



Connection Group (Small Group)

Ephesians 1:1-23 Spiritual Blessings, Thanksgiving, and Prayer

WELCOME

[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed]

Open your time with an ice-breaker question(s): When you count your blessings what do you put at the top of the list? What do you remember from your childhood about Thanksgiving Day?

OPENING PRAYER

PURPOSE/VISION CASTING *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other; to glorify God and pursue people (multiply our group to reach more), and help each other think and live like Christ with the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.]*

REVIEW GROUP GROUND RULES *[How we practice loving and respecting each other. Review these each week for the first several weeks, and when you have new people; ask group members to name them off.]*

PREPARING OUR HEARTS *[Remind everyone that someone will tell the story as our Bibles are closed; ask everyone stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us; encourage everyone to share as God leads them – we share our hearts out of obedience to the Holy Spirit, not to please someone else]*

TODAY'S STORY/SETTING THE SCENE *[Introduce the passage reference; Bibles closed for now; provide the context by sharing what happens before this story.]*

Paul made his first visit to the city of Ephesus on his second missionary journey. There, he set up a long-term ministry that allowed him to lead people in the city to Christ and to teach them what it means to be a part of the united body of Christ.

This epistle was written when Paul was a prisoner at Rome. He shows that they were saved by grace, and that however wretched they (we) once were, they (we) now have equal privileges with the Jews. He encourages them (us) to persevere in their Christian calling, and urges them (us) to walk in a manner becoming their (our) faith.

TELL THE STORY *[Ask someone ahead of time to tell the story, perhaps your co-facilitator. If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).]*

REBUILD THE STORY *[With their Bibles open, the group rebuilds the story based on what they remember. Let participants know as we share, we are not giving commentary or teaching the group what we know. Say, "Ok, let's read the Scripture". Ask, "If someone is comfortable, please read the passage.]*

Ephesians 1

READ THE STORY ALOUD *[Let the group observe if anything was left out or added to the story.]*

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

¹⁵ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

DEBRIEF/DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS *[Questions marked * are the key questions that should to be discussed. Other questions are optional **if time allows**. Keep in mind that these questions are for the purpose of BUILDING CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a time for you or anyone in the group to “teach” them something.]*

1. ***What do we learn about God from this passage?** (God understands our weak faith; Jesus continues to disciple them; The Holy Spirit is our power to be His witnesses. He is our Comforter; He has work for me to do)
2. ***What do we learn about man/us from this passage?** (I can set my mind on earthly things; when I choose not to trust and wait on God I can limit God’s power; I can put God in a “box”; I often need explicit instructions from God; I don’t like to wait.)
3. **What does the work of Christ do for the believer?**
4. **How is God’s power at work in all creation?**
5. **What did those filled with the Spirit begin to do?**

6. ***What is God leading you to do?** Sum up your “take-away” in a word or short sentence.
7. ***Who will you tell this week what God has shown you in His Word today?**

ASSIGN NEXT WEEK’S PASSAGE Ephesians 2 *[Tell everyone the passage reference for next week and to read it several times during their week. Ask if anyone would volunteer to tell the story next week.]*

PRAYER REQUESTS *[Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don’t have to have something to share every week.]*

HUDDLE *[As members are leaving gather your team and...*

1) identify which couples/individual members were absent. Decide and assign someone to contact them that afternoon...

2) identify your guests and assign someone to contact them that afternoon to thank them and invite them back...

3) did someone share a situation or need during small group that needs encouragement? Ask them if it’s ok if a member can call them maybe have coffee during the week to just pray with them and encourage them. Ask someone to contact them during the week.]



Connection Group (Small Group)

Ephesians 2 Made Alive in Christ, One in Christ



WELCOME

[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed]

Open your time with an ice-breaker question(s): From where did your ancestors originate? What did their new citizenship mean to them?

OPENING PRAYER

PURPOSE/VISION CASTING *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other; to glorify God and pursue people (multiply our group to reach more), and help each other think and live like Christ with the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.]*

REVIEW GROUP GROUND RULES *[How we practice loving and respecting each other. Review these each week for the first several weeks, and when you have new people; ask group members to name them off.]*

PREPARING OUR HEARTS *[Remind everyone that someone will tell the story as our Bibles are closed; ask everyone stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us; encourage everyone to share as God leads them.]*

TODAY'S STORY/SETTING THE SCENE *[Introduce the passage reference; Bibles closed for now; provide the context by sharing what happens before this story.]*

Remind your group that in the previous passage of Ephesians, Paul recorded that God's great power raised Christ from the dead and exalted Him to God's right hand in the heavenly places. Summarize that today's passage teaches that God's grace was required so believers could share Christ's destiny.

TELL THE STORY *[Ask someone ahead of time to tell the story, perhaps your co-facilitator. If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).]*

REBUILD THE STORY *[With their Bibles open, the group rebuilds the story based on what they remember. Let participants know as we share, we are not giving commentary or teaching the group what we know. Say, "Ok, let's read the Scripture". Ask, "If someone is comfortable, please read the passage.]* **Ephesians 2**

READ THE STORY ALOUD *[Let the group observe if anything was left out or added to the story.]*

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For

we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

¹¹ Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

DEBRIEF/DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS *[Questions marked * are the key questions that should to be discussed. Other questions are optional **if time allows**. Keep in mind that these questions are for the purpose of BUILDING CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a time for you or anyone in the group to “teach” them something.]*

1. ***What do we learn about God from this passage?** (God understands our weak faith; Jesus continues to disciple them; The Holy Spirit is our power to be His witnesses. He is our Comforter; He has work for me to do)
2. ***What do we learn about man/us from this passage?** (I can set my mind on earthly things; when I choose not to trust and wait on God I can limit God’s power; I can put God in a “box”; I often need explicit instructions from God; I don’t like to wait.)
3. **What were you like before becoming a Christian?**
4. **How do you see God’s creative workmanship working in your life?**
5. **How does the Gospel breakdown religious and social barriers?**
6. ***What is God leading you to do?** Sum up your “take-away” in a word or short sentence.
7. ***Who will you tell this week what God has shown you in His Word today?**

ASSIGN NEXT WEEK’S PASSAGE Ephesians 3 *[Tell everyone the passage reference for next week and to read it several times during their week. Ask if anyone would volunteer to tell the story next week.]*

PRAYER REQUESTS *[Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don’t have to have something to share every week.]*

Huddle *[As members are leaving gather your team and...*

1) identify which couples/individual members were absent. Decide and assign someone to contact them that afternoon...

2) identify your guests and assign someone to contact them that afternoon to thank them and invite them back...

3) did someone share a situation or need during small group that needs encouragement? Ask them if it's ok if a member can call them maybe have coffee during the week to just pray with them and encourage them. Ask someone to contact them during the week.]

Connection Group (Small Group)

Ephesians 3 the Preacher to the Gentiles, A Prayer for the Ephesians



WELCOME

[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed]

Open your time with an ice-breaker question(s): Do you like to figure things out for yourself or get help as soon as possible?

OPENING PRAYER

PURPOSE/VISION CASTING *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other; to glorify God and pursue people (multiply our group to reach more), and help each other think and live like Christ with the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.]*

REVIEW GROUP GROUND RULES *[How we practice loving and respecting each other. Review these each week for the first several weeks, and when you have new people; ask group members to name them off.]*

PREPARING OUR HEARTS *[Remind everyone that someone will tell the story as our Bibles are closed; ask everyone stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us; encourage everyone to share as God leads them.]*

TODAY'S STORY/SETTING THE SCENE *[Introduce the passage reference; Bibles closed for now; provide the context by sharing what happens before this story.]*

Paul has explained what it means to be spiritually dead. He has reminded his readers that they receive true life only through the grace of Christ. Paul has also explained that the grace of Jesus Christ changed believers into new people, both spiritually and culturally, who then share a new citizenship under God. Becoming a believer involves a change in citizenship from the world to the Kingdom of God.

TELL THE STORY *[Ask someone ahead of time to tell the story, perhaps your co-facilitator. If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).]*

REBUILD THE STORY *[With their Bibles open, the group rebuilds the story based on what they remember. Let participants know as we share, we are not giving commentary or teaching the group what we know. Say, "Ok, let's read the Scripture". Ask, "If someone is comfortable, please read the passage.]* **Ephesians 3**

READ THE STORY ALOUD *[Let the group observe if anything was left out or added to the story.]*

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.

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family^[a] 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.

DEBRIEF/DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS *[Questions marked * are the key questions that should to be discussed. Other questions are optional **if time allows**. Keep in mind that these questions are for the purpose of BUILDING CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a time for you or anyone in the group to "teach" them something.]*

1. ***What do we learn about God from this passage?** (God understands our weak faith; Jesus continues to disciple them; The Holy Spirit is our power to be His witnesses. He is our Comforter; He has work for me to do)
2. ***What do we learn about man/us from this passage?** (I can set my mind on earthly things; when I choose not to trust and wait on God I can limit God's power; I can put God in a "box"; I often need explicit instructions from God; I don't like to wait.)
3. **As a Christian believer how can we explain God's mysteries to non-believers?**
4. **If a person knew only rejection and pain in their relationships, how can this person come to understand the love of God in a personal way?**
5. **How does each person of the Trinity work in our lives?**
6. ***What is God leading you to do?** Sum up your "take-away" in a word or short sentence.
7. ***Who will you tell this week what God has shown you in His Word today?**

ASSIGN NEXT WEEK'S PASSAGE Ephesians 4 *[Tell everyone the passage reference for next week and to read it several times during their week. Ask if anyone would volunteer to tell the story next week.]*

PRAYER REQUESTS *[Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.]*

HUDDLE *[As members are leaving gather your team and...*

1) identify which couples/individual members were absent. Decide and assign someone to contact them that afternoon...

2) identify your guests and assign someone to contact them that afternoon to thank them and invite them back...

3) did someone share a situation or need during small group that needs encouragement? Ask them if it's ok if a member can call them maybe have coffee during the week to just pray with them and encourage them. Ask someone to contact them during the week.]

Connection Group (Small Group)

Ephesians 4 Unity in the Body, Living as Children of Light



WELCOME

[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed]

Open your time with an ice-breaker question(s): What on quality would you like to build in your character?

OPENING PRAYER

PURPOSE/VISION CASTING *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other; to glorify God and pursue people (multiply our group to reach more), and help each other think and live like Christ with the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.]*

REVIEW GROUP GROUND RULES *[How we practice loving and respecting each other. Review these each week for the first several weeks, and when you have new people; ask group members to name them off.]*

PREPARING OUR HEARTS *[Remind everyone that someone will tell the story as our Bibles are closed; ask everyone stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us; encourage everyone to share as God leads them.]*

TODAY'S STORY/SETTING THE SCENE *[Introduce the passage reference; Bibles closed for now; provide the context by sharing what happens before this story.]*

Just in three chapters Paul has taught us that our relationship with Christ is based on power from the Holy Spirit, the presence of Christ, and the fullness of God. Within this letter, Paul continually offers prayers to God, he has prayed for believers to be empowered to understand the immensity of Christ's love for them. Paul continues to thank God and encourages us to be faithful.

TELL THE STORY *[Ask someone ahead of time to tell the story, perhaps your co-facilitator. If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).]*

REBUILD THE STORY *[With their Bibles open, the group rebuilds the story based on what they remember. Let participants know as we share, we are not giving commentary or teaching the group what we know. Say, "Ok, let's read the Scripture". Ask, "If someone is comfortable, please read the passage.]* **Ephesians 4**

READ THE STORY ALOUD *[Let the group observe if anything was left out or added to the story.]*

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 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 grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

⁹ (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the

heavens, that he might fill all things.)¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

The New Life

¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ! - ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

DEBRIEF/DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS *[Questions marked * are the key questions that should to be discussed. Other questions are optional **if time allows**. Keep in mind that these questions are for the purpose of BUILDING CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a time for you or anyone in the group to "teach" them something.]*

1. ***What do we learn about God from this passage?** (God provides unity, he provides our gifts, He looks to us to use the gifts He gives, God is love)
2. ***What do we learn about man/us from this passage?** (man lets his anger overcome, man tends to do things on his own, we are sinful in nature.)
3. **Why would Paul have placed so much emphasis on unity among believers?**
4. **What evidence do you see that your life is controlled by the Holy Spirit?**
5. ***What is God leading you to do?** Sum up your "take-away" in a word or short sentence.

6. *Who will you tell this week what God has shown you in His Word today?

ASSIGN NEXT WEEK'S PASSAGE Ephesians 5 *[Tell everyone the passage reference for next week and to read it several times during their week. Ask if anyone would volunteer to tell the story next week.]*

PRAYER REQUESTS *[Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.]*

HUDDLE *[As members are leaving gather your team and...*

1) identify which couples/individual members were absent. Decide and assign someone to contact them that afternoon...

2) identify your guests and assign someone to contact them that afternoon to thank them and invite them back...

3) did someone share a situation or need during small group that needs encouragement? Ask them if it's ok if a member can call them maybe have coffee during the week to just pray with them and encourage them. Ask someone to contact them during the week.]

Connection Group (Small Group) Ephesians 5 Being Imitators of God



WELCOME

[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed]

Open your time with an ice-breaker question(s): Did you ever get your mouth washed out with soap? What were your parent's rules about language in your home?

OPENING PRAYER

PURPOSE/VISION CASTING *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other; to glorify God and pursue people (multiply our group to reach more), and help each other think and live like Christ with the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.]*

REVIEW GROUP GUIDELINES *[How we practice loving and respecting each other. Review these each week for the first several weeks, and when you have new people; ask group members to name them off.]*

PREPARING OUR HEARTS *[Remind everyone that someone will tell the story as our Bibles are closed; ask everyone stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us; encourage everyone to share as God leads them.]*

TODAY'S STORY/SETTING THE SCENE *[Introduce the passage reference; Bibles closed for now; provide the context by sharing what happens before this story.]*

Paul moved on from describing the roles of the Trinity to focusing on the calling of Christian leadership. He urged those who accepted that calling to accept the responsibility for their actions toward others as a part of that calling. As he continued his discussion about godly and ungodly characteristics his focus moved from Christian leaders to all believers. He then urged believers to put aside all ungodly characteristics and to put on characteristics that are evidenced in Christ.

TELL THE STORY *[Ask someone ahead of time to tell the story, perhaps your co-facilitator. If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).]*

REBUILD THE STORY *[With their Bibles open, the group rebuilds the story based on what they remember. Let participants know as we share, we are not giving commentary or teaching the group what we know. Say, "Ok, let's read the Scripture". Ask, "If someone is comfortable, please read the passage.]* **Ephesians 5**

READ THE STORY ALOUD *[Let the group observe if anything was left out or added to the story.]*

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of

these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not become partners with them; ⁸ for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰ and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³ But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴ for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DEBRIEF/DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS *[Questions marked * are the key questions that should to be discussed. Other questions are optional **if time allows**. Keep in mind that these questions are for the purpose of BUILDING CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a time for you or anyone in the group to "teach" them something.]*

1. ***What do we learn about God from this passage?** (God is the light, he gives wisdom, he does not like sin, God is our hope and help)
2. ***What do we learn about man/us from this passage?** (we tend to hang on to old habits, not worthy of God's grace, we are sinful in nature.)
3. **As you look back over your life since becoming a Christian, what positive changes have you seen in your motives and desires?**
4. **If you were to make one phrase or verse from this passage your slogan for this coming week, what would it be?**
5. ***What is God leading you to do?** Sum up your "take-away" in a word or short sentence.
6. ***Who will you tell this week what God has shown you in His Word today?**

ASSIGN NEXT WEEK'S PASSAGE Ephesians 6 *[Tell everyone the passage reference for next week and to read it several times during their week. Ask if anyone would volunteer to tell the story next week.]*

PRAYER REQUESTS *[Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.]*

HUDDLE *[As members are leaving gather your team and...]*

1) identify which couples/individual members were absent. Decide and assign someone to contact them that afternoon...

2) identify your guests and assign someone to contact them that afternoon to thank them and invite them back...

3) did someone share a situation or need during small group that needs encouragement? Ask them if it's ok if a member can call them maybe have coffee during the week to just pray with them and encourage them. Ask someone to contact them during the week.]



Connection Group (Small Group) Ephesians 6:10-20 The Armor of God



WELCOME

[greet everyone in your group, make sure new believers and guests feel valued & welcomed]

Open your time with an ice-breaker question(s): How do you protect your home from danger?
How do you protect you and your family from danger?

OPENING PRAYER

PURPOSE/VISION CASTING *[Remind everyone our purpose is to grow in our relationship with God and each other; to glorify God and pursue people (multiply our group to reach more), and help each other think and live like Christ with the people around us – family, friends, neighbors, co-workers.]*

REVIEW GROUP GUIDELINES *[How we practice loving and respecting each other. Review these each week for the first several weeks, and when you have new people; ask group members to name them off.]*

PREPARING OUR HEARTS *[Remind everyone that someone will tell the story as our Bibles are closed; ask everyone stay personally engaged with what God is saying; we're not discussing "what the passage means" but "what is God saying" to each of us; encourage everyone to share as God leads them.]*

TODAY'S STORY/SETTING THE SCENE *[Introduce the passage reference; Bibles closed for now; provide the context by sharing what happens before this story.]*

As Paul continued his discourse on godly behavior, he described the concept of biblical submission in the marriages of believers. He encouraged believers to submit to each other, their submission to Christ and others. Paul completed his discussion on godly behavior by explaining that Christians have the resource of the full armor of God to provide protection and resources.

TELL THE STORY *[Ask someone ahead of time to tell the story, perhaps your co-facilitator. If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).]*

REBUILD THE STORY *[With their Bibles open, the group rebuilds the story based on what they remember. Let participants know as we share, we are not giving commentary or teaching the group what we know. Say, "Ok, let's read the Scripture". Ask, "If someone is comfortable, please read the passage.]* **Ephesians 6:10-20**

READ THE STORY ALOUD *[Let the group observe if anything was left out or added to the story.]*

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of

salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

DEBRIEF/DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS *[Questions marked * are the key questions that should to be discussed. Other questions are optional **if time allows**. Keep in mind that these questions are for the purpose of BUILDING CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a time for you or anyone in the group to “teach” them something.]*

1. ***What do we learn about God from this passage?** (God is our armor, he is our protection, His word is our sword, He is strong, God is our hope and help)
2. ***What do we learn about man/us from this passage?** (we do not realize the power we have in God’s word, we are weak, we need His help.)
3. **How often are you engaged in spiritual warfare? Do you know when you are??**
4. **What pieces of armor are you missing? What pieces do you use most often?**
5. ***What is God leading you to do?** Sum up your “take-away” in a word or short sentence.
6. ***Who will you tell this week what God has shown you in His Word today?**

PRAYER REQUESTS *[Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests. Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don’t have to have something to share every week.]*

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