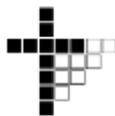


Winter 2018
Growth Group Study



St. Luke Lutheran Church

Winter Growth Group Study

“The Book of Ephesians is considered to be the most concise and theologically rich book in the Bible. This is a survival manual for Christians. This is how you can survive and thrive in the midst of a world that is not friendly to your message.”¹

Over the last year, we have been exploring the topic of Christian character. We have considered that ways in which knowing Jesus and following Him makes us different people. We have stretched our understandings of what it means to be a Christian neighbor and a member of the Body of Christ.

This study on Ephesians will help us grow deeper in our Christian character. The Apostle Paul wrote this letter to encourage the church in Ephesus as they lived as imitators of Christ. In the same way, this letter encourages us to live out our new life in Christ Jesus and boldly imitate Him in all that we do!

Knowing the peace and the power of the cross means that our character, values, actions, and entire lives are transformed by God: **“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.”**
(Ephesians 5:1)

¹J.D. Greear

Session Overview

Session	Verses	Central Teaching
Session I (Video #1)	Eph. 1:1-14	God has chosen you to be His
Session II (Video #3)	Eph. 2:1-10	God's grace is ours through faith
Session III (Video #5)	Eph. 3:14-4:16	God gives spiritual gifts
Session IV (Video #7)	Eph. 5:8-21	God calls us to grow in Him

RightNow Media

The videos for this study are available at www.rightnowmedia.org. If you need help accessing this platform, then please contact the church office.

Additional Learning

We are not studying the entire book of Ephesians in this winter Growth Group study. There are additional chapters of Ephesians (and additional video segments) that are available for you to explore on your own. Consider using the information below to help guide your study of God's Word on your own.

Session	Additional Learning
Following Session I	-Read Ephesians 1:15-23 -Watch Video #2 on Ephesians 1:15-23
Following Session II	-Read Ephesians 2:11-3:13 -Watch Video #4 on Ephesians 2:11-3:13
Following Session III	-Read Ephesians 4:17-5:7 -Watch Video #6 on Ephesians 4:17-5:7
Following Session IV	-Read Ephesians 5:22-6:24 -Watch Video #8 on Ephesians 5:22-6:9 -Watch Video #9 on Ephesians 6:10-24

Session I: Ephesians 1:1-14

GETTING STARTED

Make sure everyone knows each other. Have all participants tell about a time they were chosen for something special. How did it feel to be chosen? Have someone offer up a prayer for God's blessing on the study.

WATCH VIDEO #1
RightNow Media
(The Book of Ephesians – J.D. Greear)

DIG IN

Read Ephesians 1:3-10 and discuss the following questions:

- What has God done?
- What is God doing?
- What will God do?

We hear in Ephesians that God has blessed us, “with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3). How does God bless us through the gift of the Holy Spirit? Discuss the following verses:

- John 14:26
- Acts 1:8
- 1 Corinthians 12:13

What does the word ‘adoption’ mean in Ephesians 1:5? If we are adopted by God through faith in Christ Jesus, then what or who were we before this adoption? What happens in adoption besides simply getting a new family?

Read Ephesians 1:7-10. God has chosen to reveal many things to His people. What are some revelations of God that He has made very clear to you through Scripture? What are some mysteries that God has left hidden from us?

Session II: Ephesians 2:1-10

GETTING STARTED

Make sure everyone knows each other. The video that you will soon watch says that a deeply engrained myth in our culture is that, “the main problem in the world is other people.” Why might people believe this myth? Do we ever believe this myth? Have someone offer up a prayer for God’s blessing on the study.

WATCH VIDEO #3 RightNow Media (The Book of Ephesians – J.D. Greear)

DIG IN

Read Ephesians 2:1-10. In verse 1, we read, “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked...”

- What does that mean?
- How does that make you feel?
- How would this verse be different had Paul said, “People were dead in the trespasses and sins in which they once walked...”?
- How does this verse dispel the myth that other people are the problem?

Another myth discussed in the video is the sentiment that, “deep down we are not really that bad.”

- How does Ephesians 2:1-2 dispel this myth?
- How is ‘dead’ different than ‘damaged,’ ‘injured,’ or ‘broken’?

There is a distinction in verses 1-3 between “us” and “them.”

- Do you see it?
- What’s the difference?
- What changed when the Holy Spirit brought us from death to life?
- What do verses 4-5 tell us?
- What has God done for us in Christ Jesus?

Session III: Ephesians 3:14-4:16

GETTING STARTED

Make sure everyone knows each other. Discuss the following question: What are some pivotal moments in adolescence that force you to grow up? Have someone offer up a prayer for God's blessing on the group's time together.

WATCH VIDEO #5

RightNow Media

(The Book of Ephesians – J.D. Greear)

DIG IN

Read Ephesians 3:14-21. In verse 19, we read, "...and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge..."

- What does this mean?
 - Read Job 11:5-9 and Romans 11:33
- Does this mean that we should not seek to understand God's love?
- Verse 19 ends by saying, "...that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."
- What are some ways in which we come to know the fullness of God?

Read Ephesians 4:1. The video indicates that this verse is the hinge of the book of Ephesians. It connects the first three chapters (about the Gospel of Jesus) with the last three chapters (how knowing God changes our lives).

Discuss the following:

- How can we "live a life worthy of our calling" as Paul mentions in the beginning of chapter 4?
- How does he describe that worthy life?
- The video discusses "growing up" in our faith in Christ Jesus. How do these qualities mentioned above display a mature faith?
- Is growing up in our faith always a straight-forward and linear process? Why or why not?

Read Ephesians 4:7-10. Discuss the following questions:

- Who gives spiritual gifts? Who gets spiritual gifts?
- What are some spiritual gifts? What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?
- The video says that a spiritual gift is where **ABILITY** [what you are good at], **AFFINITY** [what you are passionate about], and **AFFIRMATION** [what others recognize in you] come together.
 - Agree or disagree? Does this help you discover any of your spiritual gifts?

Read Ephesians 4:11-12. These verses discuss the relationship between church leaders and laypeople.

- According to verses 11-12, what are pastors and other church leaders supposed to do?
- What are some ways that pastors and other church leaders go about equipping the saints for the work of ministry?
- According to verse 12, what are the saints (that is, the people of Jesus) supposed to do?
- How do these verses connect with the previous verses and the topic of spiritual gifts?

Discuss: What spiritual gifts do you recognize in someone else in your group? Share your observations with that person either during group discussion or at some other point during the week.

WRAPPING UP

Be sure to thank your hosts. Share prayer requests and close with a time of prayer together.

Prayer Requests

Session IV: Ephesians 5:8-21

GETTING STARTED

Make sure everyone knows each other. The second half of the book of Ephesians talks a lot about Christian character. As a group, discuss how you might define the word 'character.' Have someone offer up a prayer for God's blessing on the group's time together.

WATCH VIDEO #7

RightNow Media

(The Book of Ephesians – J.D. Greear)

DIG IN

Read Ephesians 5:8-11. In verse 8 we hear Paul encourage the Christians in Ephesus by saying, "Walk as children of light." Discuss the following:

- What do these verses imply for the way you live your life?
- Verse 9 talks about "fruit of the light."
 - Why might Paul mix these metaphors?
 - What does light have to do with fruit?
 - What does this mean for our lives?

Read Ephesians 5:13-16 and discuss the following:

- Agree or disagree: *"Perhaps one of the greatest tragedies in the modern church is that many of us have no idea that we're in a (spiritual) battle."* (J.D. Greear)
- Paul quotes an ancient Christian hymn in verse 14. What sort of sleep do we need to wake up from?
- What "opportunity" is Paul talking about in verse 16? How should we make the most of it?
- What sort of "unwise" or "foolish" things might we do when faced with the opportunities Paul's talking about? How can we avoid such foolish actions?

Read Ephesians 5:17-21. Discuss the following:

- Verse 17 tells us to “...understand what the will of the Lord is.” How can we do that?
- Why would Paul compare God’s Spirit with wine in verse 18? What’s the connection?
- Why does Paul suddenly get musical in verse 19? What do songs have to do with waking up and redeeming the time?
- According to verse 19, we speak to one another in these songs. What effect on each other can we have when we address one another through our songs?

“The Christian life is like an uphill battle siege. You never just coast uphill; if you’re coasting, then you’re going backwards.” (J.D. Greear)

- Agree or disagree?
- If this statement is correct, what does this reveal about our need for fellow brothers and sisters in Christ as we develop our Christian character?

WRAPPING UP

Be sure to thank your hosts. Be sure to continue caring for one and meet as a group to share Christian life together. Share prayer requests and close with a time of prayer together.

Prayer Requests

Notes