by asking a participant to pray the prayer at the end of each lesson. This is another great way to cultivate confidence and raise up new leaders.
12. End on time.

*adapted from *Bible Studies for Everyone* by N.T. Wright

BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

Study Bibles

Lutheran Study Bible - NRSV (2009) Published by Augsburg Fortress

Harper Collins Study Bible – NRSV (2006) Published by Harper One

NIV Zondervan Study Bible – NIV (2015) Published by Zondervan

ESV Study Bible – ESV (2008) Published by Crossway

Bible Dictionary / Handbook

Harper Collins Bible Dictionary (2011) Published by Harper One

Halley's Bible Handbook (2014) Published by Zondervan

Bible Atlases

Oxford Bible Atlas (2009) Published by Oxford University Press

The Student Bible Atlas (2005) Published by Augsburg Fortress

Zondervan Atlas of the Bible (2010) Published by Zondervan

Commentaries

Ephesians by Pheme Perkins (1997) Published by Abingdon Press

Paul: The Prison Letters by N.T. Wright (2004) Published by Westminster John Knox Press

Ephesians (2 volumes) by Markus Barth (1974) Published by Doubleday and Company

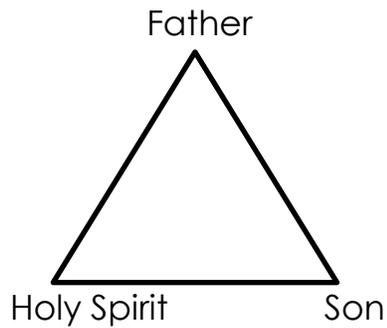
Other

Rose Book of Bible Charts, Maps and Timelines (2015) Published by Rose

Luther's Small Catechism (2016) Published by Augsburg Fortress

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (2005) Published by Concordia

SHAPES AND IMAGES KEY

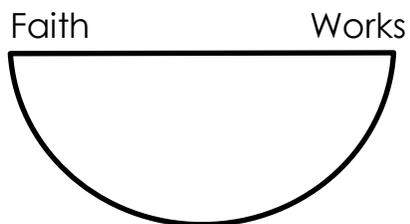


Ascending Triangle: This Is Who God Is

God the Father

God the Son

God the Holy Spirit

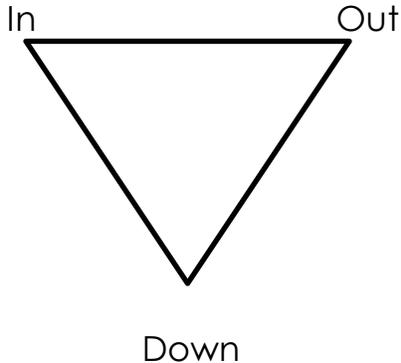


Semi-Circle: Rhythms of Life

Rest and Labor

Time On and Time Out

Faith and Works

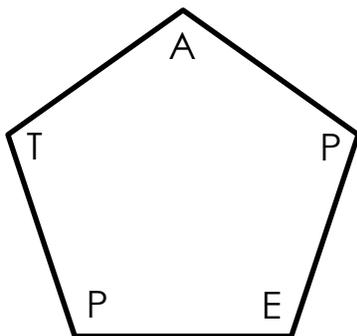


Descending Triangle: This Is What God Does

God Comes Down.

God Gathers Us In.

God Sends Us Out.



Pentagon: Gifts for the Church

Apostles: Extend the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Prophets: Know God's Will for the Christian Community

Evangelists: Recruit Others to the Ministry and Mission

Pastors: Protect and Nurture the Christian Community

Teachers: Understand and Explain God's Truth

Prayer



Prayer: Martin Luther was once asked by his barber, “Dr. Luther, how do you pray?” In 1535, Luther wrote, *A Simple Way to Pray, for a Good Friend*. Here Luther recommends prayer as a daily routine. For many people, the acronym **T.R.I.P.** has proven helpful for daily prayer.

Thanks: For whom / for what am I thankful?

Regret: What has caused me regret?

Intercession: For whom / for what do I need to pray?

Purpose: What action is God calling me to take today?

Live in the Light



The Light: In Ephesians 5:8, Christians are called to live as children of light. As followers of Jesus, the light of God shines in us and through us. Yes, we are saved by grace, and not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9); but the way we live our lives is important. Some theologians argue that we are saved by grace through faith... for good works (Ephesians 2:10). The lit candle will serve as a reminder that we are to live in the light of Christ.

Table OF Duties

Table of Duties: For Christians, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ frees us from having to impress God with who we are and what we do. By faith in God's promise in Christ, we are free to serve our neighbor in our everyday lives. Martin Luther called daily life a “holy order and estate”, and used Scripture passages in what has traditionally been called a “Table of Duties” to show how Christians should live in family and society.

EPHESIANS: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE

During the 1st century, Ephesus was a major port city in the Roman province of Asia (modern day Turkey). With an estimated population of between 200,000 - 250,000 people, Ephesus ranked with other great urban centers of the Roman Empire including: Carthage (300,000), Antioch (400,000), Alexandria (500,000), and Rome (1,000,000). Ephesus was a cross roads of commerce; a true “east meets west” city. Trade goods that arrived by caravan from the east were shipped down the Cayster River, into the Aegean Sea, and out to other Mediterranean seaports.

Ephesus was a wealthy city with impressive civic and religious monuments. Wide city streets, huge public structures, and luxurious private homes were built to impress. North of the city was the huge Temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. There was a large theater that could seat 25,000 people, an agora (marketplace), public baths, a library, and many other small temples.

We first encounter the city of Ephesus in the Book of Acts. In Acts 18:18-21, St. Paul ends his second missionary journey (est. 49-52 C.E.) with a very short stop in Ephesus. He is joined by Priscilla and Aquilla. After a brief stay, Paul departs from Ephesus with a promise to return, “if it is God’s will.” On his third missionary journey (est. 52-57 C.E.), Paul returns to Ephesus and remains there for almost 3 years (Acts 20:31). While in Ephesus, Paul established a network of “house churches”. This network eventually spread the “Jesus movement” throughout the Roman province of Asia. Acts chapters 19-20 details Paul’s ministry in Ephesus.

The Letter to the Ephesians has historically been attributed to the Apostle Paul (1:1; 3:1). However, the literary style and the distinct use of “non-Pauline” words cause some Bible scholars to question Paul’s authorship. Many scholars attribute the writing of Ephesians to one of Paul’s students (disciples). Other scholars take a different approach and argue that the Letter to the Ephesians was written by Paul as a circular letter to be distributed to several Christian churches in the Roman province of Asia. In fact, in some of the earliest and most important manuscripts the words “in Ephesus” (1:1) are missing. This argument affirms the rather impersonal nature of the letter and the lack of personal greetings that mark so many of Paul’s other letters. So, Ephesians is most likely a circular letter of Paul’s sent to several churches in western Asia Minor (including the Church in Ephesus).

The Letter to the Ephesians follows the standard pattern of ancient letter writing (see Outline of Ephesians). There is an opening (1:1-2), a body (2:1-6:20), and a

closing (6:21-24). The body of the letter is divided into two parts: theological reflection (2:1-3:21) and ethical exhortation (4:1-6:20). Unique features include a lengthy benediction (1:3-14) and two prayers (1:15-23 and 3:14-21). Ephesians 1:3-14 is one entire sentence in Greek.

Important themes that we will encounter in the Letter to the Ephesians include: the gift of God's grace, the call to unity; the cosmic Christ, and the universal Church.

OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

1. Greeting (1:1-2)
2. God's Purpose (1:3-14)
 - 1:10 is a key verse "as a plan for the fullness of time, [God will] gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth".
3. Prayer Pause A (1:15-23)
4. God Has a Purpose (2:1-3:21)
 - a. Saved by Grace (2:1-10)
 - b. One in Christ A (2:11-22)
 - c. Paul Proclaims God's Purpose (3:1-13)
 - d. Prayer Pause B (3:14-21)
5. God Has a People (4:1-6:20)
 - a. One in Christ B (4:1-6)
 - b. God's People Live (and Lead) with their Gifts (4:7-16)
 - c. God's People Live in the Light (4:17-5:20)
 - d. God's People Live in Community (5:21-6:9)
 - 1.) Husbands and Wives (5:21-33)
 - 2.) Children and Parents (6:1-4)
 - 3.) Slaves and Masters (6:5-9)
 - e. God's People Live Strong (6:10-20)
6. Benediction (6:21-24)

EPHESIANS MEMORY VERSES

Study 1

Ephesians 2:8 ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God”.***

Study 2

Ephesians 1:3 ***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.”***

Study 3

Ephesians 2:8-10 ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life”.***

Study 4

Ephesians 3:14 ***“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,”***

Study 5

Ephesians 4:11-12 ***“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,”***

Study 6

Ephesians 5:8 ***“For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light- “***

Study 7

Ephesians 6:10 ***“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.”***

LEADER STUDY #1: FOR EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON...

1. Read the Opening Scripture Passage: Ephesians 2:8
2. Take Prayer Requests and Lead an Opening Prayer
3. Offer a Welcome and Lead Introductions
4. Offer Any Announcements that Are Pertinent to the Group
5. Introduction to the Study (encourage a participant to read)

In the Book of Ecclesiastes 3:1 we read, **“For everything there is a season...”**. As I prepare this study, we are experiencing a typical Northwestern Ohio winter. We had a white Christmas on December 25, which was followed by a 61 degree December 26. Many of our neighbors delighted in the gift of an unseasonably warm day and took down their outdoor Christmas decorations. Living in the Midwest, we get this whole notion of seasons. We understand that seasons bring change.

People experience different seasons in life. Rachel and I are slowly learning what it means to be empty nesters, as our 2 oldest children have moved out of our home. Some of you may be looking forward to a new season of independence as you prepare for graduation or marriage. Others may be facing a more difficult season as you deal with aging parents, ill health, and limited mobility.

Churches also experience different seasons. As the Bishop of the Northwestern Ohio Synod, I am invited to participate in congregational anniversaries. St. Martin’s Lutheran Church in Archbold, Ohio recently celebrated their 150th anniversary. In their Fellowship Hall, they had an awesome display that highlighted different seasons in the history of their congregation.

The Church in Ephesus also experienced several different seasons. In Acts 19, the Ephesians experienced a season filled with excitement and potential as the Apostle Paul started his 3rd missionary journey (est. 52-57 C.E.) in the city of Ephesus with a bang! Baptisms, healings, Gospel preaching, exorcisms, bonfires, and a riot make for quite a season!

In Acts 20:13-38, there is quite a different season, as Paul bids farewell to the leaders of the Church in Ephesus. In Acts 20:37-38, we read, **“There was much weeping among them all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, grieving especially because of what he had said, that they would not see him again. Then they brought him to the ship.”** Sometimes our seasons involve tears and painful goodbyes.

In Revelation 2:1-7, there is a yet another season for the Church in Ephesus, as the Exalted Jesus offers comfort and challenge. Over 40 years have passed since St. Paul began his missionary work among the people of Ephesus, and things have changed. As many congregations in North America have experienced, the Church in Ephesus is no longer what it once was. Here Jesus praises the Ephesians for their toil, patience, and endurance. But then Jesus admonishes them, **“But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then from what you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first”** (Revelation 2:4-5). Sometimes our seasons are reminders of what we once were. And sometimes our seasons are reminders of what we have the potential to be.

6. Opening Reflection Questions

- A. What is your favorite season? Why?
- B. How would you describe the season of life you are currently experiencing?

7. Study and Conversation

A. The Season of Spring: The Church in Ephesus Springs into Action

- 1. Read Acts 19:1-7, 8-10, 11-20, 21-41 (encourage different readers)
- 2. What were some of the signs that the Church in Ephesus was springing into action? (see below)
 - a. 19:6-7 - The Holy Spirit allowed 12 disciples to speak in tongues and prophesy
 - b. 19:9-10 - Paul preached in a lecture hall for 2 years, and all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the Word of the Lord
 - c. 19:11 - God performed miracles through Paul
 - d. 19:12 - People with diseases were healed and evil spirits were driven out
 - e. 19:19 - Books of magic were publicly burned
 - f. 19:20 - The Word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed
 - g. 19:28-29 - A riot breaks out
 - h. 19:38-41 - A riot is quelled
- 3. When you consider the springtime of your life, where were you and what was your experience?

4. What would a springtime in the life of a congregation look like? Describe it.
5. Have you ever experienced a springtime in your congregation? Describe that time.
6. When you're in the season of springtime how might you prepare for the seasons that are to come?

B. The Season of Fall: Forlorn and Farewell

1. Read Acts 20:17-38
2. Reflect on Paul's season of forlorn and farewell?
 - a. Where is Paul going? (20:22 to Jerusalem)
 - b. What will Paul face in Jerusalem? (20:23 prison and persecution)
 - c. Will the Ephesian elders ever see Paul again? (20:25 no)
 - d. How long was Paul with them? (20:31 three years)
 - e. Why does Jesus say. **"It is more blessed to give than to receive"** (20:35). Is this true? Have you ever experienced this? Describe that experience.
 - f. How did Paul and the Ephesian elders say goodbye to one another?
 - 1.) 20:36 - they pray together
 - 2.) 20:37a - they weep together
 - 3.) 20:37b - they embrace and kiss
 - 4.) 20:38 c - they walk to the ship together
3. When have you experienced a season of forlorn and farewell? How did you say goodbye? How did you fail to say goodbye?
4. What does a season of forlorn and farewell look like in a congregation?

5. How do you find the hope and courage to move forward when you are experiencing a season of forlorn and farewell?

C. The Season of Winter: Faithful and Frozen

1. Read Revelation 2:1-7
2. For what does the exalted Jesus praise the Church in Ephesus?
 - a. 2:2 - for their toil and patient endurance
 - b. 2:2 - they will not tolerate evildoers and they test false apostles
 - c. 2:3 - they endure with great patience and have not grown weary
 - d. 2:6 - they hate the work of the Nicolaitans
3. For what does the exalted Jesus critique the Church in Ephesus?
 - a. 2:4 - they have abandoned the love they had at first
 - b. 2:5 - they have fallen from what they once were
4. What are some ways people get stuck and frozen?
5. How do churches get stuck and frozen?
6. How does one go about getting unstuck and unfrozen?

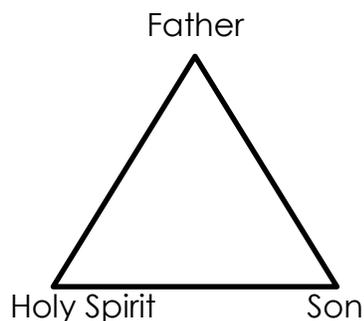
D. The Season of Summer: Sunshine and Salutations

1. Read Ephesians 1:1-2
 - a. This letter opening is called the salutation.
 - b. Ancient salutations usually have 3 parts
 - 1.) Name of sender: Paul, an apostle.
 - 2.) Name of recipients: God's holy people in Ephesus
 - 3.) A short blessing: "Grace and peace to you from God..."

2. Why does Paul begin with his credentials?
 3. As a group try to come up with 7 facts about the life of St. Paul.
 4. When is it good to know someone's credentials? (surgeon, dentist, tax accountant)
 5. How does Paul describe the people of Ephesus? (full of sunshine: holy and faithful) Is this an accurate description based upon the church folks you know? (probably not)
 6. What might be another way to describe followers of Jesus? (cloudy with a chance for sudden storms or simultaneously sinner and saint)
8. Closing Question: What is your one take away from today's study? Whom might you share this "take away" with this week?
9. Homework
- A. Read Ephesians Chapter 1
 - B. Memory Verse Ephesians 2:8
10. Closing Prayer (led by participant): ***Good and gracious God, we give you thanks for the seasons in our lives. Lead us to be steadfast in our seasons of discontent and grateful for our seasons of delight. Be with those we love and with those who are in need. Bless us to be the people you long for us to be in and out of season. In the name of Jesus. Amen***

LEADER STUDY #2: A PURPOSE AND A PAUSE FOR PRAYER

1. Read the Opening Scripture Passage: Ephesians 1:3
2. Take Prayer Requests and Lead an Opening Prayer
3. Offer a Welcome and Lead Introductions
4. Offer Any Announcements that Are Pertinent to the Group
5. Review: Any questions / comments from last week's study?
6. Memory Verse Recitation Ephesians 2:8 (ask for volunteers)
7. Introduction to the Study (encourage a participant to read)



Ascending Triangle: This Is Who God Is

God the Father

God the Son

God the Holy Spirit

The first shape that we encounter in our Ephesians study is the **Ascending Triangle**. This is where we always begin as Christians. Let's start at the top of the **Ascending Triangle** with the Father; then trace your finger down to the Son; then trace your finger over to the Holy Spirit; finally back to the Father. Then repeat. This **Ascending Triangle** will serve as our visible reminder of who God is. For Christians God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 1 God in 3 persons. God is God. Jesus is God. The Holy Spirit is God. What the Father is, the Son is, and so is the Holy Spirit.

The Apostles' Creed is another great reminder of who God is. Let's recite it together:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose

again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Did you notice that the Apostles' Creed has 3 paragraphs? Did you notice that the **Ascending Triangle** has 3 points? 1 for God the Father. 1 for God the Son. 1 for God the Holy Spirit. It is important for us to begin with who God is, and this is where Paul also begins in Ephesians chapter 1.

After Paul opens the Letter to the Ephesians with credentials, recipients, and a greeting (1:1-2), he turns to God. Ephesians 1:3-14 is actually 1 long sentence in the original Greek. Bible scholars call this section a "doxology" or blessing. As you read through this passage, notice some of the language Paul uses for God: God the Father (1:3); Lord Jesus Christ (1:3); Holy Spirit (1:13).

Also, note that this doxology (1:3-14) is composed of 3 sections of 3 blessings (there seem to be 3's everywhere we turn!). These blessings are based on the work of the triune God. 1:4-6 celebrates the fact that God chooses God's people by grace. 1:7-12 celebrates God's redemptive purpose through Jesus Christ for us and the world. 1:10 is a key verse as God promises to gather all things in him. 1:13-14 celebrates our sealing in the Holy Spirit. Each of these sections conclude with a mini-refrain that praises God's glory (1:6, 12, 14).

After the doxology (1:3-14), Paul pauses to pray a prayer of thanksgiving (1:15-23). During our study, we'll learn about the **T.R.I.P.** form of prayer and begin using it as a model for daily prayer.

8. Opening Reflection Questions

- A. Can you think of a time in your life when you felt like you didn't belong? Describe
- B. Can you think of a time in your life when you felt valued and a part of something? Describe.

9. Study and Conversation

- A. God's Purpose: Chosen by Grace
 - 1. Read Ephesians 1:3-6
 - 2. What word or phrase from this reading struck you? Why?

3. What has God done for us through Jesus Christ? (1:4 chose us in Christ)
4. What is special about the fact that God chooses us as His people? How might that differ from us choosing God? See John 15:16
5. We are not chosen by God for our own sake. We are chosen by God (by grace) for a purpose. In what ways might God want to bless others through you? In what ways might God want to bless others through your church?

B. God's Purpose: All Things Redeemed

1. Read Ephesians 1:7-12
2. What word or phrase from this reading struck you? Why
3. What is one of the blessings we receive in Jesus (see vs. 7)?
 - The forgiveness of our trespasses (sins)
4. In 1:8, Paul uses the word "lavish" to describe the blessings we receive in Jesus. This is a word we seldom use. Break into teams of 2 and come up with a sentence using the word "lavish".
5. What is God's big plan / purpose? (see vs. 10)
 - God promises to gather all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
6. Are there any places where you see God's big plan / purpose currently unfolding? How might you or your church join God in this work?

C. God's Purpose: Sealed with a Promise

1. Read Ephesians 1:13-14

2. When are we marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit?
3. What do you know about your baptism?
 - a. Where?
 - b. When?
 - c. Pastor's name?
 - d. Who was present?
 - e. God parents?
4. How does our baptism remind us that we belong?
5. In what ways do you bring praise to God's glory (1:14)?
6. In what ways does your church bring praise to God's glory (1:14)?

D. A Pause for Prayer

1. Read Ephesians 1:15-23
2. Read through the **T.R.I.P.** prayer model



Prayer: Martin Luther was once asked by his barber, “Dr. Luther, how do you pray?” In 1535, Luther wrote *A Simple Way to Pray, for a Good Friend*. Here Luther recommends prayer as a daily routine. For many people, the acronym **T.R.I.P.** has proven helpful for daily prayer.

Thanks: For whom / for what am I thankful?

Regret: What has caused me regret?

Intercession: For whom / for what do I need to pray?

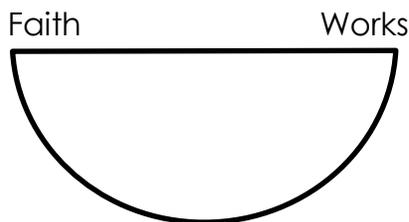
Purpose: What action is God calling me to take today?

3. Can you find any places in Paul's prayer (1:15-23) where he offers:
 - a. **Thanks** (vs. 16)
 - b. **Intercession** (vss. 17-19)

4. Compose a simple 4 sentence prayer using the **T.R.I.P.** prayer model.
10. Closing Question: What is your one take away from today's study? Whom might you share this "take away" with this week?
11. Homework
 - A. Read Ephesians chapter 2
 - B. Memory Verse Ephesians 1:3
 - C. Work through Study #3
12. Closing Prayer (led by participant): ***Good and gracious God, we give you thanks for your precious gift of grace. Forgive us for those times we have taken your grace for granted. Be with those who are in need of your healing and comfort: the sick and the suffering. Lead us to your purpose for our lives, that we may be the hope that this world so desperately needs. In the name of Jesus. Amen***

LEADER STUDY #3: SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

1. Read the Opening Scripture Passage: Ephesians 2:8-10
2. Take Prayer Requests and Lead an Opening Prayer
3. Offer Any Announcements that Are Pertinent to the Group
4. Review: Any questions / comments from last week's study?
5. Memory Verse Recitation Ephesians 1:3 (ask for volunteers)
6. Introduction to the Study (encourage a participant to read)



Semi-Circle: Rhythms of Life

Rest and Labor

Time On and Time Out

Faith and Works

The second shape that we encounter in our Ephesians study is the **Semi-Circle**. The **Semi-Circle** is a reminder that there are rhythms to life. Picture the **Semi-Circle** rocking back and forth like a playground see saw. We rest and labor. We abide and bear fruit. We practice faith and works.

So, why does it always have to be “either / or”? Republican or Democrat? Books or Movies? Coke or Pepsi? PC or Mac? Michigan or Ohio State? (Michigan!). Faith or Works? When its “either / or” someone must be right and someone must be wrong? And usually, I’m right and you’re wrong!

Think about how different the world would be if there was a bit more “both / and”. Both books and movies. Both coffee and tea. Both faith and works. I find “both / and” thinking to be a spiritual discipline. It’s not binary thinking. It’s an approach that challenges me to consider that there may be alternative ways. And it’s an approach that challenges me to consider that I may be wrong. “Both / and” thinking keeps us open to new possibilities and to the moving of the Holy Spirit. Think about how different the world would be if we put God’s gift of sacred rhythm into practice. Both rest and labor. Both time on and time out. Both faith and works.

In Ephesians 1:10, Paul writes about God’s great plan to unite all things in Christ. In Ephesians 2:1-10 God puts the great plan into action and draws us out of death and sin to make us alive in Christ. This God does out of great love (2:4), through faith (2:8), and by grace (2:5). **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God”** (2:8). Salvation is a gift. Faith is a gift. Grace is a huge gift. But with the gift comes a purpose. We are saved by grace, through faith... for good works (2:10). Another way to consider God’s gift of grace is to ask the question, *“Since there is nothing for us to do to earn our salvation, what do we now get to do?”* We get to bear fruit. We get to serve God by doing good works for our neighbor and the world. There is a sacred rhythm to God’s economy, as the **Semi-Circle** gently dances back and forth: rest and labor, books and movies, faith and works.

In Ephesians 2:11-22, Paul expands God’s great plan. As Jewish and Gentile believers are reconciled to God in Christ, they are also reconciled to one

another in Christ (the vertical goes horizontal). **“For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us”** (2:14). In Christ, there is no longer Jew or Gentile. There is no longer rich or poor. There is no longer black or white. Through the reconciling truth of the cross there is only one body (2:16). As Paul writes in Ephesians 4:4-6, **“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”**. Unity in Christ is a part of God’s great plan, and as followers of Jesus, we have a role to play in that great plan.

7. Opening Reflection Questions

- A. How would you describe the rhythm of your typical day? Your typical week? How might God’s rhythm be different?
- B. How often do you get to relate with folks from different cultures, ethnicities, and races? What do you enjoy about these cross-cultural experiences? Where do you find yourself challenged?

8. Study and Conversation

- A. Saved by Grace, through Faith... for Good Works.
 - 1. Read Ephesians 2:1-10
 - 2. What word or phrase from this reading struck you? Why?
 - 3. What are some words or phrases Paul uses to describe the human condition in 2:1-3?
 - a. 2:1 - dead
 - b. 2:2 - disobedient
 - c. 2:3 - children of wrath
 - 4. God loves us with a great love (2:4). Why?
 - Love is who God is. God is love (see 1 John 4:16).
 - 5. In 2:4-9, Paul writes about the tremendous things God does for us. List as many as you can find. Try to put them in your own words as you are able.
 - a. 2:4 - God loves us

- b. 2:5 - God makes us alive and God saves us by grace
- c. 2:6 - God raises us up with Christ and seats us with him in heavenly places
- d. 2:7 - God expresses kindness to us
- e. 2:8 God saves us by grace through faith

- 6. Mom always said, "Nobody likes a bragger." Are there ever any times when it's ok to boast?
- 7. Re-read 2:10, We are saved by grace through faith for a purpose. What is that purpose? (good works). What are some things we may do for God (good works) to say thank you to God for everything God does for us?

B. One in Christ A

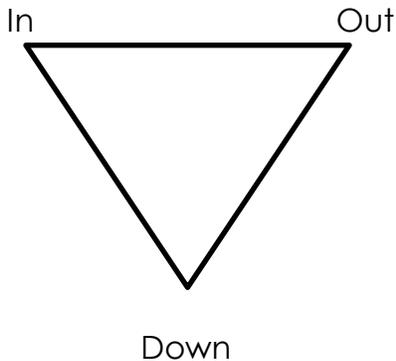
- 1. Read Ephesians 2:11-22
- 2. What word or phrase from this reading struck you? Why?
- 3. What are some words / phrases Paul uses to describe the Gentiles in 2:12? Are there people living today who are described in the same way?
 - a. without Christ
 - b. aliens
 - c. strangers
 - d. without hope
- 4. What are the dividing walls in our churches, communities, and country that continue to keep us apart?
- 5. How do you dismantle a wall that has stood for years and years?
 - Through prayer, with others, 1 brick at a time
- 6. What do you think Paul means when he writes in 2:19 that "you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints"?

7. What might you do this week to personally tear down a wall and seek unity?
8. What might you do this month to help your church tear down a wall and seek unity?
9. According to Ephesians 2:11-22, what do you believe God wants us to do about:
 - a. Those living in poverty?
 - b. Racial reconciliation?
 - c. The refugee crisis?
10. Closing Question: What is your one take away from today's study? Whom might you share this "take away" with this week?
11. Homework
 - A. Read Ephesians chapter 3
 - B. Memory Verse Ephesians 2:8-10
 - C. Work through Study #4
12. Closing Prayer (led by participant): ***Good and gracious God, we give you thanks for your precious gifts of salvation, faith, and grace. Even when we were strangers and aliens, you gathered us together and made us your own. Lead us to be your peace in this world. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen***

LEADER STUDY #4: A PURPOSE AND A PAUSE FOR PRAYER (PART 2)

1. Read the Opening Scripture Passage: Ephesians 3:14
2. Take Prayer Requests and Lead an Opening Prayer
3. Offer Any Announcements that Are Pertinent to the Group

4. Review: Any questions / comments from last week's study?
5. Memory Verses Recitation Ephesians 2:8-10 (ask for volunteers)
6. Introduction to the Study (encourage a participant to read)



Descending Triangle: This Is What God Does

God Comes Down.

God Gathers Us In.

God Sends Us Out.

The third shape that we encounter in our Ephesians study is the **Descending Triangle**. You may recall that the **Ascending Triangle** was our visible reminder of who God is. God the Father. God the Son. God the Holy Spirit. The **Descending Triangle** is a visible reminder of what God does. God comes down. God gathers us in. God sends us out. Down, In, Out. Down, In, Out. Down, In, Out...

God comes down to us in Jesus Christ. As we read in John 1:14, **“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.”** God always comes down. As we read in Luther’s Small Catechism, God comes down in Jesus Christ, to redeem us and free us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. This Jesus does with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death (see the explanation of the Apostles’ Creed: 2nd Article). Through the gift of the cross and the truth of the resurrection, we are blessed with the gift of forgiveness and promise of eternal life. God comes down. Down, In, Out...

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God gathers us in. God draws us into community, where we may grow in our love for God and others. As we read in Luther’s Small Catechism, *“...the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, **gathers**, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth...”* (see the explanation of the Apostles’ Creed: 3rd Article). God gathers us in. Down, In, Out...

And as nice as it is to stay in (in fact many congregations do just that!), God doesn’t want us to stay in. God wants us out, so God sends us out. At the very end of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus sends the Church out. And Jesus came and said to them, **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the**

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20). We were not called and gathered to stay in; we are called and gathered to go out. God sends us out. Down, In, Out...

In Ephesians 3:1-13 Paul shares a great mystery that is revealed by the Holy Spirit (3:5). The revelation is this: God's great plan of gathering all things in him (see 1:10), includes not just the people of Israel, but also the Gentiles (non-Israelites). As we read in 3:6, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel. God's great plan of gathering all things in him, includes everyone (and everything). You might say that God is in the gathering business, and God sends St. Paul to share the Good News about this gathering. That in Jesus Christ and through the power of the Gospel, God will bring to Godself each one and every one. The mystery is solved. God comes down. God gathers us in. God sends us out. Down, In, Out.

In Ephesians 3:14-21 Paul prays for the Ephesians. He prays for strength, power, and love. These are elements the church will need as it lives out its calling to be God's blessed community out in the world (see 4:1). This prayer also ends Paul's theological reflection (2:1-3:21) and prepares the reader for a series of practical and ethical exhortations (4:1-6:30).

7. Opening Reflection Questions

- A. What is one big dream you've had that has come true? Share your dream.
- B. How might you describe the difference between “the love of power” or “the power of love”? Can you think of some real-life examples?

8. Study and Conversation

A. Paul Proclaims God's Purpose

- 1. Read Ephesians 3:1 and 3:14
- 2. Paul begins chapter 3:1, **“This is the reason...”** He then puts that thought “on hold” and inserts a 12-verse account of God's purpose, only to resume his original thought in 3:14, **“For this reason...”**

- Have you ever had to put your life on hold for someone or something? Describe it. Would you do it again? Why or why not?

3. Read Ephesians 3:2-13

- As you reflect on this reading, do you think God has a purpose? If so, what might that purpose be?
 - 1:10 - God's great purpose is to gather all things in him.
 - 3:6 - God's great purpose includes the Gentiles (everyone)
- As you reflect on this reading, do you think Paul has a purpose? If so, what might that purpose be?
 - 3:8 - share the Gospel with the Gentiles
 - 3:9 - to help everyone to see God's great plan
- What might your mission be? How might you find it and pursue it?
- Why does God always include everyone? How do we / don't we follow God's example? Are there places for improvement in your daily life?
- In 3:13 Paul writes about his suffering. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, Paul details the suffering that he endured. Did any good come out of Paul's suffering?
- How might you offer care for someone who is currently suffering?

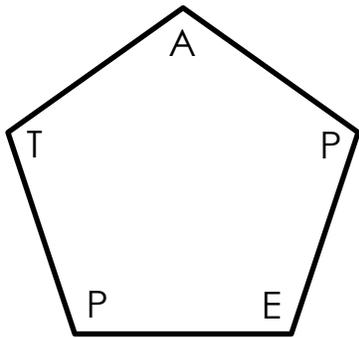
B. A Pause for Prayer (part 2)

- Read Ephesians 3:14-21
- What word or phrase from this reading struck you? Why?
- Paul writes about "bowing his knees". What are other ways people pray? What is your most common way to pray?
- Paul prays that the Ephesians may be "strengthened in their inner being". How would you describe a person who is inwardly strong?

5. How is Paul's prayer similar to or different than the types of prayers you or those in your church pray?
6. Love is an important part of this prayer.
 - Can you think of some specific ways:
 - God loves you
 - God loves the world
 - You love God
 - You love the world
9. Closing Question: What is your one take away from today's study? Whom might you share this "take away" with this week?
10. Homework
 - A. Read Ephesians chapter 4:1-16
 - B. Memory Verse Ephesians 3:14
 - C. Work through Study #5
11. Closing Prayer based on Ephesians 3:14-21 (led by participant): ***Let us pray... We pray that, according to the riches of God's glory, we may be strengthened in our inner being with power through the Holy Spirit. We pray that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith, as we are being rooted and grounded in love. We pray that we may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. We pray that the power of God at work within us may accomplish abundantly far more than we could ever ask or imagine. To God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.***

LEADER STUDY #5: UNITY AND MATURITY

1. Read the Opening Scripture Passage: Ephesians 4:11-12
2. Take Prayer Requests and Lead an Opening Prayer
3. Offer Any Announcements that Are Pertinent to the Group
4. Review: Any questions / comments from last week's study?
5. Memory Verses Recitation Ephesians 3:14 (ask for volunteers)
6. Introduction to the Study (encourage a participant to read)



Pentagon: Gifts for the Church

Apostles: Extend the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Prophets: Know God's Will for the Christian Community

Evangelists: Recruit Others to the Ministry and Mission

Pastors: Protect and Nurture the Christian Community

Teachers: Understand and Explain God's Truth

The fourth shape that we encounter in our Ephesians study is the **Pentagon**. The 5-sided **Pentagon** is a visible reminder of the gifts that God gives through the Holy Spirit to leaders in the church for the world. Paul identifies many spiritual gifts in Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28-31. In Ephesians 4:11, Paul identifies 5 ministry gifts. Each point of the **Pentagon** represents a ministry gift. **A-P-E-P-T**. Let's take a brief look at each gift.

APOSTLES extend. They have the unique gift of extending the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In Greek, the word apostle means: "sent one". Apostles ensure that the faith is transmitted from one context to another, from one culture to another, and from one generation to another. They are always thinking about bridging barriers, establishing the church in new contexts, developing new leaders, and networking. A church with an apostle at the helm might become overextended, and may need the leadership gifts of a pastor to ensure people are cared for and are growing in discipleship. Examples: St. Paul, St. Ignatius and the Jesuits.

PROPHETS know God's will for the Christian community. They are particularly attuned to God and God's truth for today. They bring correction and challenge "misdirection" in our churches and culture. They challenge the community to obey what God has commanded. They point out shadow missions. They question the status quo. Without other **A-P-E-P-T** leaders in place, prophets can become activists, or disengage from the community and become "other-worldly". A good teacher can help keep a prophet grounded. Examples: Jeremiah and John the Baptist.

EVANGELISTS recruit. These infectious communicators of the Gospel message recruit others to the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. They call for a response to God's redemption in Christ, and draw believers to engage the wider mission, growing the kingdom. However, some evangelists can be so focused on reaching those outside the church that maturing and strengthening those on the inside may be neglected. A church with an evangelist at the helm needs a pastor and teacher to ensure people are cared for and are growing in the faith. Examples: Philip the Evangelist and Billy Graham.

PASTORS protect and nurture. They are caregivers of the community, who focus on the protection and spiritual maturity of God's flock. They cultivate a loving and spiritually mature network of relationships, and make and develop disciples. Some pastors can value stability to the detriment of the mission. Pastors need apostles and evangelists to lead them out into the community and world. If we only have pastors leading a congregation, what might happen? Examples: St. Timothy, Dallas Willard, Henry Nouwen.

TEACHERS understand and explain. Communicators of God's truth and wisdom, they help others become biblically fluent to know God's will. They guide others toward wisdom, help the community remain faithful to God's word, and construct a "community theology". Without the input of the other **A-P-E-P-T** leaders, teachers can fall into dogmatism or dry intellectualism. They may fail to see the personal or missional aspects of the church's ministry. Apostles, evangelists, and prophets help teachers look up from their books and see the world. Examples: St. Augustine, John Ortberg, Rob Bell, and Timothy Keller.

The body of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians is divided into two parts: theological reflection (2:1-3:21) and ethical exhortation (4:1-6:20). In 2:1-3:21, we learn that God has a purpose. In 4:1-6:20, we learn that God has a people who are called through the Gospel to live lives of integrity, service, and love. ***"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (4:1).***

In Ephesians 4, Paul expresses the need for Christian unity (4:1-6) and spiritual maturity (4:7-16). As we read in 4:3, the Holy Spirit creates unity, and it is our call

to maintain that unity. Paul follows this call to unity with 7 brief confessional statements (see 4:4-6): 1. One body; 2. One Spirit; 3. One hope; 4. One Lord; 5. One faith; 6. One baptism; 7. One God and Father of all. The call to maintain unity is very clear from St. Paul, and from God.

Paul then turns to spiritual maturity, and this is one of my concerns as Bishop. Our folks are not formed in the faith as they should be. Many of our congregations are spiritually immature. So, God gifts the church with 5 leadership gifts: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers. The purpose of these gifts is to equip God's people to do God's work. These gifts are given to unify, strengthen, and mature the church, and not for self-promotion.

7. Opening Reflection Questions

- A. Describe a time where a group of people were divided and separated from one another (family, work, school, church).
- B. Tell about a time that you were on a team (sports, dance, church, work). What are the characteristics of an effective team?

8. Study and Conversation

- A. Unity: One in Christ (part 2)
 - 1. Read Ephesians 4:1-6
 - 2. What word or phrase from this reading struck you? Why?
 - 3. What threatens unity in your Christian community?
 - 4. Look over the 7 "one" phrases in 4:4-6. Is there a particular phrase that you can relate to? Why?
 - 5. How do we have conversations in our churches / communities / families when we are so polarized? Where might grace fit in?

B. Maturity: God's People Live and Lead with their Gifts

1. Read Ephesians 4:7-16
 2. What word or phrase from this reading struck you? Why?
 3. Relook at the 5 gifts that are defined in the introduction. Is there 1 particular gift listed that you believe you may have?
 4. The purpose of our gifts is to grow to maturity in Christ. How might each of these 5 gifts accomplish that purpose?
 - a. Apostles
 - b. Prophets
 - c. Evangelists
 - d. Pastors
 - e. Teachers
 5. What are some clear signs of spiritual maturity (see 4:13, 15)?
What are some clear signs of spiritual immaturity (see 4:14)?
 - a. 4:13 - unity, knowledge, maturity
 - b. 4:15 - speak the truth, grow up
 - c. 4:14 - acting like children
 6. What are the characteristics of a spiritual toddler?
 7. What are the characteristics of a spiritual redwood? How might you become a spiritual redwood?
 8. How do you choose leaders in your congregation? Might there be a better way?
9. Closing Question: What is your one take away from today's study? Whom might you share this "take away" with this week?

10. Homework
 - A. Read Ephesians chapter 4:17-5:20
 - B. Memory Verse Ephesians 4:11-12
 - C. Work through Study #6

11. Closing Prayer (led by participant): **Let us pray... we give you thanks, O God for this life that you have called us to live. Help us to maintain your gift of unity in our families, congregations, and places of labor. And help us to discover and use the gifts that you have given us, that we might equip your people for mission and ministry. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen**

LEADER STUDY #6: LIVE IN THE LIGHT

1. Read the Opening Scripture Passage: Ephesians 5:8
2. Take Prayer Requests and Lead an Opening Prayer
3. Offer Any Announcements that Are Pertinent to the Group
4. Review: Any questions / comments from last week's study?
5. Memory Verses Recitation Ephesians 4:11-12 (ask for volunteers)
6. Introduction to the Study

Live in the Light



The Light: In Ephesians 5:8, Christians are called to live as children of light. As followers of Jesus, the light of God shines in us and through us. Yes, we are saved by grace, and not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9); but the way we live our lives is important. Some theologians argue that we are saved by grace through faith... for good works (Ephesians 2:10). The lit candle will serve as a reminder that we are to live in the light of Christ.

The fifth image that we encounter in our Ephesians study is the **Light**. The lit candle will serve as a reminder that we are to live in the **Light** of Christ. In

Matthew 5:16 Jesus says, ***“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven”.***

In Ephesians 4:17-5:20 Paul offers instruction for Christian living. He continues the theme from 4:1, ***“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called”.*** Paul calls the Ephesians to ***“take off the old, and put on the new”*** (4:17-5:2); and to ***“live in the light”*** (5:3-20). A few key verses in this section include: 4:26, ***“Be angry, but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger”***; and 5:8, ***“For once you were in darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light”.***

7. Opening Reflection Questions

- A. Can you recall a time in your life when someone's words hurt you or your words hurt someone? How did it effect your relationship? Was the incident ever resolved?
- B. Tell about a recent ad you have seen that uses sexuality to sell something. Why do companies do this?

8. Study and Conversation

A. Off with the Old, On with the New

- 1. Read Ephesians 4:17-5:2
- 2. What word or phrase from this reading struck you? Why?
- 3. In 4:17-19 Paul describes how the dominant culture lives in Ephesus. What does he affirm and insist we not do? Does this take hard work?
 - a. Live as the dominant culture.
 - b. Yes, this is hard work to do.
- 4. In 4:22-24 Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians what they had been taught about living a new life in Christ.
 - a. Find 3 things the Ephesians have been taught by Paul
 - 1.) 4:22 - put away your former way of life, your old self
 - 2.) 4:23 - be renewed in your minds

- 3.) 4:24 - clothe yourself in the likeness of God
 - b. How might you put 1 of these teachings into practice?
 5. Read 4:25 and 4:29 What is the connection between these 2 verses? How does 4:25 and 4:29 relate to Matthew 12:33-37?
 - a. 4:25 and 4:29 - deal with the words that we speak
 - b. Matthew 12:33-37
 - 1.) Good tree bears good fruit
 - 2.) Bad tree bears bad fruit
 - 3.) Out of the heart, the mouth speaks (good and evil)
 6. What is the purpose behind our words as followers of Jesus?
 - 4:29 - “... **so that your words may give grace to those who hear**”
 7. What kind words do others need from us? How might you put this into action this week?
 8. In 5:1-2 Paul writes that we should imitate God. How might we do that?
 - a. With love
 - b. Sacrificially
- B. God's People Live in the Light
1. Read Ephesians 5:3-20
 2. What word or phrase from this reading struck you? Why?
 3. In 5:3 the Greek word for fornication or sexual immorality is porneia. Of course this is where we get the word pornography. Pornography is a multi-billion-dollar business and can be easily downloaded or viewed with just the click of a mouse.
 - a. How does pornography affect the people who view it?
 - b. How does pornography affect our relationships with God and others?

4. Trace the characteristics of light and darkness in 5:8-14. Give 2 examples of each:
 - a. Light: fruit of light is found in all that is good and true
 - b. Darkness: works of darkness are not fruitful.

5. How do we avoid works of darkness?
 - By naming them for what they are and exposing them.

6. Read 5:19 what role did psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs play in Paul's life?

7. Christian music challenge: tune in to a Christian radio station this week, and listen for the entire week. Report your experience back to the group next week.

9. Closing Question: What is your one take away from today's study? Whom might you share this "take away" with this week?

10. Homework
 - A. Read Ephesians chapter 5:21-6:9
 - B. Memory Verse Ephesians 5:8
 - C. Work through Study #7
 - D. Christian Music Challenge

11. Closing Prayer (led by participant): ***Let us pray... Good and gracious God, lead us to be the people you long for us to be. Lead us to holy thoughts, holy words, and holy actions. Let your light shine through our lives. Empower us by your Holy Spirit to be more like Jesus. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen***

LEADER STUDY #7: LIVE IN COMMUNITY

1. Read the Opening Scripture Passage: Ephesians 6:10
2. Take Prayer Requests and Lead an Opening Prayer
3. Offer Any Announcements that Are Pertinent to the Group
4. Review: Any questions / comments from last week's study?
5. Memory Verse Recitation Ephesians 5:8 (ask for volunteers)
6. Introduction to the Study (encourage a participant to read)

Table of Duties

Table of Duties: For Christians, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ frees us from having to impress God with who we are and what we do. By faith in God's promise in Christ, we are free to serve our neighbor in our everyday lives. Martin Luther called daily life a "holy order and estate", and used Scripture passages in what has traditionally been called a "Table of Duties" to show how Christians should live in family and society.

The sixth image that we encounter in our Ephesians study is the **Table of Duties**. Martin Luther's *Small Catechism* was originally published in pamphlet form, and each part (10 Commandments, Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, etc), was sold separately. At the top of each pamphlet was this heading, "*As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household*". Luther wrote the *Small Catechism* for the home, so that parents could instruct their children in the basics of the Christian faith.

Later editions of *Luther's Small Catechism* included additional parts: Morning and Evening Blessings, Blessings Before and After Meals, the Marriage Service, and the **Table of Duties**, also called, "*The Household Chart of Some Bible Passages*". Here Martin Luther divides life into 3 realms: church, society, and home. Bible verses are used as examples for how Christians are to behave in these 3 realms. Luther used Scripture passages from Ephesians 6:1-9 as examples for: children (6:1-3); parents (6:4); employees (6:5-8); and employers (6:9). Luther altered Paul's original writing ("slaves and masters") from the Letter to the Ephesians, to reflect the economic reality of 16th century Germany.

After writing about how Christians are to live in community (4:17-5:20), Paul offers instruction for the Christian Household. This builds upon the theme from 4:1, **“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called”**. A **“life worthy of our calling”** as Christians is an integrated life. The people that we are in public should mirror the people that we are behind closed doors. In the **Table of Duties** Paul focuses on the relationships between husbands and wives (5:21-33); children and parents (6:1-3), and slaves and masters (6:5-9).

The **Table of Duties** that Paul describes in Ephesians 5:21-6:9 must be understood in its historical context. Paul is writing during the time of the Roman Empire, and social relationships in the ancient world were much different than today. During the 1st century C.E., husbands and fathers were the undisputed head of the household, and everyone submitted to their authority including: wives, children, and slaves. But notice that Paul begins the **Table of Duties** by calling upon each person in the relationship to submit or to “be subject” in a particular way (Ephesians 5:21), out of reverence for Christ. Paul makes it very clear that the proper use of authority is through reverence (5:21), love (5:25), and promise (6:2).

7. Opening Reflection Questions

- A. What is one of your best memories of your mom and/or dad? Tell about it.
- B. Tell about a boss / manager / supervisor who made a positive impact on your life. Tell about a boss / manager / supervisor who made your life difficult. (Please do not use names).

8. Study and Conversation

- A. Wives and Husbands
 - 1. Read Ephesians 5:21-33
 - 2. What word or phrase from this reading struck you? Why?
 - 3. What does it mean to “yield”, “submit” or “be subject” to someone? When might “submission” be a positive thing? When might it turn negative?

4. How does the phrase “out of reverence for Christ” change things?
 - When our motivation is “out of love” or “out of reverence” it moves from a “have to” to a “get to”. I willingly submit myself to God, knowing that God’s ways are more beautiful and holy.
5. What are some concrete ways that spouses might honor one another in daily life? Please list up to 5 ways.
6. Describe what a good and healthy marriage looks like.

B. Children and Parents

1. Read Ephesians 6:1-4
2. What word or phrase from this reading struck you? Why?
3. Take a look at the 10 Commandments section of Martin Luther’s *Small Catechism*. What is the 4th Commandment? What is unique about the placement of the 4th commandment? (Hint: Commandments 1-3 focus on our relationship with God. Commandments 4-10 focus on our relationship with _____.) Why do you think God begins with parents and children?
4. What is the promise that Paul quotes in 6:2-3? (see also Deuteronomy 5:16). Do you see a connection between the promise and the keeping of the commandment to, “Honor your father and mother”?
5. What are some things that make honoring our parents difficult?
6. Is disagreeing with our parents the same as dishonoring them? Why or why not?

- C. Slaves and Masters (Employees and Employers)
1. Read Ephesians 6:5-9
 2. What word or phrase from this reading struck you? Why?
 3. Paul's world was a world in which slavery was a reality. Slavery is still a reality in some places of the world. Most households in ancient Rome owned slaves. If Paul were writing this letter in our culture today, he would address his instructions to employees and employers.
 4. In what ways do we honor God by working diligently?
 5. List some ways employers misuse or threaten employees in today's world.
- D. Choose one role from today's study: husband, wife, parent, child, employee, employer. What 2-3 changes will you make in the next week based on today's study?
9. Closing Question: What is your one take away from today's study? Whom might you share this "take away" with this week?
10. Homework
- A. Read Ephesians chapter 6:10-24
 - B. Memory Verse Ephesians 6:10
 - C. Compose Study #8
11. Closing Prayer (led by participant): ***Let us pray... Dear Lord, we thank you for the precious gift of marriage, family, and honorable work. Lead us to be in right relationship with you and with those you have given us to love and serve. Out of reverence for Christ help us to be the husband, wife, parent, child, employee, employer that you long for us to be. In the name of Jesus. Amen.***

LEADER STUDY #8: LIVE STRONG

Well, you did it. You have successfully led 7 sessions of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. Thank you and congratulations. But wait. There is need for 1 more: the famous "The Whole Armor of God" passage from Ephesians 6:10-20. For your final challenge, I want to encourage you to prepare a final study for your group. Use the outline below as a guide. You have come this far by faith. Trust in God's goodness. You can do it.

1. Select an Opening Scripture Passage from Ephesians 6:10-24
2. Take Prayer Requests and Lead an Opening Prayer
3. Offer Any Announcements that Are Pertinent to the Group
4. Review: Any questions / comments from last week's study?
5. Memory Verse Recitation Ephesians 6:10 (ask for volunteers)
6. Write a 1 page Introduction to the Study based on Ephesians 6:10-24
7. Come Up with 2 Opening Reflection Questions
8. Compose a Study and Questions for Conversation based on Ephesians 6:10-24
9. Closing Question: What is your one take away from today's study? Whom might you share this "take away" with this week?
10. Homework
 - A. Schedule a Time to Celebrate (meal, coffee) the completion of this 8 session study.
 - B. Encourage the group to remain together for additional future studies.
11. Compose and Lead a Closing Prayer