

EPHESIANS 2 : 11-22

ONE IN CHRIST

BIBLE STUDY



Introduction to the passage for leaders

Before you start - reflect on the passage – why is Paul writing it?

In the time Paul was writing his letter, Jews and Gentiles were not used to being part of the same team. For many years, Jewish people had felt like the superior group, knowing that God had chosen them as his people, but maybe not remembering that he had done so in order that ‘all other nations (would) be blessed’ by them (Gen 12 v 3).

Now in Jesus all peoples are united, and Paul longed to show them how their faith in Jesus meant that they were brought together because of him.

As you start the study today, pray that Paul’s cry for unity would show the group ways in which unity may still be a challenge, both to the worldwide church and to our own congregation. Pray too that we would remember what a precious gift our salvation is, and long to share it with others.

Starter: Find as many things as possible in common with each other.

*Some questions are inspired by
Ephesians: Wholeness in a broken world (Lifebuilder series)*

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Read: Ephesians 2 : 11-22

Let's unpack the passage.....

In verse 11, we see the two groups that Paul is addressing – the ‘uncircumcised’ (Gentiles, or those who were not born into the Jewish faith), and ‘those who call themselves ‘the circumcision’ (in other words, those who were born as Jews and who relied on this physical symbolism to give them status).

The aim of the passage is to show the two groups how they are now brought together in Christ.

1. What boxes might we put other Christian believers into today which show that we see them as different from us despite sharing our belief in Jesus?
2. Circumcision is actually a minor physical and superficial difference between the two groups. In verse 12, we see some other real divisions that separated the two groups. What were they?
3. What is the significance of the ‘blood of Christ’ in verse 13?
4. Look at the vivid imagery in verse 14-18. How should being reconciled to God through Christ affect how we are reconciled to others?
5. How are we helped to do this often very challenging thing (verse 18)?
6. How do the images that Paul uses in vv 19-22 show us the powerful image of unity that Christians can have with one another? Think or pray through what this means for us as a church as we strive to become a closer family.

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So what?

7. Who do we gravitate towards in church?
Who do we shun? Why is that?
8. Who is God calling you to get to know better or show unity with, regardless of background or cultural differences?
9. Read the Ephesians verse of the Year (Ephesians 4 v 16) and talk about what it may mean for us as a church to grow and be built up together.

**“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.”**

EPH 4 : 16

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GOING DEEPER

Different denominations have different practices.
What are some of the ways we can find unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ in spite of this?

What practical steps could you take as a home group to welcome those with a different background to you into your group?



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PRAY

Ask God to show you areas in your life where you need to be reconciled to other Christians. Ask God for the humility and readiness to work on ways to break down divisions between you and your brothers and sisters in Christ. Despite potential discomfort, what are some of the ways in which you could work towards this?

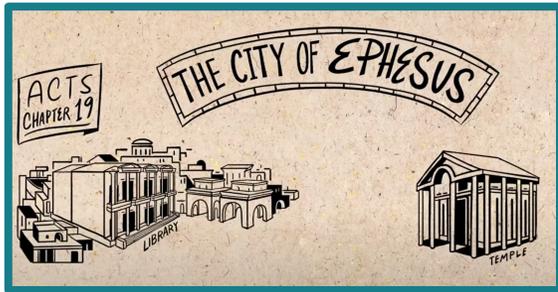
Think of a relationship in your life which may be broken. Ask God to increase your compassion and understanding for that person.



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WATCH



From the Bible Project

Watch the first 4'20 of this video to set the passage in context

<https://bibleproject.com/church-at-home/week23-ephesians/>

Questions to reflect on:

1

Reread Ephesians 1:9-10 and 2:11-22 and note all the words that communicate unity (both, all, together, etc...).

2

What are two groups in your community that disagree with one another about a current issue?

3

Growth in Jesus requires speaking the truth in love (see Ephesians 4:15). Think about the two groups that came to mind in the previous question.

What happens in these groups when truth is not spoken in love or when love is spoken without truth?

Can you think of other places where this has happened in society or in the news, to the detriment of those involved?

4

Consider the needs of the person or group that has opposite views from you.

What truthful and loving words do you think would most benefit them today?