

Ephesians

A DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS



Discipleship Foundations

DEFINING DISCIPLESHIP

There are many ways to grow as a disciple of Jesus. When we say “discipleship” we are speaking of a process in which a mentor intentionally invests his or her life in another person, in partnership with the Holy Spirit, to help them grow in their relationship in Christ, their character like Christ, and their mission with Christ. More succinctly, discipleship is a growing in Christ, like Christ, and with Christ with the help of a mentor in step with the Holy Spirit.

By deciding to become a mentor you are joining Jesus, Paul, and generations of Christians that have said “yes” to the greatest mission of all time.

GOD'S WORK IN DISCIPLESHIP

God, in the power of the Gospel and through the Holy Spirit, works through Scripture, Prayer, and Community in growing a disciple of Jesus in Christlikeness.

Jesus is the one who transforms people. All people have sinned and fallen short of His Glory, but thankfully, God has not left us in this state. God, in Jesus, came to rescue humanity and restore His broken world. Jesus lived the perfect life, died a death that we deserve, rose from the dead defeating sins' power, and ascended into heaven where He continues to work out His purposes today. Jesus is Lord. As a person comes to trust in Him and live for Him, God gives the person new life both today and into eternity. He gives us the Holy Spirit to live in us, giving us his presence and the power to live an abundant life for His purposes and glory. Scripture, prayer, and community become the primary means that God uses to work in our life as we grow in our trust in following Jesus.

How to Use This Curriculum

BEFORE THE STUDY

Before each week's leaders guide, there is a "Before the Study" page. Read it carefully to help you get the most out of each week's passage and additional discipleship material. Create a checklist like the one below to make your discipleship prep time effective.

WEEKLY PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- Pray about the material and for each student.
- Study the Passage for the week and allow God to apply it to your life.
- Read the "Before the Study" Notes.
- Read the Session and understand the questions. Adapt wording as needed.
- Text students: confirm and remind the time/place.
- Print Session Notes and the necessary handouts.
- Pray for your continued mindfulness to God's leading throughout your week.

TIMING

The study has time stamps on each major heading. Each session is designed for 60 minutes. Many discipleship sessions are closer to 50 minutes to allow for time in between classes and appointments. Other disciplers like to have 1.5 hour appointments. Adjust this guide to suit your context.

While 30 minutes is usually allotted in the Scripture portion of the study, think about breaking that down to 5 minutes for "Entering the Passage", 15 minutes for "Discussing the Passage", and 10 minutes for "Applying the Passage ." This provides the best balance of engaging the content and Scripture well, while also having space to apply it.

DURING THE STUDY

COMMUNITY

God works through intentional community. The first part of every week is focused on the community and the relationships of those present in the group. For "one-on-one" discipleship, the relationship and trust built between mentor and mentee takes priority in this time. For "group discipleship", then the mutual reflection and sharing of the provided questions provides space for trust to form which will set up deeper engagement with Scripture and prayer. The aim is not just community, but also self awareness. This is space for students to be reflecting on what God has been doing in their life, in community together.

SCRIPTURE

Scripture is God's Words. As we engage it, we encounter the living God.

Scripture Memory

Scripture memory is a great way to get God's Word "in your bones ." Each week has an "optional" Scripture Memory segment. The verse changes in week 6. When tempted to sin, when struggling with despair, when focused on self instead of others, God's Word can come surprisingly to our minds as we have it committed to memory to help us when we need it most. The two verses that have been chosen highlight key themes of the book. It is "optional" as the leader has to own it and participate in it as well.

Study Method

This guide uses the "Communal Discovery" method to engage the primary passage most weeks. The aim is to help students "uncover" the main ideas, instead of simply aiming to "cover" them. There is great power in seeing God's Word for themselves and realizing that they have the tools that they need to hear God's voice in its pages. The leader is a helpful guide. Students develop, over time, in their ability to have meaningful engagement with God's Word. The form and shape of the curriculum is intended to give you, the leader, what you need to help students encounter Jesus in the Scriptures, in a relatively short amount of time.

Application

The Application portion of each week is written in such a way to build in reflection and silence. Ask the questions or challenges and give students 2-3 minutes to reflect and process. This moves students beyond their head, from responding with the "right" answers to actually reflecting on their life, processing with God, and responding to Him.

The mentor during this portion has an important role to play. This is your clearest space to be in conversation with God on what you are sensing the student should be thinking about or doing in response to the passage. Your authority to speak Truth and Grace into your students' lives does not come from your "position" as "IV staff" or even as "friend ." Your authority comes from God's Word as you speak into their lives.

PRAYER

Prayer is our way of living out our dependence on God. Because of its primacy in developing the Christian life, time is set aside each week to pray together in community. Different prayer forms are used each week as a way of training our students different voices and ways of interacting with God in prayer.

APPENDIX

At the end of this document, you will find an appendix that has extra resources. We have included a "People Chart" there. Print out one chart for each discipleship group that you have and take notes throughout the semester. Other resources there include: Gospel diagrams, and an additional resource to help with your prep for the Relationships week.

Introducing Ephesians

MAIN THEME

Rich in Christ: New Community. New Life.

Ephesians unpacks deep and amazing realities that are true of those that put their hope in Jesus. It points to a changed identity and details the great riches that a believer has as a result of Christ's work. Part of the riches that we gain by being in Christ is the reality that we have been reconciled to God in the Gospel. Ephesians beautifully extends this unity beyond God and the individual to the individual and other believers. This gives each follower of Jesus new hope and purpose in the world, and therefore, a new life.

SUMMARY FOR STUDENTS

We are rich in Christ, members of a new community and called to a new life!

Ephesians details the great riches that believers have because of Jesus. He unites people to God and to each other, calling all followers of Jesus to a completely new life. For our students - security, social standing, grades, pleasing our families, and more, tug for our attention. Ephesians reveals to us the new and better way. John Stott has this to say about Ephesians:

The letter to the Ephesians is a marvelously concise, yet comprehensive, summary of the Christian good news and its implications. Nobody can read it without being moved to wonder and worship, and challenged to the consistency of life.

BACKGROUND

The Apostle Paul wrote Ephesians as a letter to them, that was also intended for circulation to surrounding areas and churches. He wrote it while imprisoned in Rome around the year 62 AD. Acts 28 tells of this moment in Paul's journeys. He wrote Colossians and Philemon around this time as well. Each letter went with Tychicus and Onesimus to their eventual recipients. Paul first visited Ephesians earlier in his travels. That part of his journey is detailed in Acts 19.

GETTING STARTED

1. Read Ephesians, start to finish in one setting. Set aside an hour or so to do this.
2. Take notes of your questions and observations and themes as you go.
3. Watch this Bible Project video: [Ephesians Overview](#)
4. If you have remaining questions, find a trusted mentor or commentary to address them.
5. Begin preparing for week 1.

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Week One

LAUNCH WEEK

Before the Study

Community, Vision, and Planning

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Form connections and relationships with those in the discipleship group.
- Provide vision and plans for discipleship times and growing in Christ this semester.

BACKGROUND

PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION

In the Planning Section, you will notice three categories of growth: *Intimacy in Christ, Character like Christ, and Mission with Christ*. This is a paradigm for Christian discipleship. In the power of the Holy Spirit, God enables and empowers Christians to bear fruit in each of these areas. For most students, we need to focus on helping them grow in Intimacy and Character as they live in the Mission.

COACHING TIPS

1. This is the first week; you will want to spend time communicating clearly on finding a good Day, Time, Location, and pairing of students appropriately.
2. In the *Vision for Discipleship*, be prepared to cast a strong vision for why these discipleship times matter. Students may have “committed” to the meeting, but you are always, throughout the semester, gracefully reminding them why it matters. You are always coming alongside them, helping them buy into Jesus, but also to you.
3. Pray for each student by name to be transformed throughout the semester.
4. In the planning section, get concrete with specific questions. *What do I need to do, when will I do this? Where will I do this? How long will I spend on this? Who will help me? What needs to drop to enable me to do this?*

Launch Week

Community, Vision, and Planning

COMMUNITY (15 MIN)

Choose a combo of 2-3 of the questions below. The 'Entering' set of questions are good for any group. The next two sets are specific to how well the group knows each other.

WE ARE ENTERING INTO COMMUNITY

- What was one exciting thing and one challenging thing that happened over break?
- What was one challenge over the summer and how did God work in it?

WE ARE NEW TO EACH OTHER

- What is your faith background? Share 1 or 2 key people or events that shaped you.
- Share your 3 minute story on how you began pursuing a relationship with Jesus.

WE KNOW EACH OTHER

- On a scale of 1-10, how was your summer for your spiritual growth?
- What was an area of your life that God was shaping you in?

PREPARING FOR THE SEMESTER (30 MIN)

Pass out the handout and work through it. As students share, take notes and add an appointment in your calendar in a month to check in on their specific goals.

VISION

Casting Vision for Discipleship

Have someone read the "Vision for Discipleship" section aloud. Elaborate on it for your context as needed (See Handout)

- What excites you about this vision? What excites you about this semester?

Expectations for Discipleship

Take turns reading the "Expectations" section aloud (See Handout)

- Are you on board with these expectations? Which will be the most challenging for you? Discuss any specifics of any of the expectations that are unique to your context.

DREAMING

Reflect

Open with a brief prayer; ask God to be at work informing this time of dreaming and planning. Then, using the handout, spend 3 minutes reflecting on your desired growth areas for your:

1. Intimacy in Christ
2. Character like Christ
3. Mission with Christ (Optional)

Wait to fill out the plan. If done early, keep talking to God about how He would like you to grow.

Discuss

Share a few of your reflections. Why did you choose those growth goals?

PLANNING

Creating a Plan

Fill out the plan for each area. Workshop a concrete strategy for each. You can do this with reflection time and/or discussion. Fewer goals is best. Get concrete by asking specific questions: *who, what, when, where, how* (e.g. "When will you do this?").

- What role can this group play in helping you work toward your desired growth areas?
- Does this time and place work each week for discipleship that we can each commit to?

PRAYER (10 MIN)

INTERCESSION

Spend time praying for each other. To encourage each person to pray, have each person pray for the goals and plans of the person on their left. Praying out loud may be new for some; set brief prayer parameters and explain why we pray. You know your group best, name some parameters that may be specific to individuals in your group.

Example of "Why" we pray:

- God wants a relationship with us; talking to God is one way that we grow.
- When we pray, God changes things.

Example Parameters:

- If you know you can be long winded, work on being brief.
- You don't need to pray with flowery language, just talk to God plainly; acknowledging 'Sally' needs God's help to grow and even to carry out her plan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MIN)

What upcoming IV events or items do you need to remind your students about?

Planning for Growth

VISION FOR DISCIPLESHIP

- Who we are becoming matters to God; we are our friends' first look at Jesus.
- God shapes our Intimacy with Christ, Character like Christ, and Mission with Christ.
- Through the Holy Spirit and the Gospel, God uses: Community, Scripture, and prayer.

EXPECTATIONS

- We share as vulnerably as we can to foster deep relationships and growth.
- We commit to praying for each other knowing that God is the one who gives growth.
- We encourage and challenge each other with grace and truth as we need it.
- We seek to meet with God individually outside of this time.
- We gather regularly with the IV community as opportunities arise.
- We carve this time out in our calendar to make our best effort to be here each week.
- We aim to live lives that are growing in reflecting God's grace and glory in our chapters.

DREAMING AND PLANNING

Follow your leader's prompts. The last row is for an optional third growth area.

AREA OF GROWTH	DESIRED GOAL	PLAN
<i>Ex. Trust in God's love.</i>	<i>Read the book of John</i>	<i>1)Read for 15 minutes (½ chapter) a day. 2)9am before getting ready, 3)What do I learn about God's love for me?</i>
Intimacy in Christ		
Character like Christ		
Mission with Christ (Optional)		

Week Two

NEW IDENTITY

Ephesians 1:1-14

NEW IDENTITY

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. ¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Before the Study

Ephesians 1:1-14

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Students leave with an expectation to meet God in Ephesians.
- Students understand where they currently place their identity, and how that affects life.
- Students grow in the skill of journaling and reflection.

BACKGROUND

BIBLE STUDY BACKGROUND

- The Apostle Paul wrote Ephesians as a letter to the church in Ephesus, that was also intended for circulation to surrounding areas and churches.
- Ephesians gives deep theology and Christian identity in the first half of the book, then shifts to practical outworking of those Truths in the second half.
- Paul wrote it while imprisoned in Rome around the year 62 AD (Acts 28)
- Paul first visited Ephesians earlier in his travels (Acts 18)

PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION

As this is the first week in Ephesians, come ready to share the minimal background info above so students have a basic idea of the Bible Background. Along with this, do some thinking in the concept of "Identity." The Concept of our identity is central to who we are, but can be vague and hard to grasp. Do some thinking in your own life of how God has reshaped your identity.

COACHING TIPS

1. Regardless of where you fall in the predestination debate, don't let the debate become a distraction, *but also* don't be cynical about it. It's a beautifully mysterious concept in Scripture and it is in our passage. If students get hung up, ask probing questions about what the text says about it and what those realities mean for us as Christians.

"Predestination" comes up in two different verses (v.5 and 11), and "chosen" appears in (v.4). Predestination can be a sticky issue as different Christian backgrounds have strong feelings about how this is interpreted. On one side of the debate, predestination points to reality that God "knew" beforehand who would follow Him, and they are written in His book of life. On the other side of the debate, predestination points to the security that believers have in knowing that God has known them from the beginning, and will keep them firm to the end.

New Identity

Ephesians 1:1-14

COMMUNITY (15 MIN)

RELATIONAL, PHYSICAL, MENTAL, SPIRITUAL (RPMS)

When you think of the categories of: Relational, Physical, Mental, Spiritual, which one of these do you feel depleted in this week? In which one do you feel strong?

SCRIPTURE (30 MIN)

ENTERING THE PASSAGE

Recite Memory Verse (Optional)

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe (Ephesians 1:18)

Context

Ephesians details how rich we are in Christ. All who follow Jesus are united to Him as members of a new community and called to a new life. Each week, we will aim to hear from God in Ephesians. It was written by the Apostle Paul to believers in Ephesus but also throughout the world. It is loaded with relevance for our lives today.

Hook

What aspects of your upbringing, or your life today, give you the deepest sense of pride?

Read

Read aloud. Then spend 3 minutes silently; looking for observations, repetitions, questions, etc.

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE

Spend 2-3 minutes sharing observations and questions.

Gather Observations

- Repetition of what we receive: grace/given/riches/blessings/inheritance (v. 3, 6, 7, 14)
- Repetition of family and relational language (adoption, sonship, inheritance, love)
- Repetition of praise (v.3) , and "to the praise of his glory" (v. 6, 12, 14)
- Jesus in Salvation: grace, redemption, forgiveness of sins, receiving the Holy Spirit
- Descriptors of "who" believers are: holy (v. 1), chosen (v. 4), adopted as sons and daughters (v. 5), we are to the praise of his glory (v. 12), God's Possession (v. 14), etc

Discuss Questions

- Make a list of what is true of those who hope in Christ.
- Make a list of what the passage says that God does to make these realities true?
- What is the relationship of the believer to God as described by the passage?
- Why has God done all this?

APPLYING THE PASSAGE

Summary

Who do you think you are? Your answer to this question impacts how we see the world and who we eventually become. If your identity is in your athletic prowess then being awesome at sports may be your ultimate goal. The activities you engage in and how you respond, for example, if your body is injured, will be drastically different than if your identity is in coin collecting. Your true identity, though, is who God says you are. Because of Jesus, a new reality has taken place. You are God's child. You are in a new family that defines the deepest part of who they are. This new family involves a rich inheritance. It means you will always have access to the father.

Big Idea

Through Jesus, we are part of God's family. We are worth more than we could ever imagine.

Reflect, Respond & Challenge

Choose *one* of the application options below. Read the questions and give a couple minutes for silent reflection. Then, invite your group to respond by sharing. Finish by challenging your group to take practical next steps this week to implement this truth in their lives.

Fake ID

What do you currently place your identity in? What would living "to the praise of His Glory" look like in your life? *Reflect on the questions and then discuss. This week, journal about what areas of your life absorb the most of your thinking.*

Spiritual Blessings

We're ever aware of our needs but quick to forget the ways in which God has already richly blessed us. What are some of the ways that God has blessed you? How could you become more attune to God's blessings in your daily life? *Reflect on these questions and share. This week, note the ways in which God has and continues to bless you. Keep a journal or a bullet list of them on your phone, and we may share them next week.*

Custom Application

You know your group best. As the Spirit leads, share a custom application or challenge.

PRAYER (10 MIN)

APPLICATION PRAYER

Spend 5 minutes praying *into* the passage. Think about a concept or application in the passage, and pray into it for an individual. Have each individual pray for another student's response to where their identity is, praying into Ephesians 1 in some way, asking God to shape their identity. (*ex. God, Help Joe know that he is God's child this week.*)

Spend some time mining the Big Idea and their life with questions of your own. When and where needed, encourage or challenge. Pray again if necessary to invite God's help.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MIN)

What upcoming IV events/items do you need to remind your students about?

Week Three

THE GOOD NEWS

Gospel Invitation

Ephesians 2:1-10

THE GOOD NEWS

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Before the Study

Ephesians 2:1-10

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Participants should understand the basics of the gospel.
- Ability to self-identify where they stand in relationship to this offer of new life in Jesus.

BACKGROUND

BIBLE STUDY BACKGROUND

- We are skipping Eph 1:15-23 this week, but will circle back to that in week 6.
- The 'ruler of the kingdom of the air' refers to Satan.

PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION

For the Community "Spiritual Life Graph", prepare yours in advance so you know how to answer their questions and so that you can share yours as appropriate or as an example.

Re-familiarize yourself, and even practice, a Gospel presentation like the Four Worlds (See Appendix). Our students will benefit from hearing a clear gospel presentation from this passage. You could do this in place of the Summary, or organically as you study the passage. The summary gives you wording if you need help. Be ready to share the gospel and invite a response. Who knows - you may even get to see a student come to new faith in Jesus!

COACHING TIPS

1. Many of our students need to hear the clear truth that their achievement and good works have nothing to do with earning salvation. Feel freedom to hit that harder.
2. For students that are ready to newly trust in Jesus, be ready to pray with them. Here is a sample prayer for them to repeat after you that is also included in the guide.

Jesus, I know that apart from you I am spiritually dead. I've lived life the way I want to live it, and I've made a mess of things. I need your forgiveness. Thank you, Jesus, for giving your life for mine! I love you, I trust you, and I want to know you more. I also need you to lead my life from here on out. Grant me the power to live as you want me to live. Give me your Holy Spirit to guide me and comfort me. Amen.

The Good News

Ephesians 2:1-10

COMMUNITY (15 MIN)

SPIRITUAL LIFE GRAPH

Take 3 minutes to draw a graph of your spiritual life, from left to right. Include particular peaks and valleys that you've experienced along the way. Share with the group (*3 minutes each*).

SCRIPTURE (30 MIN)

ENTERING THE PASSAGE

Recite Memory Verse (Optional)

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe (Ephesians 1:18)

Context

Ephesians details how rich we are in Christ. All who follow Jesus are united to Him as members of a new community and called to a new life. Last week, we learned about how membership in this new community gives us a completely new identity as God's children.

Hook

Have you ever been in a situation that was literally 'life and death'? What was that like?

Read

Read aloud. Then spend 3 minutes silently; looking for observations, repetitions, questions, etc.

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE

Gather Observations

- Words like dead, death, life, and alive are repeated in verses 1-5.
- The word 'But' (v. 4) is a powerful transition in this passage.
- 'Grace' is repeated three times in verses 5-8.

Discuss Questions

- What is the default spiritual status of every human being? Why?
- How can that status be changed, according to the passage?
- Why did God make the move to offer us new life? (Find two or more reasons)
- What role do good works play in this passage?

APPLYING THE PASSAGE

Summary

Share the following or share a Gospel Diagram. Use Eph 2 Language as much as possible.

Rough start to Chapter 2. Our status? Spiritually dead. It's hard to get a feel for exactly what that means. But any time you're talking about being cut off from the source of everything good – well that sounds pretty hopeless. Until something enters the scene and changes everything. Someone, really. God, in his great mercy and love for us, gives us the ultimate gift through Jesus – new life with him forever, instead of death. Again, hard to grasp. But Paul gives us a hint that it's good. Really good. God's great hope after giving us new life? "To show us the incomparable riches of his grace." He wants really good things for us! So how do we get in on this? Paul makes it really clear: it's nothing you can do. God has done it all already. All we do is receive the gift, through faith (trust in Jesus). Then what? Besides a life with God to look forward to in the 'age to come', we also get to enjoy life with him now, in this world where he's prepared good things for us to do with him. In fact, it's what we were made to do.

Big Idea

We're dead without God. But through faith in Jesus, we have new life – and a new purpose.

Reflect, Respond & Challenge

Choose *one* of the application options below. Read the questions and give a couple minutes for silent reflection. Then, invite your group to respond by sharing. Finish by challenging your group to take practical next steps this week to implement this truth in their lives.

Too Good to be True?

What do you believe about Jesus? About a new life and a new purpose with God? About your status apart from God? Have you already accepted the free gift of new life in Jesus? Or does some part of this not ring true for you yet? *Take a risk and share where you're at in your spiritual journey.*

Good Work!

Did you catch that? God has already prepared good work for us to do! So we can't take the credit. But we can partner with God in doing good in this world. Take a moment to ask God to open your eyes to some current opportunities – maybe in your chapter, on campus, or in your family. *What does he bring to mind?*

Custom Application

You know your group best. As the Spirit leads, share a custom application or challenge.

PRAYER (10 MIN)

Choose the prayer activity that is most fitting for your group.

PRAYER TO RECEIVE NEW LIFE IN JESUS

If a participant in your group indicates that they are in a place to newly trust Jesus for salvation, help them solidify this moment by praying together. You can pray one sentence at a time and have them repeat after you, or if they feel comfortable, they can pray all on their own. Here's a sample:

Jesus, I know that apart from you I am spiritually dead. I've lived life the way I want to live it, and I've made a mess of things. I need your forgiveness. Thank you, Jesus, for giving your life for mine! I love you, I trust you, and I want to know you more. I also need you to lead my life from here on out. Grant me the power to live as you want me to live. Give me your Holy Spirit to guide me and comfort me. Amen.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Some participants have been followers of Jesus for some time now. This time may have ignited a sense of gratitude for the saving work of Jesus. Spend time thanking God for his plan of salvation, for his mercy and love, and for the good works he has prepared for us to do with Him.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MIN)

What upcoming IV events or items do you need to remind your students about?

Week Four

MULTI-ETHNICITY

Topical Week

Ephesians 2:11-22

MULTIETHNICITY

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Before the Study

Ephesians 2:11-22

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- To help you & your students identify where they are at on their ethnic journeys
- To give them a baseline level of a biblical basis for multiethnicity and reconciliation

BACKGROUND

BIBLE STUDY BACKGROUND

- See Handout for Week 4 for background that you can read with your group.
- Circumcision for Jews was a physical sign that you were in the family of God.

COACHING TIPS

1. Prayerfully prepare yourself to lead with both boldness and compassion. Take extra time to familiarize yourself well with the study and the application options.
2. This is not a one-time conversation. This is a journey. If students are open to more development, consider recommending a book related to their own ethnic identity. For white students, the book "Beyond Colorblind" is a good first step. Either way, gracefully invite each student to keep taking steps in this journey.

Multiethnicity

Ephesians 2:11-22

COMMUNITY (15 MIN)

REFLECTING ON OUR ETHNICITY AND CULTURE

1. What are some family values and traditions that are important to your family?
2. Where did your ancestors come from and how has that shaped you?
3. What photographs/relics do you have that tell the story of who you are?

SCRIPTURE (30 MIN)

ENTERING THE PASSAGE

Recite Memory Verse (Optional)

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe (Ephesians 1:18)

Context

Read the handout together, taking turns to read various sections.

Hook

Reflect on the handout: What divisions currently exist on campus? In the world?

Read

Read the passage aloud. Spend 3 minutes silently; look for observations, repetitions, questions.

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE

Gather Observations

- Together/united, two becoming one, is repeated at least six times.
- This contrasts with the repetition of separation/barrier/excluded/divided, five times.
- Lots of contrast- far away vs. near; circumcised vs. uncircumcised, foreigner vs. citizen
- Building/walls/home images

Discuss Questions

- What's significant about Paul mentioning circumcision? What's the big deal with that?
- What's with all the building analogies- the dividing wall? The chief cornerstone?
- What does it mean that he creates one humanity out of two? Why all the unity language?
- What does it mean when Paul says, "Jesus is our peace"?
- What did "fellow citizens and members of God's household" mean for Jews and Gentiles?

APPLYING THE PASSAGE

Summary

Read the "Summary" on the handout aloud for your students.

Big Idea

Read from the Handout: "Our salvation isn't just individual, it's communal. Being a follower of Jesus means joining a diverse family where everyone has equal access to God."

Before we move ahead and talk about how this applies, how does this Big Idea either affirm or challenge what you have heard or been taught to be true about salvation?

Reflect, Respond & Challenge

Choose *one* of the application options below. Read the questions and give a couple minutes for silent reflection. Then, invite your group to respond by sharing. Finish by challenging your group to take practical next steps this week to implement this truth in their lives.

God is not Colorblind

Unity in Christ does not mean that we gloss over our differences. God created different cultures and ethnicities on purpose! Before we can understand and unify with someone who is different from us, we have to understand ourselves and what cultural lenses we have.

The Dividing Wall of Hostility

What groups of people are excluded from your InterVarsity chapter,, either directly or indirectly? *What steps can you take to learn about other ethnicities and groups on campus that are not yet part of your chapter?*

PRAYER (10 MIN)

PRAYING FOR EYES TO SEE

God created different cultures and ethnicities on purpose! When we cross cultures, we have an opportunity to learn more about who God is. Unity in Christ means we celebrate differences rather than gloss over or ignore them. God is not colorblind. Let's take turns praying for God's eyes to see as he does, and for the courage and wisdom to respond as He leads us.

- *Praise God for how He values all people and ethnicities; note the good in various cultures.*
- *Ask for eyes to see people as God sees them, and to see issues of race in our society.*
- *In friendships with people of other ethnicities: pray that we would be quick to listen, slow to speak, eager to learn, and that God would give us growing trust with these friends.*

Invite students to continue asking questions, seeking God, and taking steps in this journey.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MIN)

What upcoming IV events or items do you need to remind your students about?

Multiethnicity

CONTEXT | EPHESIANS 2:11-22

Last week, we learned how we are alive in Christ! Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we receive a new life and a new purpose. We are also called to a new community. In Ephesus, divisions between ethnic and religious groups were often intense and violent, not unlike today. This week we see Paul's instructions to the church on how to deal with these divisions.

While writing this letter, Paul was in prison. Paul was known and seen to be closely associated with Gentiles (non-Jewish people). Simply befriending Gentiles and treating them as equals incited the Jewish people enough to insist that Paul be jailed (Acts 21:28-29 & 28:16). At this time, the temple had many barriers or "dividing walls" separating the people. The priests could be in the innermost places, followed by Jewish men, then women, and finally the outer courts which were the only place that non-Jews could worship. These were man made divisions. In 1 Kings 8:41-43, we learn that the only division in the temple was to be between the priests and the congregation. And in Matthew 27:50-51 we read that when Jesus died on the cross, the curtain dividing the innermost area of the temple was torn in two! This segregation in the temple created all kinds of tension, discrimination, and violence between Jews and non-Jews. Jews and non-Jews were actually killing each other in the streets!

REFLECTION QUESTION

What divisions currently exist on campus?

SUMMARY

Paul's words to the Ephesians were countercultural, then, and they still ring true today. We still see divisions between cultures and ethnicities in the world and even in our church communities. When we decide to follow Jesus, it's never just an individual act. Jesus died not only so that we would be reconciled to him but that we would be reconciled to one another. Choosing to follow Jesus means that we are choosing to belong to a new community, a family of believers from all around the world! A family belongs to one another, cares for and loves one another, and lives with one another in real unity. Paul isn't asking Gentiles to become more like Jews or for the Jews to become like the Gentiles. He's calling these two violently opposed groups of people to become part of one new community, a new family centered around Christ. Because Jesus broke down every barrier between us and him through his death and resurrection, we can now truly reconcile and become one with people who we were once separated from. When we become a new community centered on Christ, we do not lose our culture or ethnicity. Rather, we become part of a new family where those differences are seen, valued, embraced, and celebrated.

BIG IDEA

Our salvation isn't just individual, it's communal. Being a follower of Jesus means joining a diverse family where everyone has equal access to God.

Week Five

WITNESS

Ephesians 3:1-13

WITNESS

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you,³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,⁵ which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.⁸ Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ,⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,¹¹ according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

Before the Study

Ephesians 3:1-13

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Participants would understand the unifying and universal nature of the gospel.
- Participants would also see Paul's example in suffering to spread the gospel, and wrestle with the cost of this in their own context.

BACKGROUND

BIBLE STUDY BACKGROUND

- Paul interrupts himself mid-sentence (Eph. 3:1) to make sure his readers knew some key background about the universal nature of the gospel.
- Paul writes this letter from prison. He was likely initially imprisoned for leading Gentiles into parts of the temple that were previously reserved for Jews. This gives him some extra authority when writing on the topic of suffering for the sake of the gospel.
- The Mystery that Paul refers to is speaking of the inclusion of the gentiles in the mission of God. All people are equal in standing and access to God. For the Jews, this would have been paradigm shattering. Paul is willing to suffer to allow others access to God.

PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION

Refresh yourself with a Gospel Diagram. This time, you may be helping others share it.

COACHING TIPS

1. One of the application options gives our students an opportunity to practice sharing the gospel. Feel free to teach them a gospel presentation (Appendix) if you'd like. You can also have them role-play 'off the cuff' and see how they do explaining the gospel in that manner.
2. For students who aren't yet followers of Jesus, this study (like Study 3) gives you the opportunity to lay out the gospel once again, and invite a response if you like. This would be a natural way to end the "Freedom!" application option.

Witness

Ephesians 3:1-13

COMMUNITY (15 MIN)

DEBRIEF (OPTIONAL)

If there was a significant response last week, then debrief. You only have time for one.

CHECKING IN

How are you feeling after last week's conversation around ethnicity? If necessary, stop now and pray briefly for students to continue being open to what God is doing in them before moving on.

SCRIPTURE (30 MIN)

ENTERING THE PASSAGE

Recite Memory Verse (Optional)

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe (Ephesians 1:18)

Context

Ephesians details how rich we are in Christ. Followers of Jesus are members of a new community and called to a new life. Last week, we tackled the topic of ethnicity, learning that our salvation isn't just individual, it's communal. Following Jesus means joining a diverse family where everyone has equal access to God.

Hook

What's the hardest thing you've had to do in life? Was it worth it? (Ie: what is a challenge you've faced and how did you overcome it?)

Read

Read aloud. Then spend 3 minutes silently; looking for observations, repetitions, questions, etc.

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE

Gather Observations

- Repeated words include: 'mystery', 'Gentiles', and 'Christ'.
- Words like 'make known', 'make plain', 'revealed' and 'understanding' are contrasted with 'hidden', 'not made known'.
- Multiple benefits of receiving the gospel are mentioned: heirs, sharers of the promise, boundless riches, freedom and confidence before God.

Discuss Questions

- What is the mystery that Paul is talking about here?
- How would making this mystery known change the early church to whom he's writing?
- In what ways is Paul a servant of the gospel?
- What response is Paul hoping his audience ('you') will have to this passage?

APPLYING THE PASSAGE

Summary

For centuries, the Jewish people worshiped God with a narrow lens, thinking they were the only ones that God loved. Paul blows up that idea and announces that while God's plan to include the whole world has been hidden for awhile, it's not anymore. Through Jesus, God is making a path back to himself – and bringing all people together in the process! Paul describes himself as a servant of this good news of freedom and this rich life in Jesus. He feels a charge to bring this to the rest of the world, outside of Israel. He's willing to suffer for it. The proof? He's writing this from prison. He states clearly: don't be discouraged that I'm suffering for this gospel – it's worth it.

Big Idea

The gospel is for everyone - and it's worth any cost to get it to them.

Reflect, Respond & Challenge

Choose *one* of the application options below. Read the questions and give a couple minutes for silent reflection. Then, invite your group to respond by sharing. Finish by challenging your group to take practical next steps this week to implement this truth in their lives.

Freedom!

There are a lot of benefits of receiving the gift of the Good News of Jesus. Anyone who trusts Jesus can approach God with freedom and confidence. Do you feel that way in how you relate to God? If so – why? If not – what keeps you from feeling like that? *Discuss.*

Counting the Cost

Who are your 'people'? In what ways have you suffered in order to give them access to Jesus? Are there ways you've avoided suffering? What would it look like for you to 'break the silence'? *Share with the group. Take a moment this week to practice explaining the gospel to someone in your sphere of influence. If time, practice now.*

Custom Application

You know your group best. As the Spirit leads, share a custom application or challenge.

PRAYER (10 MIN)

Choose the prayer activity that is most fitting for your group.

PRAYER FOR MORE

Take some time to confess what might be underneath feelings of insecurity before God, and anything else that might be keeping you from feeling free and confident in walking with Jesus. Then ask the Holy Spirit to replace that with increased faith and desire for God instead.

WHO ARE 'MY PEOPLE'? (2+ PRAYER)

Ask God to bring to mind two people in your chapter or community on campus that don't yet follow him. Spend time praying for them to come to know Jesus. Pray for opportunities to help them take steps closer to Jesus.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MIN)

What upcoming IV events or items do you need to remind your students about?

Week Six

PRAYER

Ephesians 1:15-23

PRAYER

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Before the Study

Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Students will learn how they can use Scripture to pray for one another.
- Students will commit to praying for one another regularly.

BACKGROUND

BIBLE STUDY BACKGROUND

- Note that you will be using two passages this week and comparing them.
- Paul prays for the Ephesians to know Jesus intimately and experience His power.

PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION

This study should be led more like a “Bible study guide” than a traditional communal discovery. You will not be collecting questions from the group, you as the leader should simply read the questions out loud for your group to consider. This is so that you can maximize the time for the application/active response of prayer.

COACHING TIPS

1. Make sure as you prepare that you are discerning which prayer response might be best. If you are going on a prayer walk, you might consider giving your students a heads up that you’ll be walking around outside.
2. Be prepared to help your students navigate any insecurities they may have with praying out loud. Using Scripture to pray can actually be a helpful way for students to ease into praying out loud for the first time.
3. Note that the Prayer activity mirrors and models that Application options. This will be a time to experience prayer in this way, while modeling how they can pray this week.

Prayer

Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21

COMMUNITY (15 MIN)

DEBRIEF (OPTIONAL)

If there was a significant response last week, then debrief. You only have time for one.

HIGHS & LOWS

Share a high and a low from last week related to being Christian and a student.

SCRIPTURE (15 MIN)

ENTERING THE PASSAGE

Recite Memory Verse (Optional)

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe (Ephesians 1:18)

Context

Ephesians details how rich we are in Christ. All who follow Jesus are united to Him as members of a new community and called to a new life. Last week, we learned that God's Kingdom isn't just for the Jewish people, it's for the whole world! Paul made great sacrifices to make sure that all people had access to the Gospel. This week, we learn from how Paul prays.

Hook

Have you ever had someone pray for you in person & out loud? What was that like for you?

Read

Read both passages aloud.

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE

Discussion Questions

- Individually, make a list of what is similar and different between each prayer. Share.
- Why do you think Paul focuses on certain themes in each prayer?
- Why does Paul pray about God's power in each prayer? What does that have to do with the people he is praying for?
- Why does Paul call God "Father" in both prayers and reference being part of a family?

APPLYING THE PASSAGE

Summary

In these two passages, Paul shows us a lot about how to pray for our Christian family members. He talks about being "rooted and established in love" and acknowledges God's power over and over again. He prays for his friends because he loves them and they are part of his family. When we truly see other believers as part of God's family with us, we care about their needs and desire to see them become more like Jesus. Through prayer, we can tap into the same power that raised Christ

from the dead. And because God is our Father, we can access that power knowing that he cares about our needs and the needs of others.

Big Idea

Being part of the family of God means we have access to our Father's power in prayer.

Reflect, Respond & Challenge

Choose *one* of the application options below. Read the questions and give a couple minutes for silent reflection. Then, invite your group to respond by sharing. Finish by challenging your group to take practical next steps this week to implement this truth in their lives.

God's Power in Prayer

Do we believe that we have access to God's power in prayer, that same power that raised Christ from the dead? What do you need in your life that only the power of God can do? A friend or family member who is far from God? A mental health issue? *This week insert your own name or the name of the person you wish to pray for in these passages and pray them a few times this week.*

Remembering You in My Prayers

Is there a member of your chapter or community on campus that you want to commit to praying for daily over the next week? *Using these two passages, replace all of the pronouns with their name and pray for them in the words of Paul. Commit to doing this each day.*

Custom Application

You know your group best. As the Spirit leads, share a custom application or challenge.

PRAYER (25 MIN)

Choose the prayer activity that is most fitting for your group, and as time allows.

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

"Praying Scripture is a way of entering deeply into the text with a heart alert to the unique and personal words from God... When our prayers seem to be more about maintaining control and offering God our agenda for his stamp of approval, praying Scripture can return us to a simpler state of openness and attentiveness to God." -Adele Calhoun, "Spiritual Disciplines Handbook"

A few ways that you can use Scripture to pray is by praying through any of the psalms, the Lord's prayer, and many of the prayers written to the church in the New Testament.

Spend the remainder of your time simply inserting each other's names in these two passages from Ephesians and praying over one another.

PRAYER WALK

Go on a prayer walk together on campus. Take turns praying one of the passages over significant gathering spaces, classrooms, residence halls etc...

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MIN)

What upcoming IV events or items do you need to remind your students about?

Week Seven

PURPOSE

Ephesians 4:1-16

PURPOSE

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make 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 when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." ⁹ (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Before the Study

Ephesians 4:1-16

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Students will explore the concept of calling.
- Learn that God gives each of us gifts to use to grow his community of followers.
- Begin to learn how God might be inviting them to use their gifts for his Kingdom.

BACKGROUND

BIBLE STUDY BACKGROUND

- “Ascended & Descended”- The reference to Christ ascending & descending is quoting Psalm 68:18. Psalm 68 is describing how Moses would go to Mount Sinai to meet with God. God’s presence would literally descend to the mountain to equip Moses with guidance and the Law (10 Commandments). Paul is equating God equipping Moses with guidance and gifts to the way that Jesus equips his followers with guidance and gifts.

PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION

Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, ...- while each of these roles may differ from one another, they all share a common purpose: they all are given authority to bear Christ’s message. Together, these ministers of God’s Word were to equip all God’s people for their own ministry.

COACHING TIPS

1. If you see leadership potential in your group, this is an ideal week to invite students into apprenticeship opportunities! Have a good sense of IV opportunities your group can say yes to.
2. Regardless of leadership opportunities available, be ready to encourage each student with what you see in them.

Purpose

Ephesians 4:1-16

COMMUNITY (15 MIN)

DEBRIEF | REMEMBERING YOU IN MY PRAYERS

How did praying the Scriptures go last week? What did you learn about God and yourself as you prayed using Scripture this past week?

SCRIPTURE (30 MIN)

ENTERING THE PASSAGE

Recite Memory Verse (Optional)

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:14-15)

Context

Ephesians details how rich we are in Christ. All who follow Jesus are united to Him as members of a new community and called to a new life. This new community is meant to be a family. And last week, we learned that one purpose of this new family is to pray for one another. This week, Paul digs deeper into our purpose as members of this new community.

Hook

When you hear the word “calling”, what thoughts or feelings come to mind?

Read

Read aloud. Then spend 3 minutes silently; looking for observations, repetitions, questions, etc.

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE

Gather Observations

- Unity/one is repeated a lot, ten times.
- Maturity is a theme.
- The image of a body comes up again.
- “Fullness of Christ” shows up again.

Discuss Questions

- What does Paul mean by “calling”? What does it mean to be called?
- Why does Paul mention the roles of apostle, prophet, evangelist, etc...?
- Why is unity repeating so much? What does unity have to do with being called?
- What is this whole ascended & descended thing all about? (See Psalm 68:18)
- According to Paul, what does it mean to be mature? Why is maturity important (v. 14)?
- We see the image of being part of a body; what does this image have to do with calling?

APPLYING THE PASSAGE

Summary

In God's family, everyone has a calling: a purpose and a role to play. No one gets to sit on the sidelines. Some might have gifts that are more up front, like in communication or teaching, while others might be more gifted behind the scenes. Either way, we are all invited to use these gifts to encourage and build up our Christian community and to share the Gospel with others and grow our Christian community.

Big Idea

God gives everyone a new purpose: to be unified with other believers and to use your gifts to build your Christian community up.

Reflect, Respond & Challenge

Choose *one* of the application options below. Read the questions and give a couple minutes for silent reflection. Then, invite your group to respond by sharing. Finish by challenging your group to take practical next steps this week to implement this truth in their lives.

Live a Life Worthy of the Calling

You have a calling! As a Christ follower, you have a part to play in supporting and expanding God's family. When you think about your gifts and skills, how has God uniquely created you? List the things you are good at and passionate about. *Share those with the group and spend some time in prayer, asking how God might be inviting you to use those skills in your InterVarsity community for building up the family of God.*

Calling is About Community

What God has equipped and called you to do is not primarily about your personal growth and fulfillment. As Paul states, Christ "equips his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." How is God inviting you to serve your IV community? What gifts do you have that will build your community up? *Reflect and discuss. Share any upcoming IV opportunities and how people can get involved.*

Custom Application

You know your group best. As the Spirit leads, share a custom application or challenge.

PRAYER (10 MIN)

PRAYING THROUGH FEARS

Take turns sharing any fears or anxieties you have as you use your gifts and follow God's calling. Spend time praying for one another, one at a time, encouraging them in their calling and entrusting their fears to God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MIN)

What upcoming IV events or items do you need to remind your students about?

Week Eight

TRADING UP

Ephesians 4:17-32

TRADING UP

¹⁷ So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.²⁰ That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Before the Study

Ephesians 4:17-32

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Students will understand what being “made new” looks like in their community.
- Students will have space to practice hearing God’s voice personally.

BACKGROUND

BIBLE STUDY BACKGROUND

- New self (v. 24) translates to the “new person created by God.”
- “Vice” lists like the one seen in this passage were a common literary form in ancient writings of teachers and would have been familiar to the readers.
- Grieving the spirit (v. 30) reflects a serious offense to God.

PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION

Though this passage is very literally a list of behaviors to avoid, we want to make sure to steer the conversation away from simply behavior modification and into understanding what it means to be “made new.” Perfection isn’t possible but striving to live a life that expresses the fullness of the identity we’ve received through Jesus is a lifelong journey.

COACHING TIPS

1. Read through the intro to the listening prayer exercise first and adjust accordingly. Students may need more context for listening prayer if it is a new activity for them.

Trading Up

Ephesians 4:17-32

COMMUNITY (15 MIN)

DEBRIEF (OPTIONAL)

If there was a significant response last week, then debrief. You only have time for one.

PAYING ATTENTION

Where is one place you noticed God's presence in your life last week?

SCRIPTURE (30 MIN)

ENTERING THE PASSAGE

Recite Memory Verse (Optional)

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:14-15)

Context

Ephesians details our riches in Christ. All who follow Jesus are united to Him in a new community and called to a new life. Last week we discussed the calling given to believers to unify the church.

Hook

Have you ever "upgraded" something, like a phone or computer? Did it make your life better?

Read

Read aloud. Then spend 3 minutes silently; looking for observations, repetitions, questions, etc.

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE

Gather Observations

- Contrast of the futility of the Gentiles with the way the church has been taught.
- Contrast of the old and new self and the repetition of "put off/on" (v. 22, 24, 25).
- List of actions that cause disunity in the church (impurity, greed, lying, anger, stealing, unwholesome talk, bitterness, rage, brawling, slander, malice).
- Christ's forgiveness is the model for how to forgive (v. 32).

Discuss Questions

- Why does Paul describe the Gentiles as darkened in their thinking? (v. 18)
- What does it mean to put off your old self? To put on your new self? (v. 22)
- List the actions warned against in verses 25-34. What stands out to you about this list?
- What do you notice about what Paul says about anger? (v. 26)
- What does it mean to forgive as Christ forgave you? (v. 34)

APPLYING THE PASSAGE

Summary

If you showed up at an average party on campus and noted what you saw, your list might not be that different from this list. The Gentile lifestyle is contrasted with the life the Ephesians have learned from Paul. The church is called to live a life marked by our new relationship with Jesus, not one that looks the same as our old life before we met God. The list of actions are ones that affect both the individual and the unity of the church. Paul challenges the church to live into their new call - to live with eternity in mind and in the truth that they are forgiven by God.

Big Idea

Jesus calls us out of our old life, and into a completely new one.

Reflect, Respond & Challenge

Choose *one* of the application options below. Read the questions and give a couple minutes for silent reflection. Then, invite your group to respond by sharing. Finish by challenging your group to take practical next steps this week to implement this truth in their lives..

OBSTACLES TO LETTING GO

What stands in the way of letting go of your old life? How does this affect your relationship with God? *Share together. The prayer exercise will help us go deeper.*

EVIDENCE OF WHAT?

If a friend were to look at your life, would they see evidence of a life "made new?" If you were to make one change to reflect this truth in your life right now what would it be? *Share what you can with the group. Share with a friend for accountability.*

PRAYER (10 MIN)

LISTENING PRAYER

Have you ever heard from God? What was that like? Do you believe hearing God is possible?

God has been speaking to people since the beginning of time. There are many ways that God speaks; Scripture, words, images, and experiences in our body through the Holy Spirit. It's often the very first thing we hear when we ask God to speak. If you don't hear anything, don't fret! God wants to speak to you because he loves you. We are all learning how to listen to God; it takes practice and there is no "one size fits all" in how God speaks. We all have areas in our lives where we are "following your own desires and thoughts ." Let's interact with God about these areas in our lives.

Imagine you are in a room with Jesus.

Ask God, "what stands in my way of 'letting go of my former life?'" (pause for 20 seconds)

Are you ready to ask for forgiveness? (pause)

Ask God for forgiveness; imagine lying the things that hinder you down at Jesus's feet. (pause)

Then ask God "What do you want to give me in exchange for these things?" (pause) Amen.

Did you hear anything from God? Try Listening Prayer on their own this week.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MIN)

What upcoming IV events or items do you need to remind your students about?

Week Nine

SELF-AWARENESS

Topical Week

Matthew 26:36-46

SELF-AWARENESS

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." ³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹ "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."⁴³ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Before the Study

Matthew 26:36-46

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Students will grow in their understanding of self awareness.
- Space will be created to allow students to identify their emotions.

BACKGROUND

BIBLE STUDY BACKGROUND

- We are deviating from Ephesians this week, instead looking at Matthew 26:36-46.
- This passage occurs right before the persecution. The religious leaders were currently plotting to kill Jesus and he knew his life would soon be coming to a violent end.
- All the disciples had said that they would die before they disowned Jesus. Hours later, they chose denial over death when faced with his crucifixion.
- The “cup” Jesus is referring to in verse 39 alludes to the Old Testament image of the cup of judgment given to nations. In this verse he is asking God if there is any way he can fulfill the Lord’s will without having to endure the pain of death.

PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION

Take time to review the self awareness chart and practice the body scan prayer activity. You have an opportunity to lead out of self awareness, modeling emotional health for your students.

COACHING TIPS

1. The scripture study during this week should be quick. *Lead students directly into discussion instead of gathering observations and questions.* The focus of the discussion should be to help students identify the emotional experience of Jesus. Make sure to set up the passage well by setting the scene and sharing the context so students understand the emotional weight of Jesus’s experience.
2. Use the “Emotional Color Wheel” handout to give them language for their emotions.

Self Awareness

Matthew 26:36-46

COMMUNITY (5 MIN)

PAYING ATTENTION

What was the main emotion this week for you? *Use the Handout, the "Emotional Color Wheel."*

SCRIPTURE (10 MIN)

ENTERING THE PASSAGE

Recite Memory Verse (Optional)

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:14-15)

Context

We are going to deviate from Ephesians. This text occurs right before Jesus' suffering. The religious leaders were plotting to kill Jesus; he knew his life would soon meet a violent end.

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE

Read aloud. Then spend 3 minutes silently in the passage. Pay attention to Jesus' emotions.

Discuss & Reflect

- Using your imagination, how would you feel if you were Jesus?
- What emotions do you see Jesus experiencing in this passage?
- Why do you think Jesus responds to Peter the way he does in verse 40?
- What can we learn from Jesus's open expression of emotion during this dark time?

APPLYING THE PASSAGE

Summary

Jesus is in great anguish over the looming physical pain of the crucifixion, the emotional pain of being betrayed by all his friends, and reality of taking on the sins of the world. Jesus was in such agony that he asks his father for an out from his pending horrible death. He ultimately declares his loyalty to the father saying, "not as I will, but as you will." His last request to his friends was for them to wait up and watch with him, which they failed to do. The passage ends with acceptance that his life will now be handed over to his enemies.

SELF AWARENESS (30 MIN)

"You cannot be spiritually mature without being emotionally mature." - Pete Scazzaro

Jesus experienced the full spectrum of human emotions during his time on earth. In this passage, and throughout scripture, we see Jesus engage emotionally with himself and others. There is an invitation for us to engage with our emotions as a way to better connect with God and others. Our

hope is to grow in self awareness to increase our emotional maturity and become more holistic and effective followers of Jesus.

We are going to talk about growing in “self awareness” and “emotional awareness .”

GROWING IN SELF AWARENESS

Using the Handout, read aloud and talk through the “Self Awareness Chart .”

Discuss:

1. Why is self-awareness an important part of our relationship with God?
2. Why is it important for a leader to be self aware?
3. What do you think about Jesus being emotionally expressive? Have you ever thought of him that way?

GROWING IN EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

There are many ways God speaks to us and forms us. One way is through our growing self-awareness; paying attention to our thoughts, emotions, even our physical bodies, allowing God to restore and transform us. This next prayer activity helps us get in touch with our emotions and offer them to God.

You have permission to pass on this experience if it is overwhelming. If you start to feel overwhelmed: pause, take a few deep breaths, and reorient yourself to the present.

BODY SCAN PRAYER REFLECTION

Find a comfortable position, you can keep your eyes open or closed.

- Begin by taking a few deep breaths. As you settle in, your thoughts may still be racing, and your body may still be uncomfortable. That is okay. (1-2min)
- Begin to scan from the top of your head, to the bottom of your feet, and just notice anywhere where you feel unusual tension or tightness. You may notice tension in your neck, or tightness in your chest for example. (1-2min)
- Try to identify what emotion may be underneath this physical experience. (1-2min)
- Notice as you name it and let yourself feel it, does the emotion get bigger or smaller?
- Ask yourself, or the Holy Spirit, what do I need to do to let go of this emotion, even just for a moment?
- If you are ready, can you imagine laying these things down at Jesus’s feet?

Closing Prayer: Lord, I offer you my emotions, I trust that you see me and know what I need. You are the one who cares for me, restores me, and transforms me into the person you have created and called me to be. In you I have everything I need. Amen.

DEBRIEF (10 MIN)

1. What emotions or physical experiences came up for you during this prayer?
2. How can you integrate this practice (or another that helps you slow down) into your life?
3. What is one thing you can do to grow in your self-awareness?

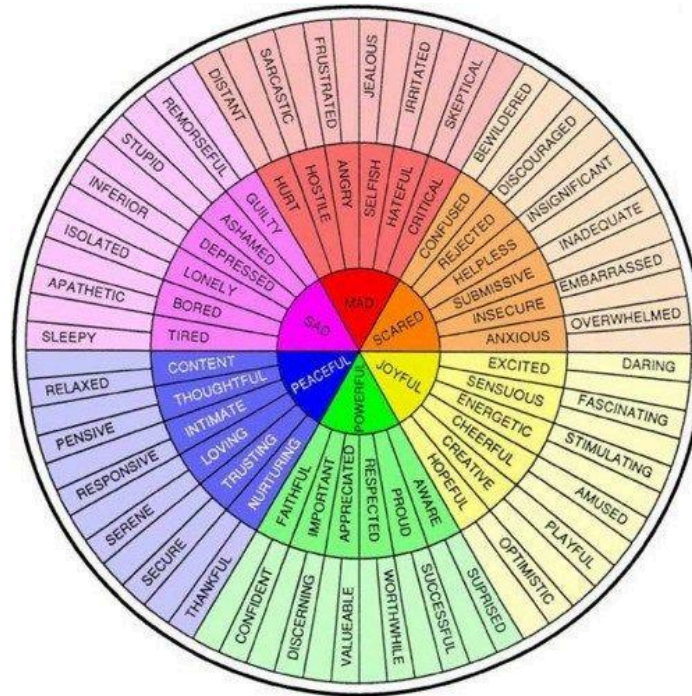
ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MIN)

What upcoming IV events or items do you need to remind your students about?

Self-Awareness

EMOTIONAL COLOR WHEEL

Use this wheel to help you identify and name emotions that you have experienced.



SELF AWARENESS CHART

SELF AWARENESS	LACK OF SELF AWARENESS
Aware of specific needs, opinions, desires	Unaware of specific needs, opinions, desires
Aware of both strengths and weaknesses	Unaware of blind spots
Self confident	Plagued by insecurity in various areas of life
Open to feedback	Sensitive to feedback
Own your mistakes	Blame others
Less anxious	More anxious
<i>ASK: Anything you would add?</i>	<i>ASK: Anything you would add?</i>

Week Ten

RELATIONSHIPS

Ephesians 5:21-6:9

RELATIONSHIPS

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.⁶ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for 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 enjoy long life on the earth.”⁴ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶ Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.⁹ And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Before the Study

Ephesians 5:21-6:9

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Students can identify that the gospel should impact all of their relationships
- Students can identify relationships yet to be transformed by the gospel in their own lives.

BACKGROUND

BIBLE STUDY BACKGROUND

- Missing from Paul's exhortation here is some version of 'Husbands - rule your wives', which would have been common to the 'Household Codes' of Paul's contemporaries. Paul advocates for sacrificial love from the husband, upending usual power dynamics.
- Children were not usually directly addressed in household codes like this one.
- This passage is not Paul tacitly approving of slavery, but rather Paul beginning to upend and unravel slavery by addressing the spiritual equality of both slave and master. The natural outgrowth of that would eventually be freedom for both.

PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION

This passage may tend toward a discussion of complementarian vs egalitarian theology. While probably not the most helpful use of this time for most of our students, feel free to summarize different viewpoints.

COACHING TIPS

1. Some students may be 'triggered' by conversations around gender roles and/or slavery. Similarly, one of the application options addresses male/female dynamics, and may create the opportunity for confession for some, or the opportunity to share about sexual assault for others. While we shouldn't go 'fishing' for either of the above, take a moment to think about what your response might be to either scenario.

Relationships

Ephesians 5:21-6:9

COMMUNITY (5 MIN)

DEBRIEF (OPTIONAL)

If there was a significant response last week, then debrief. You only have time for one.

RELATIONSHIP REFLECTION

What's one relationship in your life where you've seen God at work this semester? What about a relationship that needs some help?

SCRIPTURE (30 MIN)

ENTERING THE PASSAGE

Recite Memory Verse (Optional)

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:14-15)

Context

Ephesians details our riches in Christ; we are members of a new community and called to new life. Last week, we went off-road from Ephesians as we tackled Self-Awareness. Self awareness is an aspect of our spiritual growth and leadership, with Jesus as our example to follow.

Hook

What do power dynamics around seniority look like in your chapter? Does this play a factor for your community?

Read

Read aloud. Then spend 3 minutes silently; looking for observations, repetitions, questions, etc.

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE

Gather Observations

- The first sentence stands alone (and seems to act as a topic sentence)
- The title Christ is used a number of times here
- Each of the six relational roles (wife, child, slave etc.) are directly addressed by Paul

Discuss Questions

- How does the encouragement to 'submit to one another out of reverence for Christ' affect the rest of the passage?
- What point is Paul making about Christ and the church?
- How does the gospel transform each of these sets of relationships?
- Why do you think Paul focuses on these three pairs of relationships?

APPLYING THE PASSAGE

Summary

How, exactly, should the gospel transform our relationships? The answer is woven throughout these verses, but is summarized nicely in the very first sentence. We submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. By honoring and valuing one another as if doing this for Jesus himself, questions about who has ultimate power or authority melt. The focus is placed on how we serve, love, and care for one another. For example, the husband is to match the submission of his wife with the kind of sacrificial love that took Jesus to the cross. In each case, the guiding principle is the same. The path goes through love and submission; honor the other person over yourself.

Big Idea

Gospel-centered relationships seek the good of the other first.

Reflect, Respond & Challenge

Choose *one* of the application options below. Read the questions and give a couple minutes for silent reflection. Then, invite your group to respond by sharing. Finish by challenging your group to take practical next steps this week to implement this truth in their lives.

Easier Said Than Done

Paul picks out some traditionally difficult relationships and applies the gospel to each of them. What do you notice about the relationship between men and women on campus? How does this compare to the ideas of mutual submission and honor that we see in this text? *What's one thing you can do to help shift any unhealthy dynamics you identified?*

Growing Pains

While not all of us are parents, all of us are someone's child (or are under the care of a figure that plays that role). There is no perfect parent-child relationship; all of us come out of childhood with some wounds. Where might you need to forgive your parents? Where do you need to seek forgiveness? *Spend a moment journaling. Then discuss.*

Custom Application

You know your group best. As the Spirit leads, share a custom application or challenge.

PRAYER (10 MIN)

PRAYER FOR RECONCILIATION

All of us have conflict in our lives. What do we do with it? Jesus offers a listening ear. Be assured: He wants to bring peace and healing to our relationships, even if it takes a long time.

Hold someone in your mind before Jesus, and pray for them:

- Ask Jesus for forgiveness if there are things to confess.
- Ask Jesus to help move you toward forgiveness as well.
- Pray for their good, as specifically as you can.

Spend some time pastorally caring for your students in whatever relationships are brought up.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MIN)

What upcoming IV events or items do you need to remind your students about?

Week Eleven

THE BATTLE

Ephesians 6:10-23

THE BATTLE

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. ²¹ Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. ²² I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you. ²³ Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before the Study

Ephesians 6:10-23

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Students will recognize the spiritual reality of “the battle” in our world.
- Students will grow in differentiating the 3 voices; God’s, the enemy’s, and self talk.

BACKGROUND

BIBLE STUDY BACKGROUND

- Verses 10-17 describe the battle Christians face against Satan’s evil forces in the world.
- “Day of evil” (v. 13) could refer to our present time speaking of our current suffering and testing, or the time immediately preceding the final judgment when Christ returns.
- Defining armor: belt or girdle is the leather apron beneath the armor protecting the stomach, the breastplate protects the chest, much like a helmet does for the head. In addition Roman soldiers used sandals (v. 15) and a shield (v. 16) for protection.

PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION

Whether a student grew up in the church, or is a brand new Christian, many of us are under-informed about the evil forces in our world that Paul describes in this passage. Practice explaining “evil forces” to students of varying levels of understanding and biblical knowledge.

COACHING TIPS

1. Read through the listening prayer activity before leading students through it. Refer back to the coaching tips from week 8 if you need help setting it up. If you believe students are hearing a voice that is not from the Lord, then remind them: the Lord’s voice can be convicting, but it is also always loving and never contradicts what is in Scripture.

Ephesians 6:10-23

COMMUNITY (15 MIN)

DEBRIEF (OPTIONAL)

If there was a significant response last week, then debrief. You only have time for one.

REFLECTION

What has been a challenge of the last week? Did you sense God was with you during it?

SCRIPTURE (30 MIN)

ENTERING THE PASSAGE

Recite Memory Verse (Optional)

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:14-15)

Context

Ephesians details our riches in Christ. All who follow Jesus are united to Him as members of a new community and called to a new life. Last week we discussed God's hope for relationships.

Hook

What is your favorite scene of "good vs. evil" in a book or media?

Read

Read aloud. Then spend 3 minutes silently; looking for observations, repetitions, questions, etc.

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE

Gather Observations

- Strength comes from being in the Lord, not from ourselves (v. 10).
- Our battle is not against others but against the evil powers and principalities (v. 12).
- Putting on the full armor of Christ will help us stand our ground when evil comes (v. 13).
- Repetition of "all": pray on *all* occasions, *all* kinds of requests, for *all* people (v. 18).

Discuss Questions

- Why does Paul use the imagery of armor?
- Make a list of each piece of armor. Define each piece and the role that it plays.
- What does it mean that our battle is against "spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms?"
- What effect on the reader does the author intend by describing the armor that we have?
- How do we pray on *all* occasions, with *all* kinds of prayers and requests for *all* people?

APPLYING THE PASSAGE

Summary

Paul explains that we are in a cosmic battle of good and evil. Though it is tempting to look to other people as the problem in the challenges we face, he warns that we are actually fighting against spiritual evil forces. Intense thought, but true! Much like an actual battle, we need to be prepared.

We must put on the full armor of protection offered to us by God through his spirit and His Word. Paul calls his readers to be alert in prayer on all occasions with all types of requests because when you're in battle it requires complete focus.

Big Idea

We are in a battle against evil but we are well-equipped in the Spirit.

Pass out the Handout. Read it aloud together briefly. Have one person read a row, then the next person. Afterward, bring it back to the passage and land on the "Big Idea ."

Reflect, Respond & Challenge

Choose *one* of the application options below. Read the questions and give a couple minutes for silent reflection. Then, invite your group to respond by sharing. Finish by challenging your group to take practical next steps this week to implement this truth in their lives.

3 Voices

What did you learn about the 3 voices from the chart? What voice do you tend to listen to the most? *Share. Practice differentiating the voices this week.*

Standing Firm

How do you see the powers of darkness around you? What role might God be inviting you to play in combating these spiritual realities? *Discuss. Detail how they can rely on God's armor and resources in this battle. This week, spend time re-reading this passage, asking God to protect and empower you in this fight.*

Custom Application

You know your group best. As the Spirit leads, share a custom application or challenge.

PRAYER (10 MIN)

LISTENING PRAYER FOR OTHERS

Let's spend time asking God to speak.

Have each student ask God a question on behalf of another student. A simple starting question when practicing listening prayer is to ask God, "Lord, what do you love about this person?" Or "what do you want to say to this person today?" Give a minute of silence and have each person share what they heard. If more clarification is needed, simply ask God, "Lord what does this (image, word, scripture) mean?"

Debrief what each person heard. Normalize students who may not have heard anything.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MIN)

What upcoming IV events or items do you need to remind your students about?

The Battle

DISCERNING THREE VOICES

It's not possible to fight a battle if you don't know what that battle is actually against or if you don't even know that you're in one! A useful tool in combating evil in this world is being able to differentiate the voices of the Lord, the enemy, and ourselves. Hearing from God acts as a defense against the voice of the enemy in our lives. We can use our understanding of scripture to help us discern God's voice.

VOICE	CHARACTER	MOTIVE	FEELING
God the Father Jesus Christ Holy Spirit	God is Love. He is Father. He is Friend. He is Giver of Good Gifts. He is Truth.	He wants a relationship with us. He wants us to know Him. He wants only good for us. He sees all of our potential.	Special and Loved Empowered to change Courageous Peace and Joy Grateful and Humbled
My own Self-Talk	Compares myself with the standards of the world May be judgmental May be critical and perfectionist	I want to justify myself. I want to be a better person. I focus on myself rather than on the Lord I want to ease my own anxiety	Discouraged Tired Tempted to give up or seek temporary comfort 'justified' in our actions and thoughts
Satan or the Evil One	Adversary Deceiver Spoiler Destroyer Thief Accuser of the Brethren	He wants to destroy our relationship with the Father. He wants to ruin our relationship with others. He wants to spoil our joy. He wants us to remain trapped in lies.	Defeated Isolated Hopeless Unworthy We may feel we have to take matters into our own hands.

Week Twelve

CELEBRATION WEEK

Before the Study

VISION FOR BREAK

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Provide closure for students with both IV and your discipleship relationship.
- Affirm transformation and growth in individuals and in the community.
- Plan for growing in Christ over break (Winter Break or Summer Break).

BACKGROUND

PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION

Other than the first set of reflection questions in “Looking Back”, the rest of the guide essentially helps you walk your students through the provided handout. As this is the last week, you want students to be thoughtful about how God has been at work in their midst, helping them to see growth and His activity. Along with this, you will be wanting to help prepare them for what they are heading into over Break. This is an important session to help give students closure in relationships and for understanding what God has done and is doing in them.

COACHING TIPS

1. The “feel” of this session should be warm, relational, fun, and encouraging.
2. Prepare in advance 2-3 ways you have seen each student grow. Your students will be encouraged by the thought you put into them, and your words carry weight.

Celebration Week

Community, Vision, Planning

LOOKING BACK (15 MIN)

SEMESTER HIGHLIGHTS

As soon as everyone arrives, give them 2 minutes to reflect on the following questions:

- 1) What did you see God do in our chapter over the last semester/quarter?
- 2) How did God grow you personally this semester/quarter?

Spend some time sharing. Have fun. Celebrate the small wins!

SENIOR REFLECTIONS

If seniors are present, expand the above question to their college experience with IV.

ENCOURAGEMENT (20 MIN)

Pass out the handout. You know your group best. If there were repeated conversations of painful situations throughout the semester, add "Lamenting Pain" and time it accordingly.

AFFIRMATION CIRCLE

Encouragement is an important part of community and growing in Christ. The end of a semester marks an opportunity to speak words of encouragement into each other. Using the handout, take 2 minutes to reflect on your peers. You will give 2 words of encouragement to every member of the group. *Leader: Come ready with 2-3 ways you have seen each student grow. For smaller groups, you can insert yourself to be encouraged.*

LAMENTING PAIN (OPTIONAL)

For some, looking back on the semester may be painful. If you know this is true for a student or group, take 1-2 minutes for students to reflect on what was hard about the previous semester. Spend some time acknowledging that pain together. Read Psalm 13, then pray together asking God to meet them in their pain and to help them to keep trusting as they heal.

LOOKING AHEAD (15 MIN)

Winter and summer breaks come with both opportunities for growth and challenges to overcome. You will want to help your students plan for growth and for overcoming barriers.

DISCUSS BREAK SITUATION

- What is your living situation over break?
- In what way does your relationship with your family/friends impact your faith?
- What does your church situation look like?
- SENIORS: Describe how you are feeling about graduating? Plans?

REFLECTING ON BARRIERS

Take 2 minutes to reflect on the “Reflecting on Barriers” Questions (see handout). Have them journal, or reflect silently. After the two minutes are up, work through the questions together.

PLANNING FOR GROWTH

Take 2 minutes to reflect on the “Planning for Growth” Questions (see handout). Have them journal, or reflect silently. After the two minutes are up, work through the questions together. *Remember to help them get concrete with their plans. For planning tips, refer to week 1; clear, simple, and concrete is best.*

PRAYER (5 MIN)

COMMISSIONING PRAYER

Leader, read Ephesians 3:14-21. Spend a moment in silence reflecting on the passage. Pray this passage over each student by substituting the students name every time the passage says “you” or “your .” Pray it over each student in turn and by name. *Example: “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen ‘Emily’ with power through his Spirit...”*

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 MIN)

What IV items related to break do you need to encourage them toward?

Planning for Break

ENCOURAGEMENT

NAME	AFFIRMATION ONE	AFFIRMATION TWO

REFLECTING ON BARRIERS

What do you foresee being a barrier to setting aside personal time to meet with God? Thinking about your break situation, what areas of sin in your life do you feel most weak in? What general concerns do you have for your break situation?

PLANNING FOR GROWTH

What is an area of RPMS that you want to grow in: Relational, Physical, Mental, Spiritual. What is a concrete goal and plan for growing in that area(s)?

Which of the following are you excited to commit to over break? What will that look like for you?

- Read a Christian book
- Get connected to a church
- Create a plan for spiritual disciplines: what, when, where, how
- Set up accountability for areas of sin or struggle
- InterVarsity Summer Opportunities

Appendix

DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES

Discipleship People

Make a printout of this page for every discipleship group that you have. Keep notes throughout the semester. You can reference this in week 12, when reflecting on their goals and growth.

MEETING DETAILS

Day of the Week:

Time:

Location:

NAME	WEEKLY GOAL	NOTES, PRAYER REQUESTS, GROWTH

Ideas of Planning

Week One Addendum

See below for examples of ways to guide students if they feel stuck thinking of categories as they fill out the handout.

AREA OF GROWTH	DESIRED GOAL
Intimacy in Christ Trust in God’s Love Love of God’s Word Understanding of God’s Word Enrich Prayer Life Grow in expectation of God’s Power	Goals to Accompany Area Read book of John Read Bible daily Read Christian book Give space to pray each day Be more aware of God’s presence and provision
Character like Christ Humility Patience Social Life Trust in God through hardship Purity with boyfriend/girlfriend Purity in thoughtlife related to lust	Goals to Accompany Area Memorize Philippians 2 Read book on patience Stop getting drunk Read Psalms and add my own laments daily Have boundaries convo, and check in weekly Take every thought captive; make it obedient to Jesus
Mission with Christ (Optional) Boldness in relational witness Lead friends in their faith Friendships Love of friends/community	Goals to Accompany Area Share the Gospel with 5 new friends Launch a Small Group Deepen friendships and trust Pray daily for a few select friends

Gospel Presentation

Week Three Addendum

SHARING THE GOSPEL

Before I begin, what do you notice about the world as you see it today? What is it like? What are some of the headlines on the news?

WORLD 1 | GOD IS HOLY

It's a mess. That's not the way God created it to be. *Draw world 1.*



God is the creator of all things. He made us and loves us. When God first created the world, it was a place of peace and harmony. God created men and women in His image to live in love and holiness.

WORLD 2 | I AM NOT

But that is not the world we see, is it? *Draw World 2.*



God is Holy, I am not. This is the problem. The Bible calls this problem sin. It's where we reject God's central place in our lives and the world.

The result and consequence of sin? Brokenness and Death. Because sin breaks our relationship with God, our lives, our relationships with others, and the world is not the way that it's supposed to be.

The Bible tells us that every person on the planet has sin in their heart. What this means is that every person is separated from God. Because we have rejected God's leadership in our lives and hurt ourselves, others, and ultimately God, everyone is subject to God's judgment. That's what the Bible describes as hell. We don't like talking about it, but every person deserves God's judgment as He is the Creator.

WORLD 3 | JESUS REDEEMS

What is awesome about God, is that He loves us enough to not just leave us in our mess.



Our relationship with God was messed up... But God, in love, sent his one and only son Jesus to rescue people and restore a broken world. Jesus Christ came to earth to show us what God looks like with skin on. But more importantly, Jesus assumed the judgment due sinners by dying on the cross in our place. A great exchange took place. Our sin was laid on Jesus and His holiness was given to us. After His death Jesus was raised from the dead and ascended into Heaven as Savior and Lord.

God paid the ultimate price for our sin so that we wouldn't have to and so that He could be back in relationship with us, now, and eternally.

Rom 3:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

WORLD 4 | CHRIST IS MY LIFE

Here is the life that God describes for those who begin to follow Jesus. *Draw world 4.*



The world is still broken. It's still a mess. But God lives in the hearts of people who trust him. His desire is that we would now orient every area of our lives to letting him lead.

To be a Christian means that you trust in Christ and follow him. It means you have a personal relationship with him. This new and real relationship now defines us. God is at work in us through His Holy Spirit, helping transform us into people who care about him and his Kingdom.

Jesus calls us into being members of a new community, and into a new life. His picture of life is better and bigger than our picture of our lives. He wants us to have joy instead of anxiety. He wants us to share with others the good news of what Jesus did instead of keeping it to ourselves. He wants us to be people who love each other instead of living out more broken relationships. He wants us to join the family of God in caring tangibly about the broken needs in the world.

Christians, admittedly, don't do this perfectly. That's why Jesus had to die, because we are not perfect.

ASKING WHERE THEY ARE

Which world describes where you are at with God? And Why?

- World 1 - You think everything is fine in the world and in your relationship with God.
- World 2 - Think the world is a mess, hopeless, and there is no God. Or you believe there is a God, but would rather live your own way.
- World 3 - You believe that Jesus is real and he really rose from the dead but maybe you have not made an adult decision to follow him. Or you haven't actually trusted in him as the leader of your life.
- World 4 - You have started following Jesus and he is at work in your heart and life.

What is holding you back from trusting and following Jesus?

INVITING A RESPONSE

Depending on how they answer, help them see that God is inviting them to follow him. This part is crucial. Just sharing the Gospel is awesome. However, if people don't know that they need to respond actively in belief and repentance, then we haven't loved our friends well. We need to help people know what it means to repent and believe!

The crux of this story is that Jesus died for me and he died for you. He rose from the dead so that you and I could know Him deeply and follow Him.

Would you like to place your faith and trust in Jesus today and follow Him?

- Repent- Turn from leading our own lives and turn to following Christ as the leader of your life.
- Believe- This is more than intellectual assent, it's trusting in Christ's sacrifice in your place as the basis for your relationship with God.

Sample Prayer

Will you pray with me to ask God into your life? You can just repeat after me:

Jesus, I know that apart from you I am spiritually dead. I've lived life the way I want to live it, and I've made a mess of things. I need your forgiveness. Thank you, Jesus, for giving your life for mine! I love you, I trust you, and I want to know you more. I also need you to lead my life from here on out. Grant me the power to live as you want me to live. Give me your Holy Spirit to guide me and comfort me. Amen.

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Read Scripture: Ephesians (2016) is copyright by Bible Project and is available for viewing at bibleproject.com.

EMOTIONAL WHEEL

Plutchick, Robert. Emotions and Life: Perspectives from Psychology, Biology, and Evolution. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2002. *Plutchik used a color wheel to categorize intensities of what he considered to be the eight primary emotions: anger, fear, sadness, disgust, surprise, curiosity, acceptance and joy.*

OTHER VIDEOS

Ethnicity Matters (2013) is copyright by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship USA

Sharing the Gospel (2011) by Doug Schaupp

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