

EPHESIANS



Rooted and Grounded
in love

Lesson Four EPHESIANS 2:11-22

Day 1



Father, as I read your word open my mind and my eyes and my heart to understand and see and love you.

- Read Ephesians 2:11-22 several times. Read through the passage *prayerfully*—responding to what you are reading with praise, thanksgiving, confession or surrender. (God speaks to us through his word and we respond back to him through prayer.)
- Pick one word or phrase that stands out to you to ponder on throughout the day and week. (It may be something that resonates with you or that you want to understand better.) Write it here.
- Write one sentence summarizing the passage.

Day 2- Eph.2:11

Write out verse 11

In order to understand where Paul is going in this passage we need to have a little background on why circumcision was such a big deal to the Jewish people. Remember, Paul is writing to the Gentile church in Ephesus—people who were uncircumcised. So hang in there, today will be all Digging Deeper!

Digging Deeper:

Read the verses in Genesis below.

- Why were Jewish males circumcised?

Genesis 17:10-11, 13-14 (God speaking to Abraham) ¹⁰This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised. ¹¹You must cut off the flesh of your foreskin as a sign of the covenant between me and you... ¹³All must be circumcised. Your bodies will bear the mark of my everlasting covenant. ¹⁴Any male who fails to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for breaking the covenant.” (NLT)

- Read the verses from the New Testament below. How should the sign of circumcision be viewed by the people of God now?

Galatians 5:6 ⁶For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, there is no benefit in being circumcised or being uncircumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love. (NLT)

Galatians 6:15-16¹⁵ It doesn't matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation. ¹⁶May God's peace and mercy be upon all who live by this principle; they are the new people of God. (NLT)

Philippians 3:3 ...for we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh...

Colossians 2:10-12 ¹⁰So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority. ¹¹When you came to Christ, you were “circumcised,” but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. ¹²For you were buried with

Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. (NLT)

In verses 11-22 Paul is stating the reality that through Jesus, God is creating one, multi-ethnic, holy family.

- How are non-Jewish (Gentile) believers connected to the history of Israel?

John 4:21-22²¹ Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. (NLT)

Romans 9:4-5⁴ They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵ To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever.

Galatians 3:7-9⁷ The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God. ⁸ What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in his sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you." ⁹ So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith. (NLT)

For Discussion:

Why might it be hard for the Jewish people in Paul's day to accept the Gentiles?

Day 3- Eph. 2:12-13

Write out verses 12-13

1. In verses 12-13 Paul expresses the former desperate plight of the non-Jewish people. What thoughts and feelings do these words and phrases evoke in you?

Separated-

Alienated-

Strangers-

No hope-

Without God-

Far off-

-What were non-Jewish people separated and alienated from and strangers to according to verse 12?

2. In verse 13 we see the second significant “but” of the chapter. What gracious intervention comes with this “but”?



Jesus thank you for giving your life to bring me near!!!

Digging Deeper:

How does Peter express the same marvelous truth that Paul is communicating in the verse below?

1 Peter 2:10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

In verse 9 of 1 Peter 2 (on the following page) he details the identity of the new people of God. Highlight the phrases that used to only pertain to the Jewish people.

- How does Peter portray the plight of the Gentiles in this verse?
- Paul has written several times in chapter one that God’s purpose in choosing people to be his children is to the praise of his glorious grace. How does Peter express the purpose of God’s chosen people?
- What excellencies of God are clear to you right now? How will you proclaim this today?

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.



At one time we all were separated from Jesus, cut off from God's family, we had no access to the promises. We were far off, on the outside. But Jesus. Jesus brought us near, by sacrificing his life and bearing the wrath of God for our sin, then rising victorious because death had no hold on the sinless Savior.

- ❖ Spend time in prayer praising God for his glorious grace through Jesus that has brought you near.

Day 4- Eph.2:14-18

Write out verses 14-18

3. Now that Gentiles have been brought near by the blood of Jesus, how has this affected Jewish/Gentile relations according to verse 14?

Scholar's Note:

The dividing wall of hostility (v.14) separated the Jews from the Gentiles at the temple in Jerusalem "... the Court of the Gentiles was a spacious court running right round the temple and its inner courts. From any part of it the Gentiles could look up and view the temple, but were not allowed to approach it. They were cut off from it by the surrounding wall, which was a one-and-a-half metre stone barricade, on which were displayed at intervals warning notices in Greek and Latin. They read, in effect, not 'Trespassers will be prosecuted' but 'Trespassers will be executed.' ¹

4. Paul tells us that in making Jews and Gentiles one, Jesus has created a whole new humanity or a new people. What is the defining feature of this new humanity according to verse 15?

Digging Deeper:

Paul expands on this theme in his letter to the Galatians and the Colossians. What, in today's terms are other hostilities, hierarchies and divisions are put away for those in Christ according to the verses below?

- What are some blessings of this truth?

- What are some challenges of this truth?

Galatians 3:26-28 ...for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:11. In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. (NLT)

Picture and Ponder:

"Divisiveness is a constant characteristic of every community without Christ."²

5. In verse 14, the hostility that needed reconciling was between Jew and Gentile. In verse 16, what else needs reconciling?
 - How did Jesus kill the hostility between God and man and Jew and Gentile?

Picture and Ponder:

"In addition to the Jew and the Gentile, a third type of person has now appeared--the Christian."³

6. What ways are Jesus and peace connected in verses 14-17?

7. What great privilege can Jews and non-Jews share according to verse 18?

- How do you see the Trinity at work in this verse?



Because of Jesus, we can have peace with God and peace with other believers. We may have many differences, but the things we share in common—access to the Father through Jesus because his Spirit lives in each of his children— overshadow our many differences.

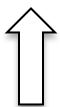
- ❖ Why does having the Spirit in each person make us one body?

- ❖ How does verse 18 show us what will help keep this key commonality supreme over our differences?

Day 5- Eph.2:19-22

Write out verses 19-22

8. According to verse 19, God made us— who were once strangers and aliens— into fellow citizens and members of the household of God. What are the implications of this exchange?



Thank you God for taking me and giving me an eternal and beautiful kingdom and a true family!

9. Through Jesus God is building his people into a holy temple. What is the foundation of this building according to verse 20?

- What role is Jesus in this holy temple God is building?

Scholar's Note: "Paul is here referring to the cornerstone—the most significant part of the foundation of the temple. This large stone bore much of the weight of the building and tied the walls firmly together. "4 "Often the royal name was inscribed on it. In

the East it was considered to be even more important than the foundation."5

Digging Deeper:

How do the following verses in Acts help us understand what the foundation of the apostles is?

Acts 2:32,39-40a, 42a [Peter speaking] "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses...For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the lord our God calls to himself." And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them...And they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching...

For Discussion:

"The church stands or falls based on its faithfulness to God's word"6 Do you think this is true? Why or why not?

10. What all do you learn about this structure in verses 21-22?



In verses 11-22 we have seen that being "in Christ" has brought us— we who were far off and separated from God— near, turned aliens into citizens of God's kingdom, and made strangers into family members. And finally, being "in Christ" is transforming us into a dwelling place for God. All of these stunning blessings are ours by grace through faith!

- ❖ Becoming citizens, family members and the church are not individual blessings, but shared with a diverse group of "in Christ" people. How does this glorify God?

- ❖ This is a shared blessing, yet it is made of individuals. How does knowing you are being built into a holy dwelling place for God affect you individually? What perspective does it give you on the other individuals you share this privilege with?

- ❖ How does being part of this shared blessing impact your view of the local church body and your participation in it?

Taking Root:

- What in this portion of Scripture swells your heart with love for God, or makes your heart treasure Jesus?

- What from this portion of Scripture spurs you on to love others?

- How are you challenged to reach God's world after living with this portion of Scripture this week?

¹ Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (pp. 91-92). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

² Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians (The Bible Speaks Today Series) (p. 96). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

³ Expositor's Commentary Copyright © 1998-2018 Olive Tree Bible Software

⁴ Zondervan, . Ephesians (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 10) (p. 234). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

⁵ Expositor's Commentary Copyright © 1998-2018 Olive Tree Bible Software

⁶ Merida, Tony. Exalting Jesus in Ephesians. P.64. B&H Publishing 2014