



A SERIES IN EPHESIANS

MADE ALIVE

WHO YOU REALLY
ARE IN CHRIST

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDIES

MADE ALIVE

Who were you made to be? In many ways, it's one of the biggest questions of our culture. But how do we find out who we really are? There are so many ways that we can seek self-discovery, self-actualising, or self-awareness, that can help to give us some answers. But in the letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul gives us a staggering claim: To be alive in Christ is to become what humanity was always meant to be.

The church in Ephesus was well known to Paul—he stayed there for two years, teaching them about the kingdom of God, and about the Scriptures (Acts 19:8–10). It was a city filled with temples, magic and idols. So when the Gospel reached the city, there were always going to be complications for the people coming to follow Christ.

As an answer to the Ephesians in the face of all of these challenges, Paul takes the Ephesians on a sweeping tour of God's work in history and in all things, showing how they are all called to bring glory to Christ, through his death, resurrection and ascension, to make us alive in Christ. Ephesians is about God's plan across all of history to reconcile all creation, to unite people from all nations to himself, through Christ.

As people who were dead in their sins, and made alive in Christ, Ephesians shows us our part in God's greater story, and who we are in every part of life. The letter calls us to walk in love, holiness, and wisdom within our local church and in the world.

Ephesians is about what it means to be made alive, to live our new life in Christ. It's about who we are in Christ in every part of life.

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WEEK 1

I AM IN CHRIST

Ephesians 1:1-14

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will:

To the faithful saints in Christ Jesus at Ephesus. 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him. 5 He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One.

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace 8 that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he purposed in Christ 10 as a plan for the right time—to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in him.

11 In him we have also received an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will, 12 so that we who had already put our hope in Christ might bring praise to his glory.

13 In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. 14 The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.

STUDY QUESTIONS



DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn? What don't you understand?

If you had to describe who you are, what are the top three words that come to mind?

Read Ephesians 1:1-14.

What are the spiritual blessings listed in verses 4-6?

Find every time "glory" or "glorious". From each example, what's glorious? Why is it glorious?

What is the "mystery" of verse 9?

What are the time-stamps in this passage? What is happening in the past? Present? Future?

Past	Present	Future



NURTURE

What do you love in this passage? How can we see God's character here?

Try and think of three words to sum up how this passage is telling us who we are in Christ?

Which of the spiritual blessings in Ephesians 1 do you need to remember most at the moment?

What comfort does it bring to you, knowing that you already have "every spiritual blessing" in Christ?



ACT

How should we live differently because of these words? What is one thing in this passage that really stirs you to act?

It's a massive comfort that in this glorious sweep of God's work of salvation throughout all of history, our only part to play is "you believed in him... when you heard the word of truth" (verse 13). How can you be hearing the word of truth more this week?

Which do you need to spend more time thinking about: What God has done for you in the past, how God is at work in your life right now, or what hope that God has stored up for you in the future?

WEEK 2

I AM RICH

Ephesians 1:15-23

1:15 This is why, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. 17 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, would give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the mighty working of his strength.

20 He exercised this power in Christ by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens— 21 far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he subjected everything under his feet and appointed him as head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Ephesians 1:15-23.



DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn? What don't you understand?

If the Ephesians are already loving like Christ, why does Paul pray for them to demonstrate Christ's love?

What part do the Father, Son and Spirit play in Paul's prayer for the Ephesians?

Father	Son	Spirit

Paul prays that "the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know the hope of his calling." Try and rephrase that prayer in your own words:

I pray that...



NURTURE

What do you love in this passage? How can we see God's character here?

Try and think of three words to sum up how this passage is showing us who we are in Christ?

How does verse 21 give us confidence for our prayers?

What is the main focus of Paul's prayer in this passage?
How can that be shaping your prayers?



CT

How should we live differently because of these words? What is one thing in this passage that really stirs you to act?

Write out a prayer inspired by Paul's prayer, asking for God to work in his church today:

Paul starts out his prayer by saying: "Since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers." How might Paul's faithfulness in prayer inspire you in your own prayer life?

WEEK 3

I AM ALIVE

Ephesians 2:1-10

2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins 2 in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. 3 We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, 5 made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! 6 He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— 9 not from works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Paul wants us to see who we are now in Christ, in sharp contrast to who we were before.



DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn? What don't you understand?

Read Ephesians 2:1-10.

How would you summarise the stages Paul describes?

Who you were (verses 1-3)

Who you are (verses 4-7)

Who was responsible for each stage? (see v. 8-10)

We find out in verses 11-13 that Paul is addressing "you" Gentiles vs. "we" Jews. What does verse 3 tell us about who was dead in sin? Is this surprising?



NURTURE

What do you love in this passage? How can we see God's character here?

How do we see God's love for us here?

What should this passage do to our pride in our own achievements?

What's the relationship between feeling God's love and taking pride in your own achievements?



CT

How should we live differently because of these words? What is one thing in this passage that really stirs you to act?

Some people are motivated to do good works by pride, others by wanting a reward from God. What motivation does verse 10 give?

Some people would criticise this passage for being so negative about humanity's sinfulness and giving people low self-esteem. What kind of self-esteem does this passage actually encourage?

In Christ, we really have been changed from dead to alive. If that's who we really are, we should live like it! Let's pray for each other that we would.

WEEK 4

**WE ARE
RECONCILED**

Ephesians 2:11-22

2:11 So, then, remember that at one time you were Gentiles in the flesh—called “the uncircumcised” by those called “the circumcised,” which is done in the flesh by human hands. 12 At that time you were without Christ, excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility. In his flesh, 15 he made of no effect the law consisting of commands and expressed in regulations, so that he might create in himself one new man from the two, resulting in peace. 16 He did this so that he might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross by which he put the hostility to death. 17 He came and proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So, then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God’s household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building, being put together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you are also being built together for God’s dwelling in the Spirit.

STUDY QUESTIONS



DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn? What don't you understand?

In Ephesians so far, we've heard how God has chosen us in Christ in eternity past, to get every spiritual blessing now, by trusting in the Gospel. In the second half of Ephesians 2, we hear about how this salvation is the same for, everyone, Jewish people and non-Jewish.

Read Ephesians 2:11-22.

In what sense were the Gentiles "far off"? (v. 13)

In what sense were the Gentiles "brought near"? (v. 13)

What does it mean for Jesus to have created "one new man"? (v. 15)

Verse 17 says that: " He came and proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near." When did Jesus do this? What was the message?



NURTURE

What do you love in this passage? How can we see God's character here?

What would this unity have meant for racial divides that would have existed in the church?

What does this passage have to say to those who feel far from God?



CT

How should we live differently because of these words? What is one thing in this passage that really stirs you to act?

How should this unity speak to how we treat people of different races in our church?

Read verses 21-22. Try and spend some time thinking of three specific ways that this “growing” and “building” might play out in our church?

In our culture today, it isn't shocking to include Gentiles in our church family (most of us are Gentiles ourselves!). But Jew / Gentile relationships aren't the only ones where the life of grace makes a difference.

Think of a relationship in your life, whether a friendship, a marriage, or a member of your family, where you're struggling to show grace at the moment. How might the grace of Ephesians 2 speak into that relationship?

WEEK 5

I AM LOVED

Ephesians 3

3:1 For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— 2 assuming you have heard about the administration of God's grace that he gave me for you. 3 The mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have briefly written above. 4 By reading this you are able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ. 5 This was not made known to people in other generations as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: 6 The Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and partners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 7 I was made a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power.

8 This grace was given to me—the least of all the saints—to proclaim to the Gentiles the incalculable riches of Christ, 9 and to shed light for all about the administration of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things. 10 This is so that God's multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens. 11 This is according to his eternal purpose accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 In him we have boldness and confident access through faith in him. 13 So, then, I ask you not to be discouraged over my afflictions on your behalf, for they are your glory.

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. 16 I pray that he may grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power in your inner being through his Spirit, 17 and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love, 19 and to know Christ's love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us— 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

STUDY QUESTIONS



DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn? What don't you understand?

Read Ephesians 3:1-13.

What do each of these verses tell us about the Gospel:

v2-3:

v4-5:

v6:

v7-9:

v10:

v11:

Verse 10 says that Paul preaches the Gospel "so that God's multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens." What does that mean? What is this wisdom?

Read Ephesians 3:14-21.

Try to sum up what the prayer is asking for, in one sentence, in your own words:

What part do the Father, Son and Spirit play in Paul's prayer?

What's the unknowable thing that Paul wants them to know (verses 17-19)?



NURTURE

What do you love in this passage? How can we see God's character here?

How does Paul speak about his sufferings in this passage?

Looking at what we learn about the Gospel in all of the verses above, which are you most excited about for where you're at in life right now?

How does verse 20 encourage you in your prayer life?



ACT

How should we live differently because of these words? What is one thing in this passage that really stirs you to act?

Looking at the way that Paul speaks about suffering. How might that challenge the way that you speak with others about the struggles you're facing?

How might this passage help your prayers to be bigger in scope?

Read through the passage again, focusing on all the times that it mentions God's power at work in our lives, or God working within us... How should this reality change our lives?

WEEK 6

WE ARE GIFTED

Ephesians 4:1-16

4:1 Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 making 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 at your calling— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

7 Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 For it says:

When he ascended on high,
he took the captives captive;
he gave gifts to people.

9 But what does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower parts of the earth? 10 The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, to fill all things. 11 And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. 14 Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. 15 But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ. 16 From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Ephesians 4:1-16.



DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn? What don't you understand?

What does it mean to "walk worthy of the calling you have received?" (verse 1)

What is unity meant to look like, from verses 1-5?

How would you sum up God's building plan for his church (ie. from this passage, how God intends to build up his church)?

What four goals does Paul have for us all (v13)?

_____ in the faith

_____ of the Son of God

Becoming _____

Having the _____ of Christ

What does "maturity" mean in this passage?



NURTURE

What do you love in this passage? How can we see God's character here?

In verses 1-3, Paul summarises how he wants Christians to live. What would it look like for our church to realise more of this vision?

How do you feel about being a part of a church full of people who are very different to you?

What would a church look like when no one is using their gifts to build others up?

The phrase "in love" appears twice in the last few verses. Why do you think doing all of this "in love" is so important to everything Paul's talking about?

When thinking of "speaking the truth in love", which do you tend to neglect? Do you speak in a loving way, but sometimes compromise the truth, or do you give people the truth, but not always in a loving way?



CT

How should we live differently because of these words? What is one thing in this passage that really stirs you to act?

Verse 7 says that "grace was given to each one of us according to... Christ's gift," and from verses 11-16, we read a bunch of ways that Christ equips each of us to build up his church. How has Christ gifted you to help build up his church?

WEEK 7

I AM NEW

Ephesians 4:17-5:2

4:17 Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thoughts. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts. 19 They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more.

20 But that is not how you came to know Christ, 21 assuming you heard about him and were taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, 23 to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.

25 Therefore, putting away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. 26 Be angry and do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and don't give the devil an opportunity. 28 Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. 29 No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear. 30 And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit. You were sealed by him for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. 32 And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.

5:1 Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, 2 and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Outside of church, what's a larger groups that you're a part of that shapes who you are? (ie. family, culture, sports team, fan-group, gym, community, social media groups, hobbies).

Read Ephesians 4:17-5:2.



DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn? What don't you understand?

Try to find everything in the passage that speaks of the Ephesians are to live their new life in Christ, as well as finding every time it tells them what to avoid from their old life:

How to Live New Life	Things from Old Life to Avoid

What are the biggest contrasts between the old life and the new life?

What does this passage teach us about anger?

What kind of speech shows that the Gospel is working in our hearts?



NURTURE

What do you love in this passage? How can we see God's character here?

Are there any ways that you see verses 17-19 in your own heart?

From the table above, which part of the new life in Christ are you most excited about pursuing?

Which aspect of the old life do you wish you could leave behind once and for all?



ACT

How should we live differently because of these words? What is one thing in this passage that really stirs you to act?

What's one thing you can do this week to try and pursue the new life in Christ?

Split into pairs or threes, and think about each of these areas of change. What do each of these look like for you at the moment?

The desire for more (verse 19):

Anger (verses 26-32):

Speech (verses 25-32):

5:1-2 sum everything up: "Be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God." How do these words encourage you, as you think about living a new life in Christ?

WEEK 8

I AM WISE

Ephesians 5:3-21

5:3 But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you, as is proper for saints. 4 Obscene and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks. 5 For know and recognize this: Every sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, who is an idolater, does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for God's wrath is coming on the disobedient because of these things. 7 Therefore, do not become their partners. 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light— 9 for the fruit of the light consists of all goodness, righteousness, and truth— 10 testing what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to mention what is done by them in secret. 13 Everything exposed by the light is made visible, 14 for what makes everything visible is light. Therefore it is said:

Get up, sleeper, and rise up from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.

15 Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise— 16 making the most of the time, because the days are evil. 17 So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18 And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit: 19 speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Ephesians 5:3-20.



DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn? What don't you understand?

Looking through the passage, what does a life in darkness look like? What does a life in the light look like?

Life in the Dark	Life in the Light

What does "light" do throughout the passage?

What do you think the "empty arguments" of verse 6 might have looked like (and what might they look like today)?

Paul compares being "drunk with wine" and being "filled with the Spirit." Why do you think he contrasts these two?



NURTURE

What do you love in this passage? How can we see God's character here?

Looking at the table above, what's one thing in your life that you would like to be more illuminated?

What are some ways that this passage challenges your words to be more helpful, or loving?



ACT

How should we live differently because of these words? What is one thing in this passage that really stirs you to act?

How do you need to "wake," to let the light of Christ shine on your life?

Thankfulness is everywhere in this passage, especially in verses 19-20. How can you as a group be speaking, singing and thanking more?

WEEK 9

WE ARE FAMILY

Ephesians 5:21-6:9

5:21 Submitting to one another in the fear of Christ. 22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, 23 because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives are to submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. 27 He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless. 28 In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, 30 since we are members of his body. 31 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. 32 This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband.

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because 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 have a long life in the land. 4 Fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

5 Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as you would Christ. 6 Don't work only while being watched, as people-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing God's will from your heart. 7 Serve with a good attitude, as to the Lord and not to people, 8 knowing that whatever good each one does, slave or free, he will receive this back from the Lord. 9 And masters, treat your slaves the same way, without threatening them, because you know that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Paul shows us here how members of a household should relate to each other. Wives and husbands, kids and parents, slaves and masters. For modern Westerners, this teaching is really counter-cultural. But it was actually even more so in Paul's day. Because it's all about relationships which reflect who we really are now: we're in Christ, the crucified Lord.



DISCOVER

What's interesting here? What do you learn? What don't you understand?

Read Ephesians 5:21-33.

How does verse 21 help us understand everything that comes after?

What's the husband's duty to his wife? (v25-28)

What's the wife's duty to her husband? (v22-24)

How does this reflect "Christ and the church" (v32)?

Read Ephesians 6:1-9.

Christ uses his power not for himself but for us, his church. So we rejoice in his power.

How can Christ-likeness be displayed:

by parents? (v4)

by masters? (v9)

How can church-likeness be displayed:

by kids? (v1-3)

by slaves? (v5-8)



NURTURE

What do you love in this passage? How can we see God's character here?

How do you feel about Christ having power and how he uses it?



ACT

How should we live differently because of these words? What is one thing in this passage that really stirs you to act?

Do you fear how some people might use this passage? What resources does the passage itself provide to counter that use?

In whichever roles are most relevant to you, what could you change to more clearly reflect Christ and his church?



VILLAGE CHURCH
2022