

EPHESIANS  
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# EPHESIANS



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# welcome

The letter to the Ephesians declares the cosmic reality that Jesus Christ has defeated sin and death and now rules over all. By His amazing grace, Jesus rescues and restores His followers, inviting us to participate in His redemptive reign. Our calling as His Church is to fully embody this new “in Christ” reality with its life-giving practices. When we do, our lives shine the light of God’s great love in a dark world.

This study will guide you to:

**CONNECT** in authentic community as you and your group share the joys and struggles of life and pray together for big things.

**GROW** in biblical truth by searching the scripture and actively applying this truth to your life.

**ENGAGE** in helping people find and follow Jesus by practicing simple disciple-making tools that tune your heart to those who are far from God.

## PERSONAL STUDY + PRAYER

God’s word, the Bible, is a unique and wonderful library of books that tell a united story. It is one of His greatest gifts to us. By reading it regularly, meditating on it, and studying it with others, we begin to hear God’s voice and to know Him more deeply. As we put biblical truth into practice, cooperating with the Holy Spirit, our relationship with God grows. We become more like Jesus, transforming into mature sons and daughters of God.

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.” **James 1:22-25**

Each lesson begins with personal study sections designed for you to walk through the selected passage verse by verse. The Survey provides the big picture and background information for the book of Ephesians. Lessons 1-9 focus on studying each section in detail. The Synthesis is a place to record an overall summary of what you learned in the study.

In this study, you will practice a basic Bible study method that answers three questions:

**Look it Over** (Observation): What do I see?

**Think it Through** (Interpretation): What does it mean?

**Make it Real** (Application): How does it work?

An overview of this method is summarized in the Bible Study Tools section in the Appendix beginning on page 114.

**Prayer Reminders:** We need God Himself to illuminate His word to us. As we prayerfully

approach the study of His word, God shows up! Pray before, during, and at the end of each lesson for eyes to see and ears to hear the things the Holy Spirit has planned to reveal to you.

## GROUP DISCUSSION

At the end of every lesson, there is a Group Discussion Guide that provides a balanced plan for the time you spend together as a group - connecting, growing and engaging. Use this guide to plan your group time.

## APPENDIX

**Leader Helps:** This section contains a few helpful ideas for anyone leading others through this study. See pages 112-113.

**Bible Study Tools:** Each lesson contains descriptions of tools that will help you to observe, interpret, and apply scripture. These are summarized on pages 114-119.

**New Testament Chronology:** A list of the approximate dates of major events in the New Testament can be found on pages 120-121.

**Engage Tools:** We are called to partner with God in helping people find and follow Jesus. Some of the basic tools for becoming a disciple maker will be introduced in the lessons and can be found on pages 122-130.

**Spiritual Practices:** Following Jesus involves learning from His teachings, putting into practice His commands, and imitating the rhythms of His life. Some of these key spiritual practices will be introduced in the lessons and can be found on pages 131-132.

**Additional Study Resources:** This section contains a list of recommended books and online tools on page 133.

# what is the gospel?

The Gospel is the good news of how we can be reconciled to God through Jesus.

## GOD'S DESIGN

Out of God's great love, He created a world that was good. He made people to enjoy a deeply connected relationship with Him and to represent Him through our lives. (Genesis 1:26-28, 31) As a loving Father, He communicated boundaries to protect us and to allow us to fully enjoy our relationships with Him and with other people (Genesis 2:15-17).

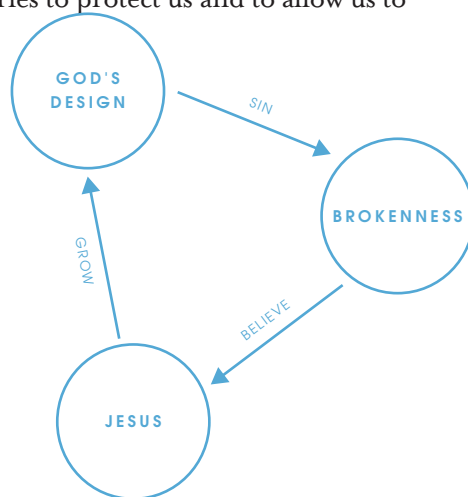
## BROKENNESS

Yet, when we look around our world, brokenness and evil are evident everywhere - war, famine, disease, corruption. If we are honest, we also see brokenness and evil inside ourselves - deceit, hatred, greed, lust. This is because we have rejected God's design and chosen to follow our own way.

Our rejection of God and His ways is what the Bible calls sin. (Romans 3:23)

Our sin results in separation from God which the Bible calls death. (Romans 6:23a)

Unless our sin is forgiven, we will remain separated from God forever.



## JESUS

God does not want to leave us in our sin and brokenness!

God graciously provided a way to forgive our sin and to freely give us eternal life - a life connected to God both now and forever. (Romans 6:23b; John 17:3)

God's only Son Jesus died in our place. He took upon Himself the penalty that we deserve because of our sin. Then, Jesus rose from the dead, and forever defeated the power of sin and death. (Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5)

## BELIEVE

We respond to Jesus by believing in Him for the forgiveness of our sin.

To believe in Jesus means that you no longer try to earn God's approval through what you do, nor do you deny that you need forgiveness and rescue. Instead, you accept God's free gift of eternal life. Belief or faith is simply being convinced or persuaded that something or someone is trustworthy. (John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9)

Everyone who believes in Jesus is forgiven of their sin and receives eternal life. We can now know God personally and experience the life we were designed to live. (John 3:16-17)

**Which circle or arrow best represents your life right now?**

**Have you put your trust (believed) in Jesus alone to be reconciled to God?**

# memorize & meditate

Begin to memorize and meditate on these important verses.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, **Ephesians 1:3**

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

**Ephesians 2:8-9**

But now in Christ Jesus you who previously were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, **Ephesians 2:13-14**

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. **Ephesians 3:20-21**

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **Ephesians 4:1-3**

Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. **Ephesians 4:32**

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. **Ephesians 5:1-2**

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, **Ephesians 5:17-18**

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

**Ephesians 6:10-11**



SURVEY



## BACKGROUND

Once you have completed the introductory questions, read the following background on the book of Ephesians (portions compiled from *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* and *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*).

## GENRE

While we may think of the Bible as one book, it is actually a library of books each containing various literary styles or genres. These styles include history, biography, poetry, prophetic writing, wisdom literature and discourse (letters, speeches or essays). While most books of the Bible have a primary literary style, they often contain a unique combination of several styles. It is important to identify which genre you are reading as you begin to study and interpret biblical writing.

The literary style of Ephesians is discourse written in the form of an epistle or letter. Like most New Testament letters, Ephesians was addressed to groups of believers and typically read aloud in gathered communities. The letters were often circulated throughout a region.

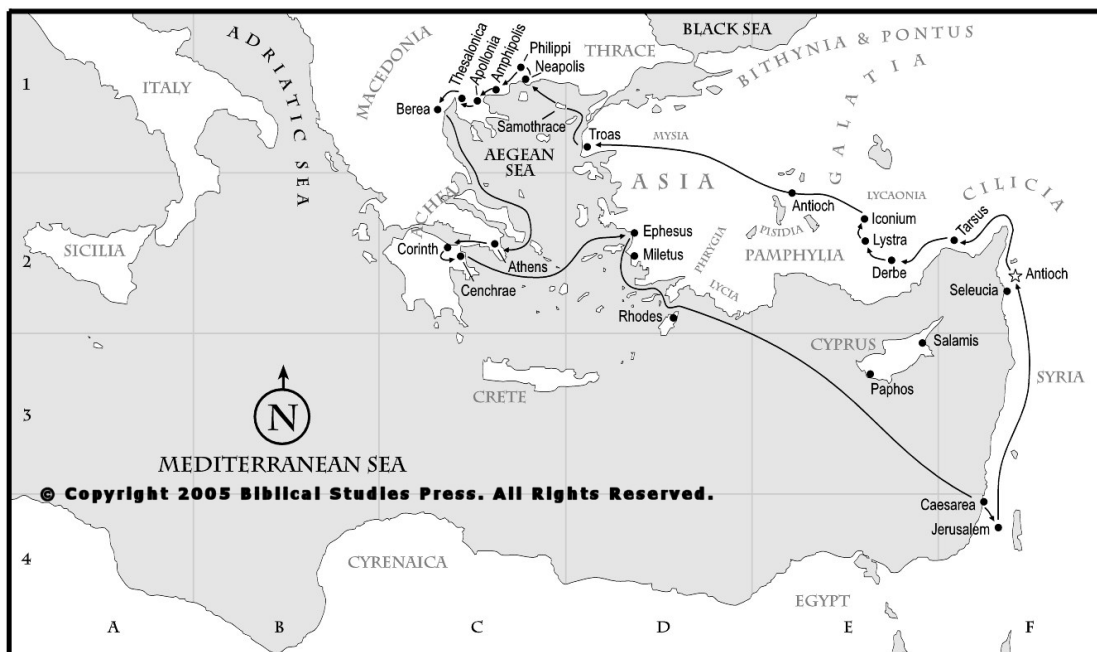
## AUTHORSHIP

Paul was born in Tarsus into Roman citizenship (Acts 22:28) and later educated under the illustrious rabbi, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Zealous for the Law, Paul became the chief persecutor of the early church until his conversion when Jesus Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). After a sojourn to Arabia, Paul began to proclaim Jesus as Messiah, eventually focusing several missionary journeys to the Gentiles throughout Asia Minor. During his journeys, he traveled to Ephesus and ministered there for almost three years (Acts 20:31). After Paul departed from Ephesus, he left Timothy behind to combat false teaching (1 Timothy 1:3). At some later point, Paul wrote this letter while in prison either in Caesarea or Rome as one of his many "Prison Epistles" in A.D. 60-62. Despite recent debate that the book was written by someone who did not use his own name but instead claimed to be Paul, there is no strong reason to reject Pauline authorship of the book.

## RECIPIENTS

Ephesus was a leading city on the west coast of Asia Minor. It essentially linked the western and eastern portions of the Roman Empire on the main highway and even possessed the most favorable seaport in the province of Asia. Due to its location within the Empire, Ephesus exerted great influence culturally, economically, and religiously. With a population over 300,000 people, Ephesus contained a theater that seated an estimated 25,000 people. It became the center for worship of the goddess Artemis (Diana in Roman mythology), which often included temple prostitution. Her temple ranked as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and became not just a center for worship but also the primary banking institution for all of Asia Minor. As a result, Paul's apostolic ministry that turned people to Christ and away from Artemis represented a significant financial threat to temple-related businesses like that of the silversmith, Demetrius (Acts 19:23-41). Ephesus also became a center of occult practice as many used magic, witchcraft, and sorcery to manipulate hostile spiritual powers to their advantage (Acts 19:11-20).

In the Roman era (1st cent. B.C.), it became the capital of the Roman province of Asia under the rule of Caesar Augustus. By Paul's day, it was a center for the cult of Caesar, where the emperor was worshiped as the divine son of the goddess Roma.



## PURPOSE

Paul's letter to the Ephesian believers does not seem concerned with any particular heresies as we see in Galatians and Colossians, nor with any particular occurrences of immorality as 1 Corinthians. Rather, Paul's purposes are to clarify the good news (gospel) that Jesus has defeated the powers of sin and death and has been established as ultimate ruler of the world. Paul then describes the radical implications of the gospel in the lives and relationships of believers, outlining their calling and conduct.

The concept of being "in Christ" is a central theme in Paul's writings. Its emphasis in Ephesians seems to be on how people who were once divided by social and religious barriers are now united "in Christ" under His loving rule. This new humanity, known as the church, is described as a unified body, building and household called to visibly demonstrate the cosmic reality of Christ's life-giving and sovereign rule over all things.



# LESSON 1



Blessed be the God and Father  
of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has blessed us with every  
spiritual blessing in the  
heavenly places in Christ,

EPHESIANS 1:3

*Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.  
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.*

# look it over

## OBSERVATION

Every time we study the Bible, the first thing to ask is “What do I see?” This is the crucial skill of observation, which lays the groundwork for the rest of your study. Simply read the passage and write one or two observations for each verse. Your observations might identify people, places, and events, point out repeated words or key terms, record important connections between words and sentences. The first few observations have been done for you as an example.

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

### EPHESIANS 1:1-14

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,  
*Paul was an apostle of Jesus*

To the saints who are at Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you  
*The saints in Ephesus were the audience*

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 with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He

chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and

blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons and

daughters through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of

His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He favored us in

the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness

of our wrongdoings, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished

on us. In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He set forth in Him, 10 regarding His plan of the fullness of the times, to bring all things together in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. 11 In Him we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things in accordance with the plan of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in the Christ would be to the praise of His glory. 13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of the promise, 14 who is a first installment of our inheritance, in regard to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.

## OBSERVATION SKILL: LIST PRIMARY THEMES

A primary theme is the big idea, the central truth, or command that the passage focuses on, such as “spiritual blessings” in 1:1-14. After reading the passage, write your themes as single words or short phrases. Identifying these themes at the beginning of your study will help you develop a good overall grasp of the passage.

1. List any primary themes or big ideas you see in this passage.
2. Underline or highlight the names of God you observe in this passage. This should include names of any individual members of the Trinity.
3. List all of the “spiritual blessings” you see in this passage given by God to believers.
4. Circle every time you see “in Christ.”

# think it through

## INTERPRETATION

### INTERPRETATION SKILL: USE THE CONTEXT

This interpretive skill greatly improves our understanding of what a passage meant to its original readers. Look for important clues in the sentences and paragraphs that come before and after the verse in question. Try to follow the flow of thought through the whole chapter. This may take you to the previous passages or cause you to read ahead in the book for clues.

1. Refer back to your list of “spiritual blessings” mentioned in this passage. What role does each Person of the Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) play in relation to these blessings?

2. What does Paul mean by “adoption as sons”? How did it occur? See 1:5, Romans 8:15-17.

3. What does “redemption” mean? What did it cost and who paid the cost? What motivated this cost to be paid for us? See 1:7, 1:14; Deuteronomy 7:8, Romans 3:23-25; Colossians 1:13-14.

4. What does it mean to be “sealed with the Holy Spirit”? What must a person do to receive this? How does this sealing relate to our inheritance and redemption? See 1:13, 4:30.

5. According to 1:4-6; 11-12, and Romans 8:23-30, answer the following questions ...

What does it mean to be “chosen” or “predestined” by God?

When did God predestine us?

Why did God predestine us? In other words, what is the purpose of His choice?

Why does any of this really matter? Is predestination just a big theological debate, or does it have a practical application to our lives?

## SUM IT UP

In a sentence or two, summarize the main ideas of this passage.

# make it real

## APPLICATION

The goal of application is to internalize and embody God's life-giving love and truth. This leads us into a deeper relationship with Him and to becoming more like Him.

- Begin in prayer, asking God's Spirit to reveal what He is saying specifically to you. Answer the reflection questions designed to demonstrate how each passage relates to our lives.
- Next, step back and look at the passage as a whole and begin to list things God has shown you including ideas, images, biblical truths and principles. A principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in a particular passage that is relevant to our lives. A principle is not specific to a particular person or time.
- Finally, prayerfully decide on specific action steps that you will begin to take right away to live out biblical truth in your daily life.

## 3 STEPS TO APPLY → REFLECT, LIST PRINCIPLES, MAKE A PLAN

1. What impact do the spiritual blessings described in this passage have on your view of God? When you think of God showering you with these blessings, what emotions come up in you?

2. Spend some time thanking God for these spiritual blessings.

3. List some of the biblical truths, principles, ideas, or images God has revealed to you from this passage. A few questions to consider are:

Is there a promise for me to claim?

Is there a truth for me to believe?

Is there a command for me to obey?

Is God showing me a picture or image of what He desires?

How does this passage connect to what God has been saying to me lately in prayer, in conversations with fellow believers and through His word?

4. Continuing in prayer, write down the main biblical truth, principle, idea, or image that God revealed to you during your study.

5. What is God's invitation to you this week as you seek to apply what you've learned? What specific steps will you take? How could this impact relationships where you live, work, and play? Write your goal in the box below.

## ENGAGE TOOL

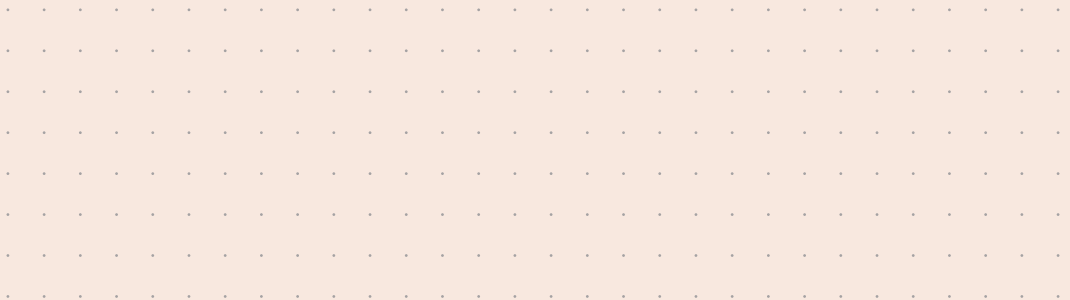
### EVERY NEIGHBOR MAP

Jesus noticed and cared for the people around Him. He taught His disciples to do the same. As His followers, we are also called to love our neighbors, the people with whom we live, learn, work and play.

Turn to page 123 and prayerfully fill in your Every Neighbor Map. Be ready to share it with your group next week.

For more insight, watch the Every Neighbor Map video at [grace-bible.org/disciplemaker](http://grace-bible.org/disciplemaker).

Create a personal goal expressing how you will actively embody biblical truth and engage missionally this week.



# group discussion

## CONNECT

### CARE/SHARE (choose from these)

1. Spend a few minutes catching up with each other. Share something you are celebrating or something that disappointed you during the last week.
2. Ask 1-2 people to take 5 minutes and share how they found Jesus and began to follow Him.

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

Spend a few minutes discussing your group's purpose. Of all the things we could be doing, why are we here? Why is this time important to be present for and to prioritize?

Pray for your time together.

## GROW

### DISCUSS OBSERVATION (choose from these)

1. How do we observe scripture? What are we looking for and what questions are we asking?
2. Read Ephesians 1:1-14. Share some of your observations.
3. What are some of the primary themes you noticed?

### DISCUSS INTERPRETATION

Discuss 2-3 questions.

## ENGAGE

### DISCUSS APPLICATION (choose from these)

1. Why is it important to personally apply biblical truth to your life?
2. What did God reveal to you this week and how do you plan to apply it?
3. What kind of community do we hope to experience in our group?

### ENGAGE TOOL **Every Neighbor Map (p. 123)**

Share your maps with your group or fill them out together now.

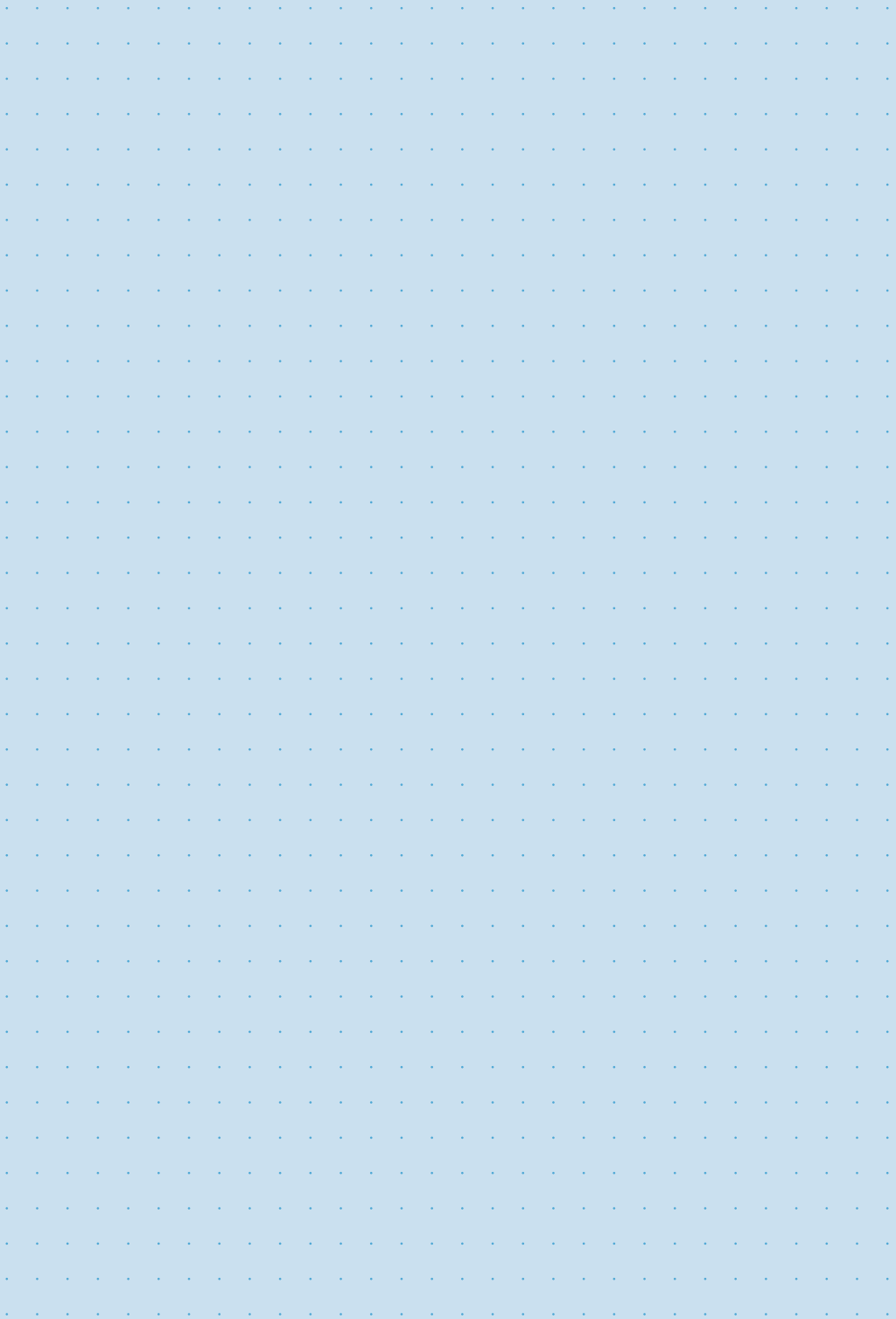
Spend some time praying for these friends. Ask God for opportunities to deepen friendships and to practically bless them with His Love. Ask God to reveal Himself to them and to open their eyes to His grace.

## GOALS

What will we do differently this week in light of all that we have learned and discussed?

# PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend time praying for each other and for specific friends on your Every Neighbor Maps.





# LESSON 2



For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

EPHESIANS 2 : 8 - 9

*Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.  
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.*

# look it over

## OBSERVATION

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

EPHESIANS 1:15 - 2:10

15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the boundless greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about 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 every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and made Him head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

2:1 And you were dead in your offenses and sins, 2 in which you previously

walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

3 Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, 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 ages to come He might show the boundless 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 of yourselves, 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 so that we would walk in them.

## OBSERVATION SKILL: CIRCLE KEY WORDS OR PHRASES

This week continue to write down your observations and list primary themes. Then begin to circle key words or phrases. These are words or short phrases that are important theologically or thematically (they set the theme or main idea for the passage). Include words and phrases that are closely related even if not exact duplicates.

1. List any primary themes or big ideas you see in this passage.
2. What key words did you notice in this passage?
3. Highlight everything that Paul prays for in this passage.

# think it through

## INTERPRETATION

### LOOK UP KEY WORDS

While looking up a key word in English is helpful, doing so in Greek provides deeper understanding and is surprisingly easy, thanks to online tools such as [net.bible.org](http://net.bible.org). Simply search for the passage at the top of the screen, and the relevant text will appear. Be sure that “NET2” is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then select the tab for “Greek” on the right side of the screen. Now hovering over any word in English will highlight the corresponding Greek term and reveal its Strong’s definition in the opposite window. For even further study, you can select a word, click the magnifying glass above it, then choose to run a “Word Search,” “Strong’s Search,” or “Word Study.” The first will provide all Biblical references that use the English term. The second will provide all Biblical references that use the Greek term. And the third will provide the full definition and derivatives of the Greek term. What used to take multiple books and many hours now takes one internet browser and a few seconds!

1. What is the primary thing Paul asks for in this prayer? Why does he place such emphasis on this request?
2. Why does Paul end this prayer highlighting Christ’s authority and power in the “heavenly places” (1:20)? How does this impact our confidence in prayer?
3. What does Paul mean by “dead” in 2:1? See Genesis 2:16-17; Isaiah 59:2; Romans 5:12-14.
4. Who is the “prince of the power of the air” in 2:2? What power and authority does he have now? See 6:11-12, 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 4:4; 5:19.

5. God's rescue of us is described with three main verbs in 2:4-6. How do these verbs further define our union "in Christ"? See also Romans 6:1-14.

6. Define the following key words in this passage:

"Grace" - See Romans 5:15-17.

"Works" - See Romans 4:1-5 and Titus 3:5.

"Saved" - See 1 Timothy 1:15-16.

"Faith" - See Ephesians 1:13.

7. How does 2:10 relate to 2:8-9? In other words, how do good works relate to our salvation? See also Titus 2:11-14.

## SUM IT UP

In a sentence or two, summarize the main ideas of this passage.

# make it real

## APPLICATION

Remember, the goal of application is to internalize and embody God's life-giving love and truth.

- Begin in prayer, asking God's Spirit to reveal what He is saying specifically to you. Answer the reflection questions designed to demonstrate how each passage relates to our lives.
- Next, step back and look at the passage as a whole and begin to list things God has shown you including ideas, images, biblical truths and principles. A principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in a particular passage that is relevant to our lives. A principle is not specific to a particular person or time.
- Finally, prayerfully decide on specific action steps that you will begin to take right away to live out what God is showing you in your daily life.

## 3 STEPS TO APPLY → REFLECT, LIST PRINCIPLES, MAKE A PLAN

1. Rewrite Paul's prayer for the Ephesians in 1:15-23 in your own words. What, specifically, does he ask God for? (Hint: Try to define the meaning of phrases like "a spirit of wisdom and of revelation" and "the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.")

Based on Paul's example of prayer, how would you like your own prayer life to change?

2. How would you describe your relationship with God using phrases from this passage?

3. List some of the biblical truths, principles, ideas, or images God has revealed to you from this passage. A few questions to consider are:

Is there a promise for me to claim?

Is there a truth for me to believe?



# group discussion

## CONNECT

### CARE/SHARE (choose from these)

1. Spend a few minutes catching up with each other. Share high or low from the week.
2. Ask 1-2 people to take 5 minutes and share how they found Jesus and began to follow Him.
3. Goals: how did you do on your application of truth last week?

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

Ask someone to summarize your group's purpose.

Pray for your time together.

## GROW

### DISCUSS OBSERVATION (choose from these)

1. Read Ephesians 1:15-2:10. Share some of your observations.
2. What were some of the key words you saw in this section?
3. What used to be true of Paul's audience? What is true now?

### DISCUSS INTERPRETATION

Discuss the skill of looking up keywords. How is it helpful in studying the Bible?

Discuss 2-3 questions.

## ENGAGE

### DISCUSS APPLICATION (choose from these)

1. Based on Paul's example of prayer, how would you like your own prayer life to change?
2. How would you describe your relationship with God using phrases from this passage?
3. What truth did God reveal to you this week and how do you plan to apply it?

### SPIRITUAL PRACTICE **PRAY Prayer Tool (p.132)**

Read over and discuss the practice of prayer. Why is it important? What have been your experiences or struggles in learning to pray? What could we do together as a group to grow in our prayer practice?

### GOALS

What will we do differently this week in light of all that we have learned and discussed?

# PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend time praying for each other and for specific friends on your Every Neighbor Maps.

A large rectangular area filled with a grid of small, light blue dots on a slightly darker blue background. The dots are arranged in approximately 20 rows and 40 columns, providing a space for writing names or notes.



# LESSON 3



But now in Christ Jesus you who  
previously were far away have  
been brought near by the blood  
of Christ. For He Himself is our  
peace, who made both groups into  
one and broke down the barrier  
of the dividing wall,

EPHESIANS 2:13-14

*Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.  
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.*

# look it over

## OBSERVATION

Like last week, read the passage and write down your observations, listing primary themes and marking the passage (circling key words and underlining verbs).

### EPHESIANS 2:11-22

11 Therefore remember that previously you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision” which is performed in the flesh by human hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the people of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who previously were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the hostility, which is the Law composed of commandments expressed in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two one new person, in this way establishing peace; 16 and that He might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the hostility. 17 And 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 our access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So



# think it through

## INTERPRETATION

### LOOK UP BACKGROUND INFORMATION

You can find helpful insights by looking up confusing names or words in a Bible dictionary or by looking up the particular verses you are studying in a background commentary. One of the best dictionaries is *The New Bible Dictionary* by Wood & Marshall. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary* by Craig Keener is another excellent example of a verse-by-verse background commentary.

Background information can be found by visiting the online reference [netbible.org](http://netbible.org). Simply search for the passage at the top of the screen, and the relevant text will appear. Be sure that “NET2” is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then select the tab for “Notes” on the right side of the screen. Now, anytime you select one of the numbered annotations above particular words or verses, you can immediately see the relevant Biblical or historical context for that term or passage. This is a great tool for answering tough questions!

### THE “BARRIER OF THE DIVIDING WALL”

Paul writes this letter from prison because he has been falsely charged with taking a non-Jew inside the temple in Jerusalem (Acts 21:28). Taking a non-Jew beyond the specified dividing point in the temple was such an important breach of Jewish \*law that the Romans even permitted Jewish leaders to execute violators of this law>(\*Josephus, *Jewish War* 5.194; 6.124-26). Paul’s readers in Ephesus and Asia undoubtedly know why Paul is in prison (Acts 21:27, 29); thus for them, as well as for Paul, there can be no greater symbol of the barrier between Jew and non-Jew than “the dividing wall” of verse 14. But Paul says that this dividing wall is shattered in Christ (cf. 2:20-22).

In the Old Testament, the only division in the temple was between priests and laity, but by Paul’s day architects had added barriers for non-Jews and for women (contrast 1 Kings 8:41-43); Paul says these barriers are abolished in God’s true, spiritual temple. Some other Jewish writers spoke of God’s people as his temple, but only Paul and other early Christians recognized that this new temple included non-Jews.

Compiled from *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*.

1. According to this passage, what changes resulted from Christ’s death, resurrection and ascension?

2. In verse 13, Paul states that in the past Gentiles, non-Jews like most of us, lived without hope and without God. Use the following passages to answer the questions below:

What exactly did Jews possess that Gentiles lacked? See Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Romans 9:3-5

Could Gentiles have a relationship with God during Old Testament times? If so, what did God require of them? See 1 Kings 8:41-43; Isaiah 56:6-7; Jonah 3:1-5, 10.

3. Why did the Old Testament Mosaic Law have to be abolished in order for Christ to create one new humanity uniting Jew and Gentile in peace? See 2:14-16 and Philippians 3:2-6.

4. Paul uses a series of analogies in 2:16 and 19-22 to characterize this new community of Jews and Gentiles. What does this figurative language teach us about this new community?

5. Paul refers to himself as an “apostle” in 1:1 and references that the church was “built on the foundation of the apostles” in 2:20. So should we be looking for apostles like Paul to lead us today? Why or why not?

6. Read 1 Corinthians 9:1-2, 12:28-30, and Galatians 1:1 to answer the following questions.  
What is the basic meaning of the title “apostle”?

What qualifications did an apostle need?

What were the responsibilities of an apostle?

## SUM IT UP

In a sentence or two, summarize the main ideas of this passage.



4. Continuing in prayer, write down the main biblical truth, principle, idea, or image that God revealed to you during your study.

5. What is God's invitation to you this week as you seek to apply what you've learned? What specific steps will you take? How could this impact relationships where you live, work, and play? Write your goal in the box below.

## ENGAGE TOOL

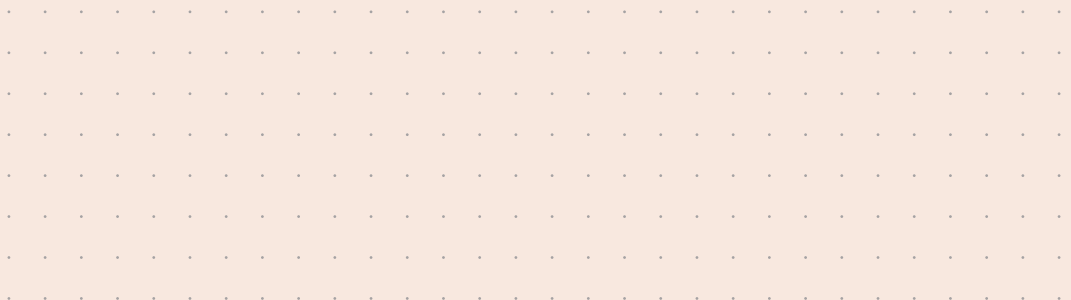
### STARTING A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

Simply talking about Jesus as part of your everyday conversations is a great way to bring His light into the spiritual darkness all around us. Be sure your conversations include asking lots of questions and listening! Most people are open to talking about spiritual things IF they feel heard and respected.

Turn to page 124 and to learn how to turn conversations toward spiritual things.

Also, watch the video on Starting a Spiritual Conversation at [grace-bible.org/disciplemaker](http://grace-bible.org/disciplemaker).

Create a personal goal expressing how you will actively embody biblical truth and engage missionally this week.



# group discussion

## CONNECT

### CARE/SHARE (choose from these)

1. How was your week? Did you see God working in any specific ways?
2. Gratitude: read a Psalm, make a list of what your group is thankful for, offer short praise prayers.
3. Goals: how did you do on your goals to apply God's word this week?
4. Were you able to connect with any friends from your Every Neighbor Map?

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

Ask someone to share why they prioritize biblical community in their life.

Pray for your time together.

## GROW

### DISCUSS OBSERVATION (choose from these)

1. Read Ephesians 2:11-22. Share some of your observations.
2. What primary themes or big ideas did you notice in this passage?

### DISCUSS INTERPRETATION:

How does asking questions like who, what, when, where and how help us understand scripture?

Discuss 2-3 questions.

## ENGAGE

### DISCUSS APPLICATION (choose from these)

1. Do you approach your relationship with God primarily as an individual pursuit or as something that is inextricably linked to community with other believers? Why?
2. Where do you see examples of inequality or division in the church today? What can believers do to heal these divisions?
3. What truth did God reveal to you this week and how do you plan to apply it?

### ENGAGE TOOL **Starting a Spiritual Conversation (p.124)**

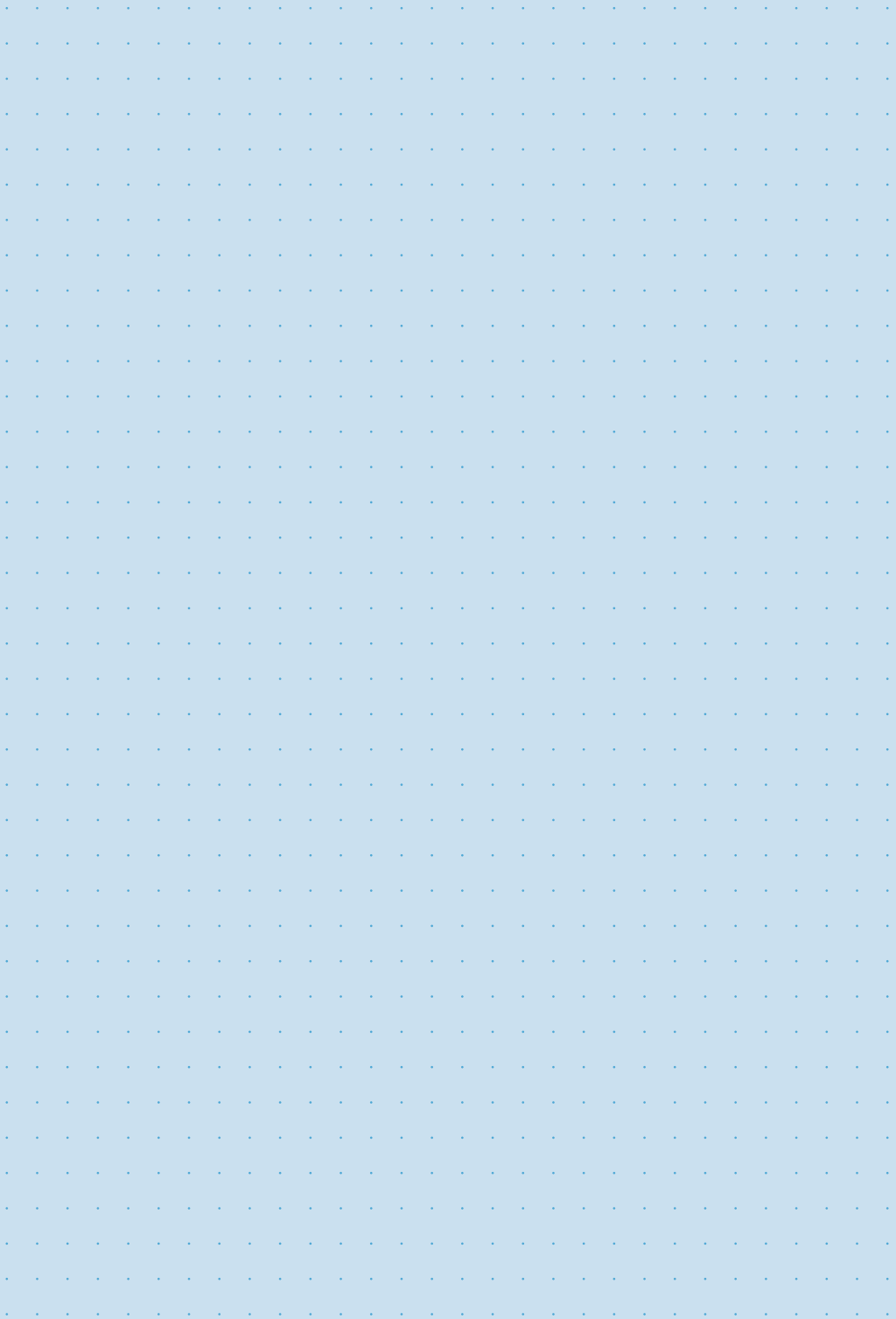
Read over and discuss how to start a spiritual conversation. What has been your experience talking about your faith with friends? Is there a friend or neighbor you could have a spiritual conversation with this week? Pray for opportunities!

## GOALS

What will we do differently this week in light of all that we have learned and discussed?

## PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend time praying for each other and for specific friends on your Every Neighbor Maps.





# LESSON 4



Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

EPHESIANS 3:20-21

*Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.  
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.*

# look it over

## OBSERVATION

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage. Continue to write down your interpretive questions, and to mark the passage using the skills you have learned (circling key words, underlining verbs).

### EPHESIANS 3:1-21

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles —  
2 if indeed you have heard of the administration of God's grace which was given to  
me for you; 3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote  
before briefly. 4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight  
into the mystery of Christ, 5 which in other generations was not made known to  
mankind, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;  
6 to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body,  
and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, 7 of which  
I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me  
according to the working of His power. 8 To me, the very least of all saints, this  
grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9 and  
to enlighten all people as to what the plan of the mystery is which for ages has been  
hidden in God, who created all things; 10 so that the multifaceted wisdom of God  
might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in  
the heavenly places. 11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He  
carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and confident

access through faith in Him. 13 Therefore I ask you not to become discouraged about my tribulations in your behalf, since they are your glory.

14 For this reason I bend my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner self, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to all the fullness of God.

20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

#### OBSERVATION SKILL: BOX CONNECTING WORDS (PART ONE)

These important words indicate the logical connection between words, phrases, and clauses.

**COMPARISON:** either points out similarities between two or more related ideas or simply joins like ideas. Comparison words include: and, like, as, just as, also, so also, even so.

**CONTRAST:** points out dissimilarities between ideas. Contrast words include: but, rather, yet, however.

**PURPOSE:** indicates the intended goal of an idea or action, whether or not it was realized. Purpose words include: that, so that, in order that.

**RESULT:** very similar to “purpose,” but indicates the actual consequence, whether or not it was intended. Result words include: that, so that, as a result, with the result that .

1. Box all connecting words you see in this passage.
2. What big ideas or themes do you observe in this passage that you saw in chapters 1 and 2?

# think it through

## INTERPRETATION

### INTERPRETATION SKILL: STUDY CROSS REFERENCES

Cross references are simply other passages in any book of the Bible that are somehow related to the verses you are studying. They often prove incredibly helpful as you seek to understand your passage. A few such cross references can be found in the margins of most English Bibles, but more can be found by visiting online tool such as [netbible.org](http://netbible.org). Simply search for the passage at the top of the screen, and the relevant text will appear. Be sure that “NET2” is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then select the tab for “Greek” on the right side of the screen. Now hovering over any word in English will highlight the corresponding Greek term and reveal its Strong’s definition in the opposite window. Then, you can select a word, click the magnifying glass above it, and choose to run a “Word Search” that will provide all Biblical references that use the English term.

1. In verse 1, Paul reminds his readers that he is a prisoner. Why did Paul say he was a prisoner “for the sake of you Gentiles”? See Acts 9:15-16, 22:1-21.

2. How does this passage describe the “mystery” that was revealed to Paul? See Romans 11:25, 16:25.

What is the significance of the mystery to Paul’s life?

Why is this mystery significant to the readers of this letter?

What are the cosmic implications of this mystery? See also Ephesians 1:21, 3:10, and 1 Peter 1:10-12.

3. How do verses 14-15 continue to reinforce Paul's theme of one new people of God in Christ?

4. In Paul's prayer, he references a "power" that believers have within themselves through the Spirit. Why is this so significant within our spiritual lives? See also Ephesians 5:18, Micah 3:8, Romans 8:2-4 and Philippians 2:12-13.

5. Why does Paul include this specific prayer right here at the end of chapter 3? Specifically, how does it act as a bridge between chapters 1-3 and chapters 4-6?

## SUM IT UP

In a sentence or two, summarize the main ideas of this passage.

# make it real

## APPLICATION

Remember, the goal of application is to internalize and embody God's life-giving love and truth. Begin in prayer, asking God's Spirit to reveal what He is saying specifically to you.

1. How does Paul's example of prayer in this passage challenge you as you compare it to your own prayer life?

2. How does the extent to which Paul suffered for his calling to preach the gospel motivate you to follow his example?

3. List some of the biblical truths, principles, ideas, or images God has revealed to you from this passage. A few questions to consider are:

Is there a promise for me to claim?

Is there a truth for me to believe?

Is there a command for me to obey?

Is God showing me a picture or image of what He desires?

How does this passage connect to what God has been saying to me lately in prayer, in conversations with fellow believers and through His word?

4. Continuing in prayer, write down the main biblical truth, principle, idea, or image that God revealed to you during your study.

5. What is God's invitation to you this week as you seek to apply what you've learned? What specific steps will you take? How could this impact relationships where you live, work, and play? Write your goal in the box below.

## ENGAGE TOOL

### STARTING A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

Continue to pray for opportunities to turn everyday conversations toward spiritual things.

Turn to page 124 to review this tool.

Also, watch the video on Starting a Spiritual Conversation at [grace-bible.org/disciplemaker](http://grace-bible.org/disciplemaker).

Create a personal goal expressing how you will actively embody biblical truth and engage missionally this week.

A large rectangular area with a light beige background and a grid of small dots for writing.

# group discussion

## CONNECT

### CARE/SHARE **(choose from these)**

1. How was your week? Share a highlight or struggle you experienced.
2. Goals: how did you do on your goals to apply God's word this week?
3. Did you have any chances to talk about your faith journey with friends?

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

What are some ways to overcome the temptation to skip group time?

Pray for your time together.

## GROW

### DISCUSS OBSERVATION **(choose from these)**

1. Read Ephesians 3:1-21. Share some of your observations.
2. What big ideas or themes do you observe in this passage that you saw in chapters 1 and 2?

### DISCUSS INTERPRETATION:

What is the significance of looking up cross references when studying the Bible?

Discuss 2-3 questions.

## ENGAGE

### DISCUSS APPLICATION **(choose from these)**

1. How does Paul's example of prayer in this passage challenge you as you compare it to your own prayer life?
2. How does the extent to which Paul suffered for his calling to preach the gospel motivate you to follow his example?

### ENGAGE TOOL

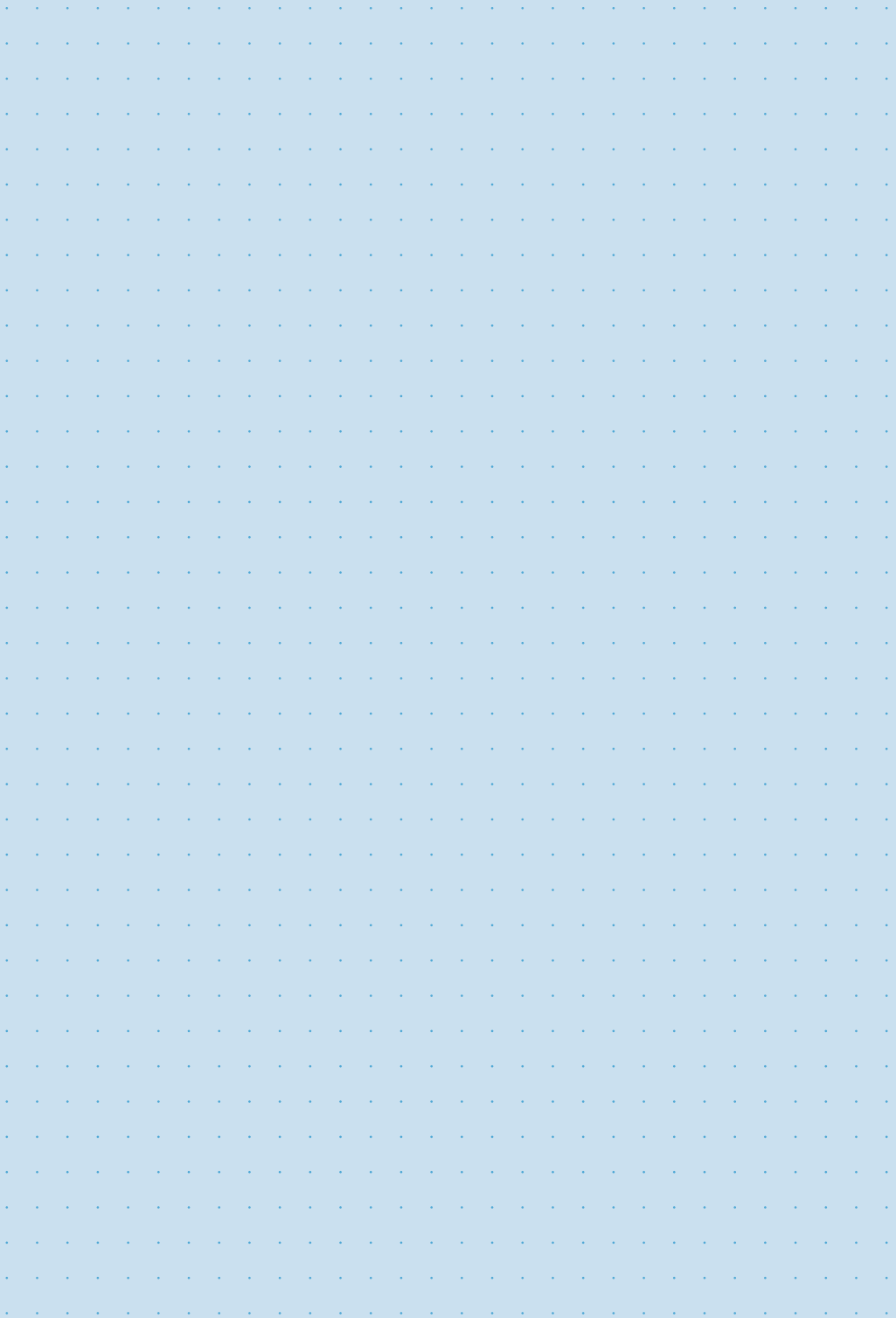
Continue to pray for opportunities to talk about your faith in Jesus with friends and family.

### GOALS

What will we do differently this week in light of all that we have learned and discussed?

# PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend time praying for each other and for specific friends on your Every Neighbor Maps.





# LESSON 5



Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

EPHESIANS 4 : 1 - 3

*Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.  
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.*

# look it over

## OBSERVATION

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage. Continue to write down your interpretive questions, and to mark the passage using the skills you have learned (circling key words, underlining verbs).

### EPHESIANS 4:1-16

1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you also were called in one hope of your calling; 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 was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

8 Therefore it says,

“WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH,  
HE LED CAPTIVE THE CAPTIVES,  
AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO PEOPLE.”

9 (Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)

11 And He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as

pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of 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 a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of people, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, that is, Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

## OBSERVATION SKILL: BOX CONNECTING WORDS (PART TWO)

These important words indicate the logical connection between words, phrases, and clauses.

**CAUSE:** expresses the basis or cause of an action. Cause words include *because*, *since*, and sometimes *for*.

**EXPLANATION:** what follows further explains the previous idea, giving reasons why it is true, why it occurred, or simply adding additional information. Look for the keyword *for*.

**INFERENCE:** provides a logical consequence, conclusion, or summary to the previous discussion. Inference words include *therefore*, *for this reason*.

**CONDITION:** presents a condition that must occur before a certain action or conclusion can occur. The statement may or may not reflect reality (i.e., it could be hypothetical). Key word is *if*.

1. Continue to box all connecting words.
2. Highlight any repeated words or phrases.
3. What big idea does this passage address?

# think it through

## INTERPRETATION

1. How does the connecting word “therefore” in the beginning of 4:1 help you trace Paul’s flow of thought in chapters 1-3 with chapter 4?

2. Paul urges his readers to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling” in 4:1.

What does Paul mean by the word “walk” in this context? Why does he use this verb?

What does a worthy walk look like according to this passage and 4:17; 5:2, 8, 15?

3. Why does Paul emphasize “love” and “unity” and “peace” in 4:2-6? In other words, why was this so critical for the Ephesian church specifically?

4. Paul introduces the topic of spiritual gifts starting in verse 7. Read Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-30 and then answer the following questions.

What specific spiritual gifts are mentioned in the New Testament?

What was Christ's ultimate purpose in giving these gifts to the church?

Should we expect to see all of these gifts in our church today? Why or why not?

**For Further Study:** What is Paul talking about in Ephesians 4:9-10? How does this digression contribute to his argument in this passage?

## SUM IT UP

In a sentence or two, summarize the main ideas of this passage.

# make it real

## APPLICATION

Remember, the goal of application is to internalize and embody God's life-giving love and truth.

Begin in prayer, asking God's Spirit to reveal what He is saying specifically to you.

1. What could you and your group do this week to "keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace" within our church this week?

2. What are your spiritual gifts? In what ways are you using them to help others in the church grow? What else could you be doing to better utilize these gifts this year?

3. List some of the biblical truths, principles, ideas, or images God has revealed to you from this passage. A few questions to consider are:

Is there a promise for me to claim?

Is there a truth for me to believe?

Is there a command for me to obey?

Is God showing me a picture or image of what He desires?

How does this passage connect to what God has been saying to me lately in prayer, in conversations with fellow believers and through His word?

4. Continuing in prayer, write down the main biblical truth, principle, idea, or image that God revealed to you during your study.

5. What is God's invitation to you this week as you seek to apply what you've learned? What specific steps will you take? How could this impact relationships where you live, work, and play? Write your goal in the box below.

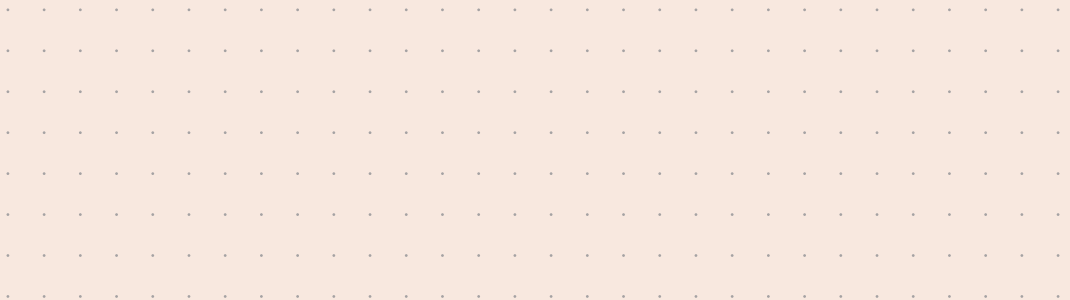
## ENGAGE TOOL

### SHARE YOUR STORY

One of the most powerful ways to help people find Jesus is to share with them your own story of meeting and trusting in Him.

Turn to page 125 and write a simple draft of your faith story. For more insight, watch the Share Your Story video at [grace-bible.org/disciplemaker](http://grace-bible.org/disciplemaker).

Create a personal goal expressing how you will actively embody biblical truth and engage missionally this week.



# group discussion

## CONNECT

### CARE/SHARE (choose from these)

1. How was your week? Share something you are celebrating or that disappointed you during the last week.
2. Goals: how did you do on your goals to apply God's word this week?
3. Did anyone try practicing hospitality this week? How did it go?

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

What are some reasons you stay committed to our group?

Pray for your time together.

## GROW

### DISCUSS OBSERVATION (choose from these)

1. Read Ephesians 4:1-16. Share some of your observations.
2. What were some of the connecting words you saw in this passage?

### DISCUSS INTERPRETATION

Discuss 2-3 questions.

## ENGAGE

### DISCUSS APPLICATION (choose from these)

1. What could you and your group do this week to “keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace” within our church this week?
2. What are your spiritual gifts? In what ways are you using them to help others in the church grow? What else could you be doing to better utilize these gifts this year?
3. What truth did God reveal to you this week and how do you plan to apply it?

### ENGAGE TOOL **Sharing Your Story (p. 124-125)**

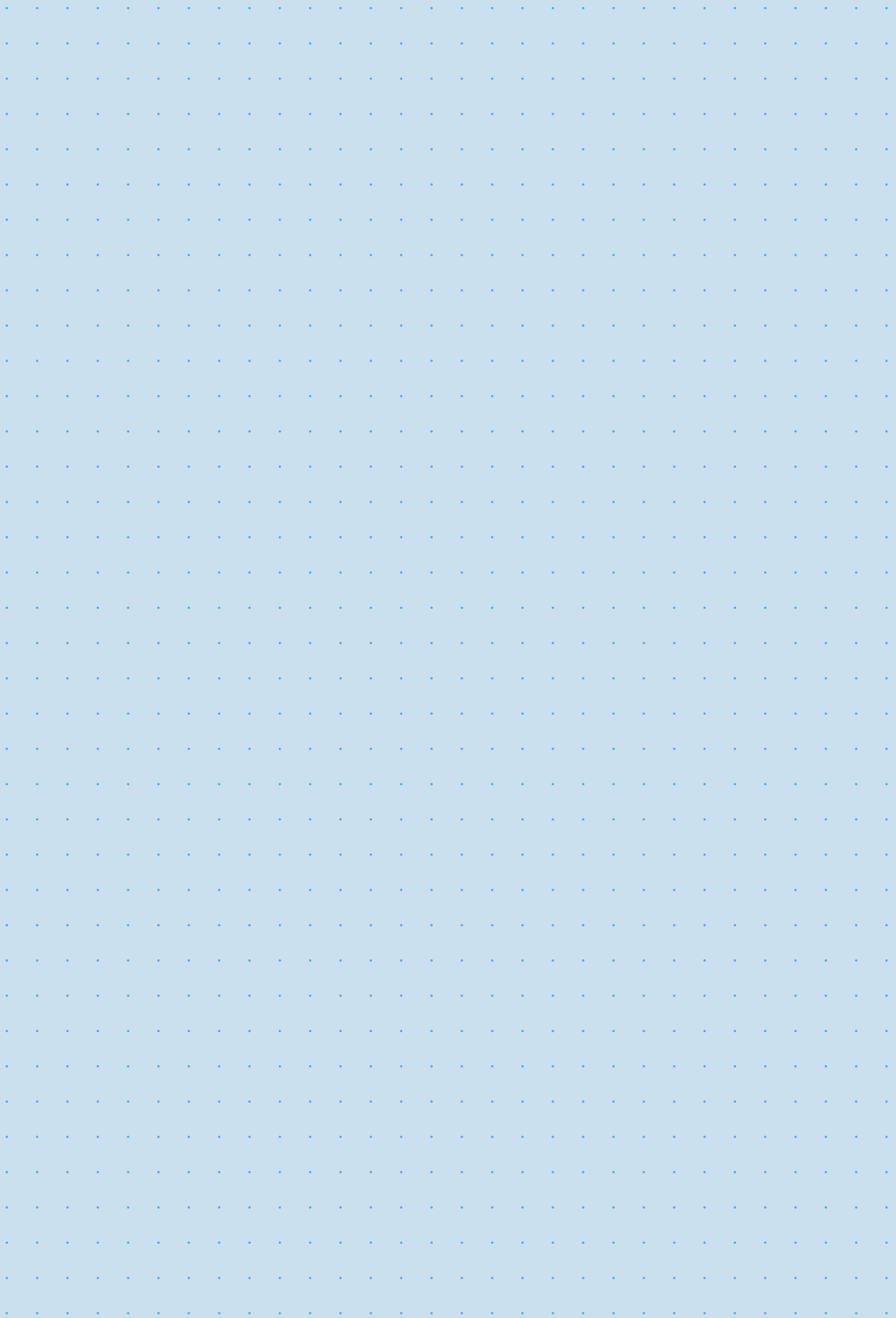
Read over and discuss how to share your story. In pairs, practice sharing a story of what God has done for you. To whom could you share your story of finding and following Jesus this week?

### GOALS

What will we do differently this week in light of all that we have learned and discussed?

# PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend time praying for each other and for specific friends on your Every Neighbor Maps.





# LESSON 6



Be kind to one another,  
compassionate, forgiving each  
other, just as God in Christ  
also has forgiven you.

EPHESIANS 4 : 3 2

Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.  
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.

# look it over

## OBSERVATION

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage. Continue to write down your interpretive questions, and to mark the passage using the skills you have learned (circling key words, underlining verbs).

### EPHESIANS 4:17-32

17 So I say this, and affirm in the Lord, that you are to no longer walk just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their minds, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves up to indecent behavior for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. 20 But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22 that, in reference to your former way of life, you are to rid yourselves of the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you are to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

25 Therefore, ridding yourselves of falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, because we are parts of one another. 26 **BE ANGRY, AND YET DO NOT SIN**; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not

give the devil an opportunity. 28 The one who steals must no longer steal; but rather he must labor, producing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with the one who has need. 29 Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but if there is any good word for edification according to the need of the moment, say that, so that it will give grace to those who hear. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 All bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

## OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

1. What key words do you notice in this passage?
2. What themes or ideas from earlier in the book do you see repeated here?
3. Create a list of all of Paul's commands in verses 25-32. What idea or thought connects most of these commands together?

# think it through

## INTERPRETATION

1. What progression do you notice in Paul's description of how Gentiles walk (verses 17-19)? What is the significance of this progression?

2. According to verses 22-24, define the following terms and determine whether they refer to an individual person or to a group of people.

“Old man/self” (See Romans 6:6-7 and Colossians 3:5-9)

“New man/self” (See Colossians 3:9-14; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:15)

3. What is the significance of “therefore” in verse 25? In other words, how do the truths of verses 22-24 relate to the relational commands of verses 25-32?

4. According to verses 25-32, how can we grieve the Holy Spirit as believers? If the Ephesian audience has been “sealed” by the Spirit and certainly forgiven by Christ, then what is it exactly that the Spirit is grieving?

5. Why does Paul connect anger and unwholesome speech in this passage? Furthermore, how can the devil use these things as an opportunity to divide the church?

## SUM IT UP

In a sentence or two, summarize the main ideas of this passage.

# make it real

## APPLICATION

Remember, the goal of application is to internalize and embody God's life-giving love and truth.

Begin in prayer, asking God's Spirit to reveal what He is saying specifically to you.

1. In Ephesians, Paul teaches that the new humanity is a present reality. Reflect on the idea that Paul is saying "act as you really are" rather than, "become somebody different." What difference does this make?

2. Are there any relationships in your life that are currently strained or estranged due to past conflict, anger, or hurtful speech? What can you do to begin the process of reconciliation and healing?

3. List some of the biblical truths, principles, ideas, or images God has revealed to you from this passage. A few questions to consider are:

Is there a promise for me to claim?

Is there a truth for me to believe?

Is there a command for me to obey?

Is God showing me a picture or image of what He desires?

How does this passage connect to what God has been saying to me lately in prayer, in conversations with fellow believers and through His word?

4. Continuing in prayer, write down the main biblical truth, principle, idea, or image that God revealed to you during your study.

5. What is God's invitation to you this week as you seek to apply what you've learned? What specific steps will you take? How could this impact relationships where you live, work, and play? Write your goal in the box below.

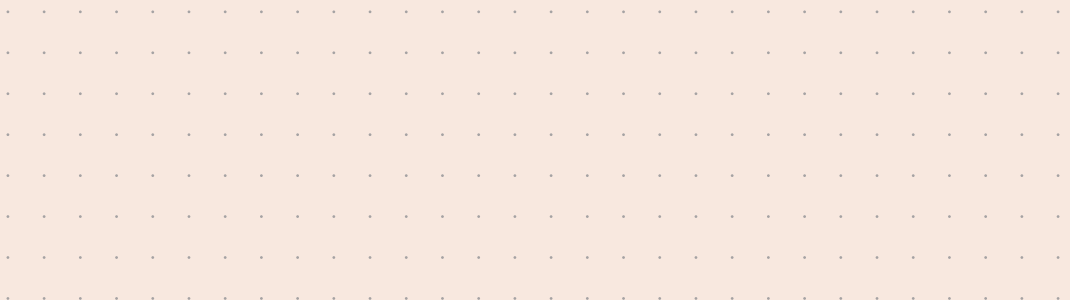
## ENGAGE TOOL

### SHARE YOUR STORY

Continue to work on a simple draft of your faith story.

Turn to page 124-125 for more insight and also watch the Share Your Story video at [grace-bible.org/disciplemaker](http://grace-bible.org/disciplemaker).

Create a personal goal expressing how you will actively embody biblical truth and engage missionally this week.



# group discussion

## CONNECT

### CARE/SHARE (choose from these)

1. How was your week? Share a high or a low from the last week.
2. Goals: how did you do on your goals to apply God's word this week?

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

What would happen if we just focused on one of these - Connect, Grow, Engage?

Pray for your time together.

## GROW

### DISCUSS OBSERVATION (choose from these)

1. Read Ephesians 4:17-32. Share some of your observations.
2. List Paul's commands in verses 25-32. What idea or thought connects most of these commands together?

### DISCUSS INTERPRETATION:

Discuss 2-3 questions.

## ENGAGE

### DISCUSS APPLICATION (choose from these)

1. Discuss the idea that Paul is saying "act as you really are" rather than, "become somebody different." What difference does this make?
2. How has conflict or hurtful speech strained relationships in your life? Where have you seen God's Spirit at work to bring about healing and reconciliation?
3. What truth did God reveal to you this week and how do you plan to apply it?

### ENGAGE TOOL **Sharing Your Story (p.124-125)**

Continue to practice sharing your story of coming to faith in Jesus.

## GOALS

What will we do differently this week in light of all that we have learned and discussed?

# PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend time praying for each other and for specific friends on your Every Neighbor Maps.

A large grid of small dots on a light blue background, intended for writing names of friends to pray for.



# LESSON 7



Therefore be imitators of God,  
as beloved children; and walk  
in love, just as Christ also loved  
you and gave Himself up for us,  
an offering and a sacrifice to  
God as a fragrant aroma.

EPHESIANS 5:1-2

*Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.  
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.*

# look it over

## OBSERVATION

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage. Continue to write down your interpretive questions, and to mark the passage using the skills you have learned (circling key words, underlining verbs).

### EPHESIANS 5:1-14

1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as

Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to

God as a fragrant aroma.

3 But sexual immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned

among you, as is proper among saints; 4 and there must be no filthiness or

foolish talk, or vulgar joking, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

5 For this you know with certainty, that no sexually immoral or impure or greedy

person, which amounts to an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of

Christ and God.

6 See that no one deceives 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 you were once darkness, but now you are light in the

Lord; walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness,

righteousness, and truth), 10 as you try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

11 Do not participate in the useless deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. 14 For this reason it says,

“Awake, sleeper,  
And arise from the dead,  
And Christ will shine on you.”

## OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

1. List any primary themes or big ideas you see in this passage.
2. What specific attribute of God does Paul desire us to imitate? List how it is described.
3. List all of the commands found in this passage (or simply underline them in the text).
4. What “deeds of darkness” does Paul mention in this passage?

# think it through

## INTERPRETATION

### COMPARE MULTIPLE TRANSLATIONS

This packet uses the New American Standard (NASB) translation. You can often find helpful interpretive clues by comparing this translation with other translations. The New King James Version (NKJV), like the NASB, is a fairly word-for-word translation of the Greek text. The New International Version (NIV) and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) are excellent phrase-to-phrase translations of the Greek and thus often easier to read.

Another excellent phrase-to-phrase Bible, which includes extensive translation notes, is the New English Translation (NET) available online for free at [netbible.org](http://netbible.org). You can find and compare numerous translations of any Bible passage at [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com).

1. How does comparing multiple translations of this section enhance your understanding of its themes?

2. How does this passage relate to 4:17-32? In other words, what is the significance of “therefore” in 5:1?

3. In verses 3-5, Paul continues to list behavior unfit for followers of Jesus. What is meant by each of the following and how is it contrary to walking in love?

Immorality & impurity (1 Corinthians 5:1 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)

Greed (Ephesians 4:19 and 2 Peter 2:14)

Filthiness, silly talk, and vulgar joking (Ephesians 4:29)

4. For all of us who have ever given in to immorality or covetousness, Ephesians 5:5 can sound like a pretty terrifying threat! What does Paul mean in this verse? Referencing 1 Corinthians 6:7-11; Galatians 5:16-21, answer the following questions:

Within this warning, who is it that will miss out on the inheritance?

What is the inheritance that they may miss out on? Is the inheritance equivalent to eternal life or something else? Why?

Why would Paul warn believers in this way? What's his goal in this warning?

5. If we aren't supposed to name or even joke about immortality and impurity (5:3, 12), then how are we to go about exposing the deeds of darkness according to verses 11, 13-14?

How does Paul's inclusion of the quotation in 5:14 reinforce his point?

## SUM IT UP

In a sentence or two, summarize the main ideas of this passage.

# make it real

## APPLICATION

Remember, the goal of application is to internalize and embody God's life-giving love and truth.

Begin in prayer, asking God's Spirit to reveal what He is saying specifically to you.

1. Why can it be so much easier to imitate the world rather than God? How can our identity as "children of light" shape our deeds?

2. Is God exposing any secret sins in your life to the light of His love? Confess them to Jesus and trusted spiritual friends. Who can partner with you to walk in the light this week?

3. List some of the biblical truths, principles, ideas, or images God has revealed to you from this passage. A few questions to consider are:

Is there a promise for me to claim?

Is there a truth for me to believe?

Is there a command for me to obey?

Is God showing me a picture or image of what He desires?

How does this passage connect to what God has been saying to me lately in prayer, in conversations with fellow believers and through His word?

4. Continuing in prayer, write down the main biblical truth, principle, idea, or image that God revealed to you during your study.

5. What is God's invitation to you this week as you seek to apply what you've learned? What specific steps will you take? How could this impact relationships where you live, work, and play? Write your goal in the box below.

## **SPIRITUAL PRACTICE**

### **PRAYER OF EXAMEN**

The Examen is prayerful reflection on the events of your day in order to detect God's presence and activity in your life. This type of prayer was developed by Ignatius of Loyola in the 1500s. Its regular practice helps us to both grow in communion with God and in awareness of the motives, desires, struggles, and opportunities in our daily lives. The Examen is often practiced at the end of the day using a journal to record thoughts.

Turn to page 131 for a full description of this practice

Create a personal goal expressing how you will actively embody biblical truth and engage missionally this week.

A large rectangular area with a light beige background and a grid of small dots for writing.

# group discussion

## CONNECT

### CARE/SHARE (choose from these)

1. Spend a few minutes catching up with each other. Share something you are celebrating or something that disappointed you during the last week.
2. Goals: how did you do on your goals this week?
3. Were you able to share your story with friends or neighbors?

### WHY ARE WE HERE?

What is the main goal of our group?

Pray for your time together.

## GROW

### DISCUSS OBSERVATION (choose from these)

1. Read Ephesians 5:1-14. Share some of your observations.
2. What are some of the commands you see in this passage?

### DISCUSS INTERPRETATION

Why is it helpful to compare multiple translations?

Discuss 2-3 questions.

## ENGAGE

### DISCUSS APPLICATION (choose from these)

1. Why can it be so much easier to imitate the world rather than God?
2. How can our identity as “children of light” shape our deeds?

### SPIRITUAL PRACTICE **Prayer of Examen (p.131)**

Read over and discuss this spiritual practice.

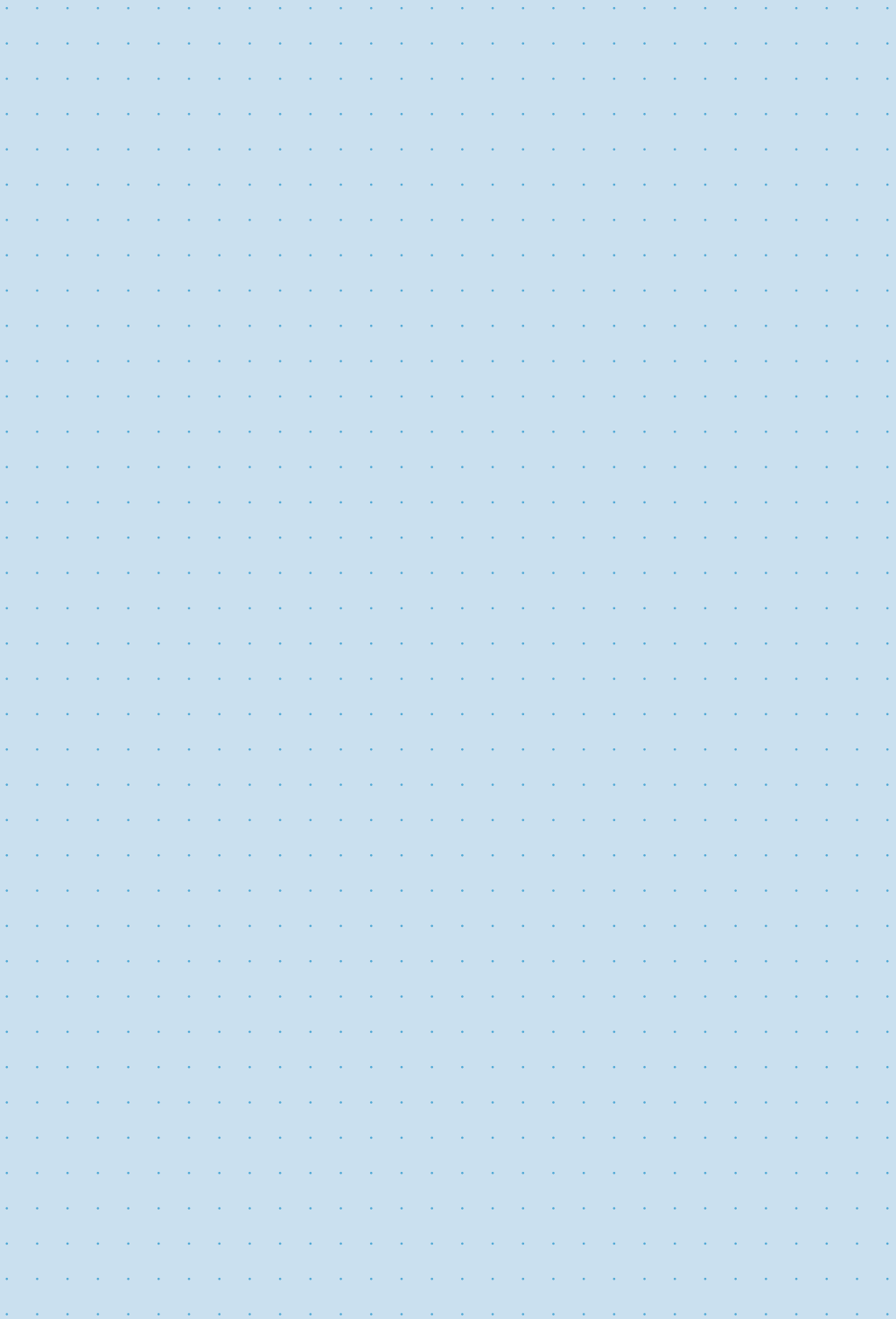
How could it help us walk in love more consistently?

## GOALS

What will we do differently this week in light of all that we have learned and discussed?

# PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend time praying for each other and for specific friends on your Every Neighbor Maps.





# LESSON 8



Therefore do not be foolish,  
but understand what the will  
of the Lord is. And do not  
get drunk with wine, in which  
there is debauchery, but be  
filled with the Spirit,

EPHESIANS 5:17-18

*Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.  
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.*

# look it over

## OBSERVATION

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage. Continue to write down your interpretive questions, and to mark the passage using the skills you have learned (circling key words, underlining verbs).

### EPHESIANS 5:15-6:9

15 So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, 16 making the most of your 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, in which there is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father; 21 and subject yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.

22 Wives, subject yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are parts of His body. 31 **FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND HIS**

MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless, as for you individually, each husband is to love his own wife the same as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

6:1 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 TURN OUT WELL FOR YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; 6 not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

7 With goodwill render service, as to the Lord, and not to people, 8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, he will receive this back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

9 And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

## OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

1. List any primary themes or big ideas you see in this passage.
2. Notice that Paul contrasts two different ways of life in verses 15-21. List all the characteristics for each way of life.
3. What specific responsibilities does Paul give to each person or group in 5:22-6:9?

# think it through

## INTERPRETATION

1. What does it mean to be “filled with the Spirit?” (Hint: It must be comparable in some way to the contrasting idea of being “drunk with wine” and refer back to Lesson 4 Interpretive Question 4.)

What are some specific examples of Spirit-filled behavior according to the context?

What hinders us from being “filled with the Spirit?” See Galatians 5:16-26.

2. What does it mean to “be subject” to someone else (5:21)? See Lesson 2’s Interpretive Skill instructions as you look up this key word.

In what relationships does God expect us to practice submission? See 1 Corinthians 15:28; Titus 2:5, 9; 1 Peter 2:13, 5:5.

## HOUSEHOLD CODES

Paul’s instructions in Ephesians 5:22-6:9 are written in a Greco-Roman literary form known as a household code. These codes were a form of ethical instruction that appeared in the writings of political philosophers and historians such as Aristotle and Josephus. The instructions were addressed to the male patriarch of the household, informing him of his responsibility to order his household as a miniature Roman empire. His authority was based on his assumed superiority to the members of his household who were “by nature” considered inferior to him. (See Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1) Ancient household codes typically included the same sets of relationships found in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3. The social status of women, children and slaves was defined by the social status of their husband, father or master.

3. How do the instructions about household relationships (5:22-6:9) relate to 5:15-21?

Given the hierarchical structure of the Greco-Roman world, how would Paul's instructions have been heard by the original audience? In what ways are his instructions radically different from typical household codes of the time?

4. What does it mean for a wife to “subject” herself to her husband? How does a wife's responsibility fulfill the controlling idea of this paragraph to “subject yourselves to one another” (5:21)?

Why are wives called to be subject to their husbands “as to the Lord”? Is it based on cultural realities or timeless principles? See Genesis 1:26-28, 2:18-24; Galatians 3:28-29; 1 Corinthians 7:2-4; 11:1-12; 1 Peter 3:1-8.

5. According to the passage, how should a husband demonstrate Christ-like love for his wife?

How does the repetition of commands for the husband to love and care for his wife as he does for himself further highlight the controlling idea of this paragraph to “subject yourselves to one another” (5:21)?

6. How does the theme of honor connect the different instructions Paul provides to children, parents, slaves, and masters in 6:1-9?

## SUM IT UP

In a sentence or two, summarize the main ideas of this passage.

# make it real

## APPLICATION

Remember, the goal of application is to internalize and embody God's life-giving love and truth.

Begin in prayer, asking God's Spirit to reveal what He is saying specifically to you.

1. In what situations or relationships have you been called upon to yield to someone else? Do you find it easy or difficult? Why? How can you better honor and serve in this situation or relationship this week?

2. What steps can you take this week to "be filled with the Spirit" in your relationships?

3. List some of the biblical truths, principles, ideas, or images God has revealed to you from this passage. A few questions to consider are:

Is there a promise for me to claim?

Is there a truth for me to believe?

Is there a command for me to obey?

Is God showing me a picture or image of what He desires?

How does this passage connect to what God has been saying to me lately in prayer, in conversations with fellow believers and through His word?

4. Continuing in prayer, write down the main biblical truth, principle, idea, or image that God revealed to you during your study.

5. What is God's invitation to you this week as you seek to apply what you've learned? What specific steps will you take? How could this impact relationships where you live, work, and play? Write your goal in the box below.

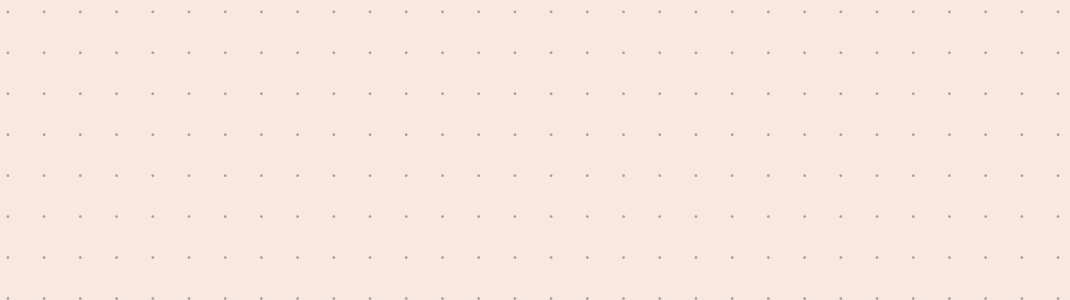
## ENGAGE TOOL

### SHARE THE GOSPEL - 3 CIRCLES

As we pray, ask questions and listen to people with a heart of compassion, the Holy Spirit may lead us into sharing with someone how they can turn from trusting in themselves to trusting in Jesus. This simple tool using a diagram of three circles is really helpful to share the good news of the gospel with people.

Turn to page 128 and practice sharing the gospel this week. Pray for opportunities to share with non-believing friends. See a demonstration video at [grace-bible.org/disciplemaker](http://grace-bible.org/disciplemaker).

Create a personal goal expressing how you will actively embody biblical truth and engage missionally this week.



# group discussion

## CONNECT

CARE/SHARE: **(choose from these)**

1. What are you thankful for this week?
2. What are you asking God for currently?
3. Goals: how did you do on your goals this week? Did anyone begin to practice the Prayer of Examen?

WHY ARE WE HERE?

If a friend asked you why you study the Bible in a group, what would you say?  
Pray for your time together.

## GROW

DISCUSS OBSERVATION **(choose from these)**

1. Read Ephesians 5:15-6:9. Share some of your observations.
2. What themes, ideas, or key words from earlier in the book of James do you see repeated here?

DISCUSS INTERPRETATION:

Discuss 2-3 questions.

## ENGAGE

DISCUSS APPLICATION **(choose from these)**

1. In what situations or relationships have you been called upon to submit to someone else? Do you find it easy or hard to submit? Why? How can you better honor and serve in this situation or relationship this week?
2. What steps can you take this week to “be filled with the Spirit” in your relationships?
3. What truth did God reveal to you this week and how do you plan to apply it?

ENGAGE TOOL **Share the Gospel: 3 Circles (p. 128)**

Practice sharing it in groups of 2-3.

GOALS

What will we do differently this week in light of all that we have learned and discussed?

# PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend time praying for each other and for specific friends on your Every Neighbor Maps.

A large grid of dots on a light blue background, intended for writing names and prayer requests. The grid consists of 20 columns and 30 rows of small, light blue dots.



# LESSON 9



Finally, be strong in the Lord  
and in the strength of His  
might. Put on the full armor of  
God, so that you will be able to  
stand firm against the schemes  
of the devil.

EPHESIANS 6:10-11

*Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.  
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.*

# look it over

## OBSERVATION

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage. Continue to write down your interpretive questions, and to mark the passage using the skills you have learned (circling key words, underlining verbs).

### EPHESIANS 6:10-24

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, having belted your waist with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having strapped on your feet the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 With every prayer and request, pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in

view, be alert with all perseverance and every request for all the saints, 19 and pray in my behalf, that speech may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

21 Now, so that you also may know about my circumstances as to what I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make everything known to you. 22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.

23 Peace be to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love.

## **OBSERVATION QUESTIONS**

### **OBSERVATION SKILL: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**

See page 115-116 for a full description of this skill.

1. Underline all the types of figurative imagery that you can find in this passage.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What big ideas do you observe in Paul's call to prayer in 6:18-20?

# think it through

## INTERPRETATION

1. Where else have we seen the ideas of God's strength or power in Ephesians? To what did that strength refer? How do we gain access to that strength?

2. Who are our spiritual enemies? What specific tactics do they use? See 2:2; Genesis 3:1-5; John 8:44; 1 Peter 5:8-9.

3. What/when is the "evil day" mentioned in verse 13? See also 5:16.

4. List each piece of spiritual armor. What does each mean? Be specific (e.g. what is “truth,” and what is the significance of the imagery “having girded your loins with the truth?”). How does each piece of armor contribute to our ability to stand strong in the midst of spiritual warfare?

5. Why does Paul’s call to prayer follow his discussion of our spiritual battle and armor? How does prayer relate to this battle?

## SUM IT UP

In a sentence or two, summarize the main ideas of this passage.

# make it real

## APPLICATION

Remember, the goal of application is to internalize and embody God's life-giving love and truth.

Begin in prayer, asking God's Spirit to reveal what He is saying specifically to you.

1. How aware are you of spiritual opposition in your life? Does it paralyze you or do you rarely consider it?

2. How can we maintain spiritual vigilance? In what ways can your prayer life become more effective in this spiritual battle?

3. List some of the biblical truths, principles, ideas, or images God has revealed to you from this passage. A few questions to consider are:

Is there a promise for me to claim?

Is there a truth for me to believe?

Is there a command for me to obey?

Is God showing me a picture or image of what He desires?

How does this passage connect to what God has been saying to me lately in prayer, in conversations with fellow believers and through His word?

4. Continuing in prayer, write down the main biblical truth, principle, idea, or image that God revealed to you during your study.

5. What is God's invitation to you this week as you seek to apply what you've learned? What specific steps will you take? How could this impact relationships where you live, work, and play? Write your goal in the box below.

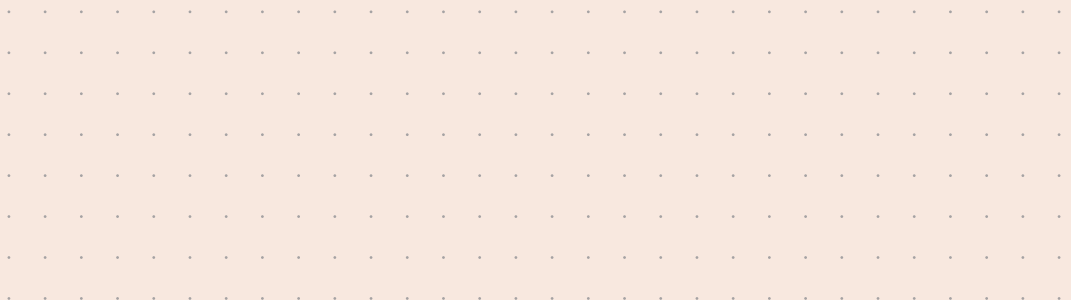
## ENGAGE TOOL

Share the Gospel: 3 Circles

Continue to practice sharing the 3 Circles Gospel tool found on page 128.

For more insight, watch the 3 Circles Gospel video at [grace-bible.org/disciplemaker](http://grace-bible.org/disciplemaker).

Create a personal goal expressing how you will actively embody biblical truth and engage missionally this week.



# group discussion

## CONNECT

CARE/SHARE: **(choose from these)**

1. Spend a few minutes catching up with each other. Share high or low from the week.
2. Goals: how did you do on your application of truth last week?

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Ask someone to summarize your group's purpose.

Pray for your time together.

## GROW

DISCUSS OBSERVATION: **(choose from these)**

1. Read Ephesians 6:10-24. Share some of your observations.
2. What is some of the figurative language you saw in this section?

DISCUSS INTERPRETATION:

Discuss 2-3 questions.

## ENGAGE

DISCUSS APPLICATION: **(choose from these)**

1. How aware are you of spiritual opposition in your life? Does it paralyze you or do you rarely consider it?
2. How can we maintain spiritual vigilance? In what ways can your prayer life become more effective in this spiritual battle?
3. What truth did God reveal to you this week and how do you plan to apply it?

ENGAGE TOOL: **3 Circles Gospel (p.128)**

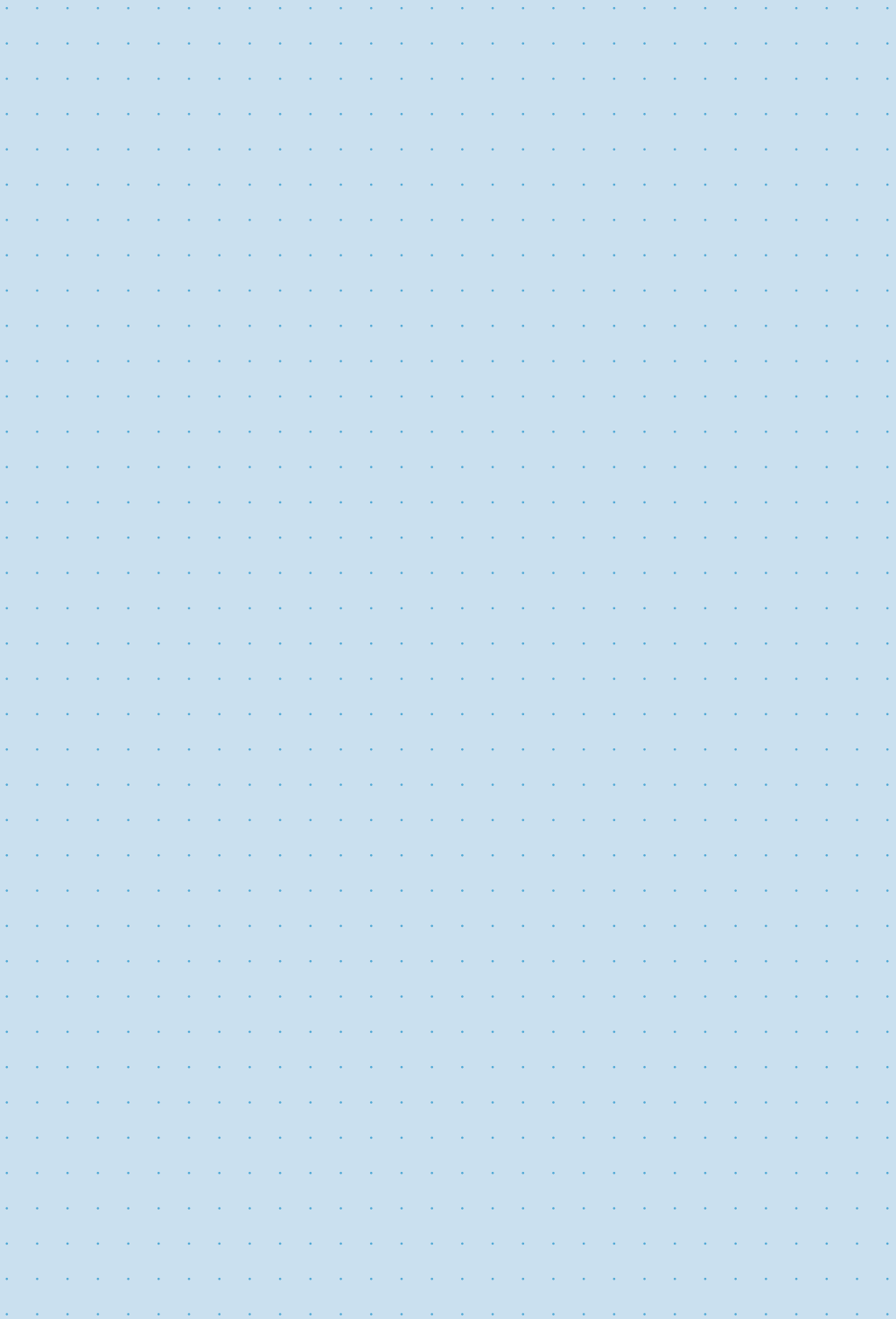
Continue to practice sharing the 3 Circles Gospel tool together in groups of 2 or 3.

GOALS

What will we do differently this week in light of all that we have learned and discussed?

# PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend time praying for each other and for specific friends on your Every Neighbor Maps.





SYNTHESIS

# put it back together

## MEMORIZE

Review your memory verses for each of the previous lessons.

Ephesians 1:3

Ephesians 2:8-9

Ephesians 2:13-14

Ephesians 3:20-21

Ephesians 4:1-3

Ephesians 4:32

Ephesians 5:1-2

Ephesians 5:17-18

Ephesians 6:10-11

Before we get to the synthesis, one word of encouragement ... please realize how much you have grown as a student of God's Word through your study of Ephesians! Each week, you've learned how to better observe, interpret, and apply the stories of Scripture. Those same three steps will serve you well as you continue to study God's story throughout the Bible. Continue to practice and refine these skills so that you become, "a worker who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the Word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

## WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

1. With the book of Ephesians as a whole in mind, what does it mean that God “called” us? What did He call us out of? What privileges and blessings are included in His call?

2. According to Ephesians, what standards of conduct does God expect of us? In other words, how does He expect those whom He has called to act in this world?

The previous lessons have led us to observe, to interpret, and to apply the entire book of Ephesians. That is no small task! Now it is time to draw our detailed study to a useful conclusion, a process known as synthesis. Our goal is to create an overall summary of the book of James that we can quickly review any time in the future to remind us of the flow and content of the book.

## OUTLINE THE BOOK

The first step of the synthesis is to create your own outline of the book. Review the work you completed each week. Then, create your own brief outline on the next page. Feel free to use any outlining style, but here is an example of how you might start:

1. Greetings from Paul to the church in Ephesus (1:1-2)
2. Praise for God’s blessings to the church (1:3-14)
  - a) Predestined adoption by the Father (1:3-6)
  - b) Gracious redemption by the Son (1:7-12)
  - c) Sealed inheritance through the Spirit (1:13-14)

# MY EPHESIANS OUTLINE

A large grid of small dots, arranged in approximately 30 rows and 100 columns, intended for writing an outline.



## APPLICATION #1

Principle from Ephesians:

Verses where it's discussed:

Plan of Action: I will ...

## APPLICATION #2

Principle from Ephesians:

Verses where it's discussed:

Plan of Action: I will ...



# APPENDIX



**112** LEADER HELPS

**114** STUDY TOOLS

**120** CHRONOLOGY

**122** ENGAGE TOOLS

**131** SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

**133** ADDITIONAL STUDY RESOURCES

# leader helps

## WHOLEHEARTED DEVOTION

The best preparation for leading a Bible study is following Jesus closely yourself.

- Spend time with God daily to keep your relationship with Him fresh and growing! Healthy leadership is ultimately an overflow of your personal relationship with God.
- Spend time in the passage throughout the week.
- Pray regularly with your co-leader for each person in your group.
- Prepare ahead of time and make a plan (see below) for your group time. Discuss with your co-leader.
- As a facilitator of discussion rather than a teacher, you are encouraged to be a co-learner with your group. Your job is not to know “everything.” It is acceptable to leave some questions partially answered or unresolved, trusting for clarity at a later time. Reach out to ministry leaders and pastors at your church for clarification as needed.
- Lead and walk by faith in the Holy Spirit’s work in your life and in the lives of your group members.

## LEADING WELL

- Set a regular meeting place and time. Consistency helps avoid obstacles that will keep people from being there and a plan helps people know what to expect.
- Create a welcoming environment! Learn people’s names and make sure everyone is introduced to each other. Possibly have a snack each week, alternating between healthy and “less healthy.” Everyone likes a snack!
- Regularly remind people of the group’s purpose to:  
**CONNECT** Relationally  
**GROW** Biblically  
**ENGAGE** Missionally
- Regularly break up into smaller groups of 2-3, starting from the very first meeting. Smaller groups help people feel known. Keep the groups no bigger than 3. This will pay off in the long run.
- Stress confidentiality about what is shared in the group.
- Try reaching out to different people each week to grab lunch or coffee outside of group time as your schedule allows.

## MAKE A PLAN EACH WEEK

Utilize the Group Discussion Guide (located at the end of each lesson). Divide your time into three relatively equal thirds that focus on **CONNECT, GROW, ENGAGE**. For example, if your group meets for one hour, try intentionally focusing about 20 minutes on Connect, 20 minutes on Grow, and 20 minutes on Engage. Each one of us can easily drift towards overemphasizing one category and neglecting another, which is why making a plan is an important step. Here are some leading tips for connecting, growing, and engaging.

1 / 3

### CONNECT

Build group community by using the connect suggestions in the Group Discussion Guide. Depending on your group size, try getting into groups of 2-3 for an icebreaker question, to catch up on application from last week, and for prayer. The question could vary from more fun or more serious. For example: “What was a highlight and lowlight of your week?” or “How did you apply last week’s lesson?”

Then pray in the small groups. (Prayer at the beginning is a good way to help make it an emphasis.) Suggest something for them to pray for as a group, that is bigger than themselves and the group. Some ideas: For neighbors, family members, friends, or classmates who they would like to point to Jesus; for a missionary or a people group in need of the gospel.

2 / 3

### GROW

Gather back as one group and have one person pray for your time in God’s Word. Discuss the passage using the Grow suggestions in the Group Discussion Guide. Summarize or read aloud the passage together.

3 / 3

### ENGAGE

Read and discuss the tool or spiritual practice in the lesson. Give time to try out sharing the tool or spiritual practice as a group. Reflect on the biblical truth God revealed to you this week. Create a plan of action to apply what you have learned. Gather in small groups (of 2-3) again. Discuss your plan of action and pray for one another.

# study tools

## OBSERVE

Every time we study the Bible, the first thing to ask is, “What do I see?” This is the crucial skill of observation, which lays the groundwork for the rest of our study. Here are four tasks involved in observation which should be performed in the order below. All examples are taken from the book of Galatians.

### OBSERVATION TASK 1

Mark up the passage by visually identifying the following specific elements:

**Underline all verbs.** A verb is a word or group of words used to indicate either that an action is taking place (“we will reign with Him”) or that a state or condition exists (“we are faithless”). Verbs are often the most significant indicators of the author’s flow of thought.

**Circle key words or phrases.** These are words or short phrases that are important theologically (like “gospel” in 1:6) or thematically (they set the theme or main idea for the passage, such as “approved” and “works of the law” in 3:2,5,10).

**Highlight repeated words or phrases.** Also, include words and phrases that are closely related even if not exact duplicates (such as “suffer hardship” and “endure suffering”). You’ll also want to highlight things that are repeated from previous passages (such as “son” in 4:23 and 4:30)

**Box connecting words.** These important words indicate the logical connection between words, phrases, and clauses. Here are eight types of common connecting words to look for:

1. **Comparison** either points out similarities between two or more related ideas or simply joins like ideas. Comparison words include *and, like, as, just as, also, so also, even so* (e.g., “like the Gentiles” in 2:14).
2. **Contrast** points out dissimilarities between ideas. Contrast words include *but, rather, yet, however* (e.g., “No longer I... but Christ” in 2:20).
3. **Purpose** indicates the intended goal of an idea or action, whether or not it was realized. Purpose words and phrases include *that, so that, in order that* (e.g., “Christ redeemed us... in order that in Christ Jesus...” in 3:13-14).
4. **Result** is similar to “purpose,” but indicates the actual consequence, whether or not it was intended. Result words and phrases include *that, so that, as a result, with the result that* (e.g., “The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.” in 2:13).
5. **Cause** expresses the basis or cause of an action. Cause words include *because, since, and sometimes for*. (e.g., “Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions” in 3:19)
6. **Explanation** is what follows further explains the previous idea, giving reasons why it is true, why it occurred, or simply adding additional information. Look for the key word *for*. (e.g., “For prior to the coming of certain men from James” in 2:12).
7. **Inference** provides a logical consequence, conclusion, or summary to the previous discussion. Inference words and phrases include *therefore and for this reason*. (e.g., “Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.” in 3:7)
8. **Condition** presents a condition that must occur before a certain action or conclusion can occur. The statement may or may not reflect reality (i.e., it could be

hypothetical). Key word is “*if*.” (e.g., “For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise...” in 3:18)

## OBSERVATION TASK 2

List 2-3 primary themes you see in the passage each week.

A primary theme is the big idea, the central truth, or command that the passage focuses on, such as “humility” in 5:16-26. After reading the passage, write your themes as single words or short phrases. Identifying these themes at the beginning of your study will help you develop a good overall grasp of the passage.

## OBSERVATION TASK 3

Write two or more observations per verse.

Our observations might identify people, places, or events, point out repeated words or key terms, record important connections between words and sentences, or even point out something missing that we expected to see.

## OBSERVATION TASK 4

Ask your own interpretive questions.

Here are a few examples:

WHO IS...	WHAT IS THE...	WHY DID THE AUTHOR...	HOW...
the author talking about? accomplishing the action? benefiting from the action?	meaning of this word? significance of this phrase? implication of this statement? relationship between these phrases?	choose this word? include this phrase, statement, or command? not say _____ ?	was this action accomplished? will this situation occur?

## OBSERVATION TASK 5 Figurative Language

As every writer knows, one of the most powerful ways to emotionally engage an audience with your words is to use figurative language. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE uses words and phrases in an unexpected way to create a vivid image in the mind of a listener. This image adds color to the author’s message, holds the listener’s attention, forces the listener to slow down and reflect on the idea being communicated, makes the abstract more concrete, and aids in retention of the author’s point. While there are many types of figurative language, here are the eight major types you should be looking for as you study the Bible:

- 1) Simile: compares two things by using the explicit formula *like* or *as*. “He will be like a tree firmly planted.” Psalm 1:3
- 2) Metaphor: compares two things but omits *like* or *as* and instead simply equates them (A is B) “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.” Matthew 5:14
- 3) Metonymy: one word is substituted for another word closely associated with it, such as referring to military officers as “brass.” A biblical example would be James’ use of “tongue” to refer to one’s speech (e.g. James 3:5).
- 4) Hyperbole: conscious exaggeration for the sake of effect or emphasis “I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to serve you” 2 Corinthians 11:8
- 5) Personification: treating something non-human (and frequently inanimate) as though it

were a human. Example: "And their tongue struts through the earth." Psalm 73:9 "Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed" Isaiah 24:23

6) Anthropomorphism: attributing human characteristics, even body parts, to God.

Example: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; neither is His ear so dull that it cannot hear." Isaiah 59:1

7) Apostrophe: addressing a thing as if it were a person or an imaginary person as if he were present. Example: "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

1 Corinthians 15:55

8) Symbol: a concrete image that points to or embodies other meanings. Examples include "light" used to represent God, goodness, truth, or blessing (such as in Psalm 27:1) and "throne" to represent power and authority (such as in Psalm 89:4 and 14).

## INTERPRET

Our observation of a passage should stir interesting yet challenging questions, leading us to the second stage of our Bible study: interpretation. Fortunately, we do not have to run to a commentary or study Bible for answers (though these are helpful tools to check our conclusions). Use the following six methods, as needed, to tackle a variety of questions. Also, make sure to familiarize yourself with the three "Principles of Interpretation" on page 118.

### INTERPRETATION METHODS

**Interpretation Method 1** | Use the context.

Look for important clues in the sentences and paragraphs that come before and after the verse in question. Try to follow the author's flow of thought through the whole chapter. This may take you to the previous lesson, so have it handy as a review. You may need to read ahead in the book for clues.

**Interpretation Method 2** | Study cross-references.

Cross references are simply other passages in any book of the Bible that are somehow related to the verses you are studying. They often prove incredibly helpful as you seek to understand your passage. A few such cross references can be found in the margins of most English Bibles, but more can be found by visiting online tool such as [netbible.org](http://netbible.org). Simply search for the passage at the top of the screen, and the relevant text will appear. Be sure that "NET2" is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then select the tab for "Greek" on the right side of the screen. Now hovering over any word in English will highlight the corresponding Greek term and reveal its Strong's definition in the opposite window. Then, you can select a word, click the magnifying glass above it, and choose to run a "Word Search" that will provide all Biblical references that use the English term.

**Interpretation Method 3** | Look up key words.

While looking up a key word in English is helpful, doing so in Greek provides deeper understanding and is surprisingly easy, thanks to online tools such as [net.bible.org](http://net.bible.org). Simply search for the passage at the top of the screen, and the relevant text will appear. Be sure that "NET2" is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then select the tab for "Greek" on the right side of the screen. Now hovering over any word in English will highlight the corresponding Greek term and reveal its Strong's definition in the opposite window. For

even further study, you can select a word, click the magnifying glass above it, then choose to run a “Word Search,” “Strong’s Search,” or “Word Study.” The first will provide all Biblical references that use the English term. The second will provide all Biblical references that use the Greek term. And the third will provide the full definition and derivatives of the Greek term. What used to take multiple books & many hours now takes one internet browser & a few seconds!

#### **Interpretation Method 4** | Look up background information.

You can find helpful insights by looking up confusing names or words in a Bible dictionary or by looking up the particular verses you are studying in a background commentary. One of the best dictionaries is *The New Bible Dictionary* by Wood & Marshall. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary* by Craig Keener is another excellent example of a verse-by-verse background commentary.

Background information can be found by visiting the online reference [netbible.org](http://netbible.org). Simply search for the passage at the top of the screen, and the relevant text will appear. Be sure that “NET2” is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then select the tab for “Notes” on the right side of the screen. Now, anytime you select one of the numbered annotations above particular words or verses, you can immediately see the relevant Biblical or historical context for that term or passage. This is a great tool for answering tough questions!

#### **Interpretation Method 5** | Tackle tough questions step-by-step.

When trying to answer the most challenging questions, follow this four-step process:

1. List all the options. Always start by brainstorming every possible answer to your question.
2. List pros and cons for each option. See all the evidence you can find that either argues for or against a particular option. This evidence comes from your study of key words, the grammar of the sentence, the context of surrounding verses and the book as a whole, cross references to other books, and comparison with your overall understanding of Christian theology.
3. Choose the most likely option. Look at your evidence for each option. Typically, evidence from the immediate context is most important, followed closely by evidence from the book as a whole. Evidence from other books of the Bible, or from Christian theology as a whole, does not carry quite as much weight unless the solution contradicts a clear passage elsewhere or a major tenant of Christian doctrine. In that case, since Scripture never lies and God cannot contradict Himself, you must eliminate that option.
4. Decide on your certainty level. Once you have chosen the best solution, step back for a second and humbly gauge how certain you are of its accuracy (90% = I am very sure this is correct ... 60% = This solution is just a bit more likely than the others!). Finally, talk with others and check commentaries or reference books to see what solutions they have chosen and why.

#### **Interpretation Method 6** | Compare multiple translations.

This packet uses the New American Standard (NASB) translation. You can often find helpful interpretive clues by comparing this translation with other translations. The New King James Version (NKJV), like the NASB, is a fairly word-for-word translation of the Greek text. The New International Version (NIV) and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) are excellent phrase-to-phrase translations of the Greek and thus often easier to read.

Another excellent phrase-to-phrase Bible, which includes extensive translation notes, is the New English Translation (NET) available online for free at [netbible.org](http://netbible.org). You can find and compare numerous translations of any Bible passage at [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com).

## INTERPRETATION PRINCIPLES

There are three fundamental principles of interpretation that help us to use our interpretive skills accurately.

### **Interpretation Principle 1** | Discern the author's intended meaning.

Your goal is to discern the author's intended meaning to the original audience.

Unfortunately, most people begin their Bible study by asking, "What does this passage mean to me?" While there may be multiple possible applications to my life, there is only one meaning, the author's intended meaning, and we must first seek this out. This involves three important steps:

1. Always start your study with prayer, asking the same God who composed Scripture through these ancient authors to give you insight to understand His intended meaning.
2. Avoid inserting your 21st century circumstances and theological issues into the text as they can skew understanding.
3. Work diligently to see the text from the point of view of the original readers. To do this: (a) dig into the historical and cultural background using Bible dictionaries and commentaries, and (b) spend a few moments thinking about the original audience's religious understanding by asking, "What books of the Bible did they have access to? What did they know about God? About Jesus? About salvation? etc."

### **Interpretation Principle 2** | Assume a "Normal" Use of Language

The Bible was given to us because God desired to communicate with us, not to hide Himself from us. Therefore, we should not be looking for "hidden" meanings as we study. Instead, we should use the "normal" techniques we would use to understand any piece of literature:

1. Study the grammar. Pay attention to nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. Think through any figures of speech. Observe how phrases and clauses are connected into sentences and how sentences are linked together into paragraphs.
2. Remember that chapter divisions came later. When Paul wrote Corinthians or Luke wrote the book of Acts, they wrote single, unified stories without verse or chapter divisions. These books were meant to be read just like you would read a letter or a novel. Always keep the overall story in mind as you study each passage.

### **Interpretation Principle 3** | Let Scripture Interpret Scripture

This is the third and last principle of interpretation. Because God is unchangingly truthful and always consistent (John 17:17; Hebrews 3:6; James 1:17), we can, and should, expect the same of His Word. This has two practical applications:

1. Check your conclusions. Always compare your conclusions with the teachings of scripture as a whole. If you find your interpretation of a passage contradicts the clear teaching of scripture elsewhere, you probably need to revise your conclusions.
2. Allow clear passages to illuminate ambiguous passages. Whenever you encounter a passage that is confusing or open to multiple possible interpretations, use clearer passages of scripture to guide you to the correct interpretation.

One last caution: remember that God revealed scripture progressively, not all at once. Therefore, we should not be surprised by differences between how people related to and understood God at different times in the history of scripture. For example, while Abraham needed only believe that God was faithful in order to be justified (Genesis 15:6), in the New Testament era, we must believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus to be saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-7).

## **APPLY**

Our Bible study is not over until we apply what we have learned to our everyday lives. And lest we underestimate the value of this last step, remember that in God's eyes it is the person who does not just know His Word, but also obeys His Word that truly loves Him (see John 14:21). So how do we apply a passage to our lives? Application involves the following two tasks:

### **APPLICATION TASK 1**

**List potential principles from your passage.**

A "principle" is simply a fact or command stated or implied in a particular passage that is practically relevant to our lives. Legitimate principles are not specific to a particular person (e.g., 1 Timothy 5:23 is just for Timothy) nor a particular time (e.g., "do not leave Jerusalem" in Acts 1:4). It is often helpful when listing principles to consider the following questions:

- Is there something to worship or thank God for?
- Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?
- Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?
- Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?
- Is there any relationship I need to work on?

### **APPLICATION TASK 2**

**Choose one principle, and create a plan to apply it to your life this week.**

Once you complete your principle list, prayerfully choose the one principle you most need to work on (Do not just choose the easiest to apply!). If you felt deeply convicted about one in particular, that is probably the principle God is leading you to apply. Once you have chosen a specific principle, answer these two questions:

1. What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.
2. Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

# chronology

EVENT	APPROXIMATE DATE
Crucifixion of Jesus	April 33
Pentecost (Acts 2)	May 33
Paul's conversion (Acts 9)	Summer 35
Paul in Jerusalem, 1st visit (Acts 9:26-29; Gal. 1:18-20)	35-43
Paul to Antioch (Acts 11:25-26)	Spring 43
Epistle of James written	45
Paul in Jerusalem, relief visit (Acts 11:30; Gal. 2:1-10)	Autumn 47
Paul to Antioch (Acts 12:25-13:1)	Autumn 47 – Spring 48
Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13-14)	April 48 – September 49
Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-16)	Autumn 49
Galatians written from Antioch	Autumn 49
Paul in Jerusalem, Jerusalem council (Acts 15)	Autumn 49
Paul in Antioch (Acts 15:30-35)	Winter 49/50
Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-18:22)	April 50 – September 52
1 & 2 Thessalonians written	Spring – Summer 51
Paul in Jerusalem and Antioch	End of September 52; Winter 52/53
Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 18:23-21:16)	Spring 53 – May 57
1 & 2 Corinthians written	Spring – Fall 56
Romans written	Winter 56/57
Ephesian elders visit Paul at Miletus (Acts 20)	May 57
Paul in Jerusalem	Eve of Pentecost, May 27, 57
Paul's arrest and trial before Felix (Acts 21:26-24:22)	June 57
Paul's appearance before Felix (Acts 24:24-26)	June 57
Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea (Acts 24:27)	June 57 – Aug 59
Paul's trial before Festus (Acts 25:7-12) & Agrippa (Acts 26)	July 59; Aug 59
Paul's voyage to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:29)	Aug 59 – Feb 60
Paul's first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:30)	Feb 60 – Mar 62
Luke written	60

Acts Written	60
Ephesians written	Autumn 60
Colossians and Philemon written	Autumn 61
Philippians written	Spring 62
Paul's release	Spring 62
Mark written	62
Paul in Ephesus and Colossae	Spring – Autumn 62
Peter in Rome	62
Paul in Macedonia	Summer 62 – Winter 62/63
1 Timothy written	Autumn 62
Paul in Asia Minor	Spring 62
Peter martyred	Summer 64 (67?)
Paul in Spain and Crete	Spring 64 – Spring 66; Summer 66
Titus written	Summer 66
Paul arrested and taken to Rome	Autumn 67
2 Timothy written	Autumn 67
Paul's death	Spring 68
Matthew written	60's
Hebrews written	60's
Destruction of Jerusalem	September 2, 70
Jude written	60's or 70's
John written	80's or 90's
1,2,3 John written	80's or 90's
Revelation written	Early 90's

*Adapted from Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ, Harold H. Hoehner, Zondervan, 1978.*

# engage tools

Because God loves all people, He is constantly working to draw men and women to Himself. He invites believers to partner with Him in this great mission of redemption and restoration. We do this by helping people find and follow Jesus — this is disciple-making. Jesus summarized this calling in Matthew 28:18-20.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying,

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

On the following pages are some foundational tools, practices, and resources to engage in helping people find and follow Jesus.

Visit [grace-bible.org/disciplemaker](https://grace-bible.org/disciplemaker) for more resources.

## EVERY NEIGHBOR MAP

Just as Jesus entered into a specific time and place, God has placed each of us into a unique context in which to share His love and to represent Him. Our context includes anyone that we commonly encounter on a regular basis which gives us the ability to have influence in their lives.

Think about the people in your spheres of influence; the people with whom you live, learn, work, and play who are near to you but might be far from God.

Also, think about people that are just beyond your normal spheres. Perhaps there is an acquaintance that you don't know well, or a neighbor who is different from you ethnically or socio-economically, or a community member that the Holy Spirit has put in your path but is more a stranger than friend. Be creative and think outside the box!

**Pray Big - diligently pray for these friends to find and follow Jesus.**

**Map - write down at least three names in each of these spheres.**

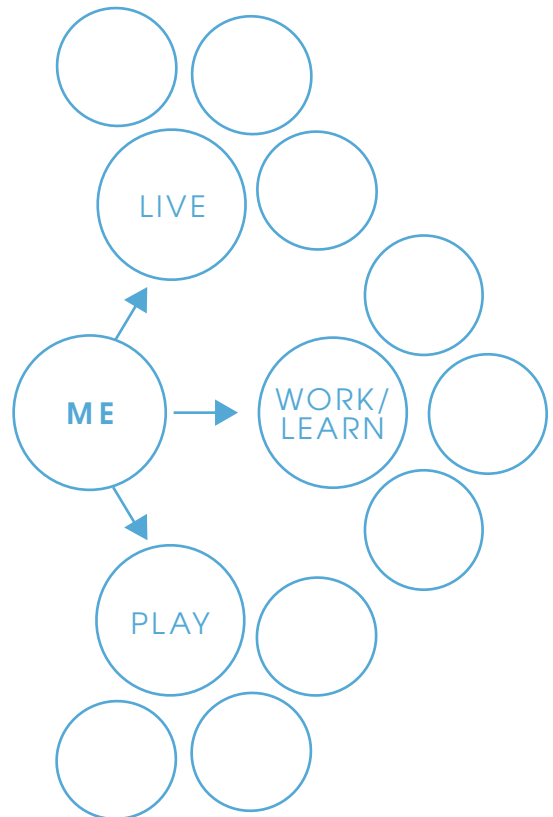
Ask God:

Who might be seeking Him or is asking hard questions about life?

Who needs acts of love and concern shown to them?

How to serve and share the love of Christ with them?

For opportunities to share your story and the gospel.



## STARTING A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

During His life on earth, Jesus told stories using illustrations from everyday life that created an interest in His Kingdom. Jesus made His message accessible to those who would hear. Sadly, we have become conditioned to put on a filter and not speak of Jesus because we imagine that it is awkward, pushy, or politically incorrect. What would it be like to take off this filter and grow in boldness and love as we share stories about who He is and what He is about?

Marking ourselves as a “spiritual” person can help us gauge whether others are interested in God and His message. Some people will “lean in” as you speak about such topics, asking additional questions, sharing their own beliefs, telling about their own journey. Some will not; they will “lean back” and change the topic, become silent, or shut down altogether. Allow the Holy Spirit to prompt you as you initiate and let Him do the work of speaking to a person’s soul.

**Practice talking about two or three of the following “interest creating” topics:**

Recently, God/Jesus has been teaching me that...

I am realizing more and more that God has blessed me by...

I used to struggle with (insert fear, stronghold, idolatry) but now I see God wants me to believe...

I decided to follow Jesus because...

I’ve really been learning to pray more lately. Do you have anything in your life that I can commit to pray for?

Think of common topics that come up as you meet people, for example: career, living situation, family history, educational background. Pick one of these and tell how God changed your path in the past, or how He is guiding you in the present.

**As you practice talking about these things, try to end with a learning question such as:**

Have you ever considered God in this way before?

Do you think God is teaching/blessing/asking you to believe anything right now?

Do you consider yourself on a spiritual journey? What is that like?

What does your tradition say about Jesus?

Your questions are to gauge a response and to allow space for them to interact with your story.

**Now, be prayerful and alert as to who God brings across your path!**

## SHARING YOUR STORY

You have a unique story of how you came to know and follow Jesus. Your story is one of the most powerful tools you have for helping other people find and follow Jesus as well. As you begin to let people know that you are following Jesus, simply ask, “Can I share with you the story of my spiritual journey?” Those who are interested in spiritual things are likely to demonstrate their interest in one way or another (asking questions, making a comment) and that often provides an open door to share your story.

### HOW TO BEGIN

Write out your thoughts on the following topics and questions. These ideas will help you share the story of your spiritual journey, sometimes called your “testimony.”

### MY LIFE BEFORE JESUS

My life revolved around \_\_\_\_\_, and I found my identity, happiness and security from \_\_\_\_\_. Use an example from your personal life here. For instance, did your security come from money, your relationships, etc.?

How did this disappoint me? How was this unfulfilling? How did I come to realize this? What was I struggling with (if anything) just before I believed in Jesus?

*Note: Some people trusted Jesus when they were very young, and don't have clear memories of the time before they knew Him. If that is you, simply share this as part of your story.*

### HOW I FIRST BELIEVED IN JESUS

This part of your story is where you came to a transition in your life.

When and how did I first hear about Jesus?

What did I learn about the life He offers all who believe in Him?

When and why did my perspective about Jesus begin to change?

Why did I decide to believe in Jesus?

*Note: Some of us may be able to point to specific times or circumstances regarding how or when we believed. For others of us, we can only point to a time period or gradual understanding. Both are great. Everyone's story is significant and the biggest point is that you now believe in Jesus.*

### MY LIFE SINCE I FIRST BELIEVED IN JESUS

How is my life different now? List some specific changes in your character, attitude, and perspective on life.

How am I motivated differently now? What do I live for now?

How do I experience God now?

### BRING IT ALL TOGETHER

Think about your answers to the questions above, and ask yourself the following:

Is this a continuous story that makes sense?

Are there any consistent themes in my story?

Can I share my story in 3-4 minutes?

Was I clear about what I believed about Jesus?

# SHARING THE GOSPEL: THE BRIDGE

In the Christian faith, the word “gospel” simply means the “good news” about Jesus - His life, death and resurrection. The message that through belief in Jesus we can enter into a loving relationship with God, experiencing forgiveness and receiving the gift of eternal life, is good news, indeed!

Let’s look at a concise and understandable way to communicate the gospel to your friends and family who do not yet know Jesus.

PEOPLE



GOD



God created people to enjoy a relationship with Him and represent Him through our lives. (Genesis 1:26-28, 31) As a loving Father, He communicated boundaries that protect and allow us to enjoy our relationship with Him and with other people. (Genesis 2:15-16)

PEOPLE



SINFUL

GOD

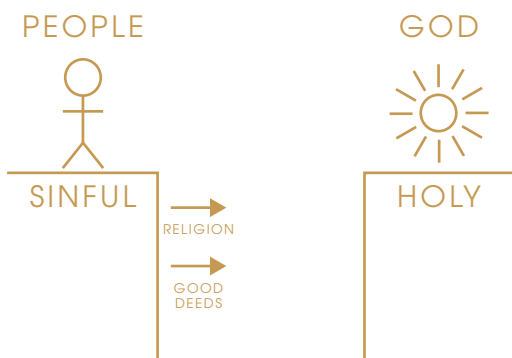


HOLY

Everyone has fallen short of God’s standards. The Bible calls that “sin.” Our sin results in our separation from God. Unless our sin is forgiven, we deserve eternal punishment, separated from God forever.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23

“For the wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23a



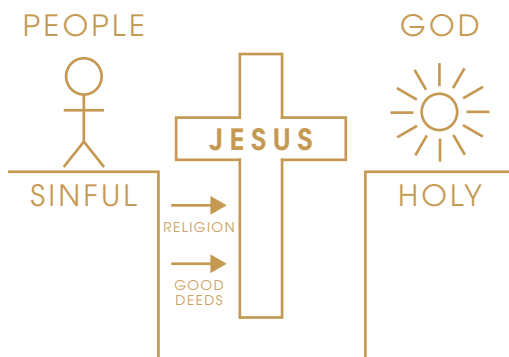
Some try to reach God through religion or by trying to be a good person. But the Bible tells us that there is only one way to God and that is through belief in His Son, Jesus Christ.

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’” John 14:6

God graciously provided a way to forgive our sin and freely give us eternal life. God’s only Son Jesus died in our place. He took on Himself the punishment that our sin deserves. Then, Jesus rose from the dead. He conquered sin and death forever.

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

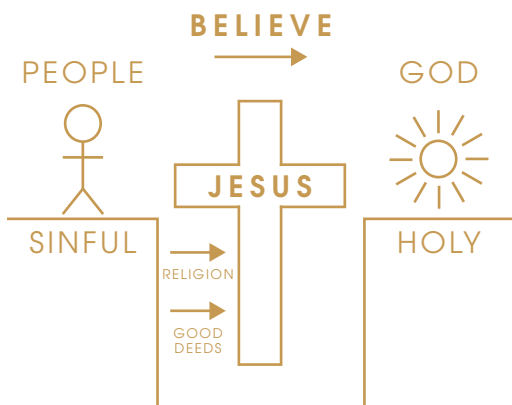
Romans 5:8



Everyone who believes in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins receives eternal life. To believe in Jesus means that you no longer try to earn God’s approval through what you do, nor do you deny that you need forgiveness and salvation. Instead, you accept God’s free gift of eternal life.

“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”

John 5:24



## SHARING THE GOSPEL: THREE CIRCLES

In Christianity, the word “gospel” simply means the “good news” about Jesus - His life, death and resurrection. The message that through belief in Jesus we can enter into a loving relationship with God, experiencing forgiveness and receiving the gift of eternal life, is good news, indeed!

Let’s look at a concise and understandable way to communicate the gospel to your friends and family who do not yet know Jesus.

**These three circles help us explain the gospel according to the Bible.**

**Read each section and the scripture verses that follow.**

### GOD’S DESIGN

Out of God’s great love, He created a world that was good. He made people to enjoy a deeply connected relationship with Him and to represent Him through our lives. (Genesis 1:26-28, 31) As a loving Father, He communicated boundaries to protect us and to allow us to fully enjoy our relationships with Him and with other people (Genesis 2:15-17).

### BROKENNESS

Yet, when we look around our world, brokenness and evil are evident everywhere - war, famine, disease, corruption. If we are honest, we also see brokenness and evil inside ourselves - deceit, hatred, greed, lust. This is because we have rejected God’s design and chosen to follow our own way. Our rejection of God and His ways is what the Bible calls sin. (Romans 3:23) Our sin results in separation from God which the Bible calls death. (Romans 6:23a) Unless our sin is forgiven, we will remain separated from God forever.

### JESUS

God does not want to leave us in our sin and brokenness!

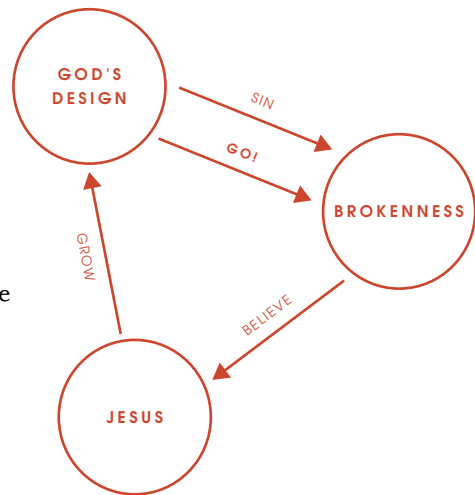
God graciously provided a way to forgive our sin and to freely give us eternal life - a life connected to God both now and forever. (Romans 6:23b; John 17:3)

God’s only Son Jesus died in our place. He took upon Himself the penalty that we deserve because of our sin. Then, Jesus rose from the dead, and forever defeated the power of sin and death. (Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5)

### BELIEVE

We respond to Jesus by believing in Him for the forgiveness of our sin.

To believe in Jesus means that you no longer try to earn God’s approval through what you do, nor do you deny that you need forgiveness and rescue. Instead, you accept God’s free gift of eternal life. Belief or faith is simply being convinced or persuaded that something or someone is trustworthy (John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9).



Everyone who believes in Jesus is forgiven of their sin and receives eternal life. We can now know God personally and experience the life we were designed to live (John 3:16-17).

**Which circle or arrow in the diagram best represents your life right now? Have you put your trust (believed) in Jesus alone to be reconciled to God?**

#### POSSIBLE ANSWERS AND NEXT STEPS:

**“Yes.”**

Ask: “Tell me about that. When and how did that happen for you?”

Try to discern if the person is trusting in anything other than Christ alone.

Move to Grow and Go

**“No, but I want to.”**

Affirm their decision to believe and help them to tell God in prayer of their belief in Jesus.

Example: “Thank you God for loving me by sending your Son Jesus to die for me. I believe in His life, death and resurrection to rescue me from my sin and spiritual death. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me the free gift of eternal life.”

Welcome them to the Family of God!

“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” 1 John 5:13

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

Move to Grow and Go

**“Not Sure” / “Not Yet” / “No.”**

Ask: “What is keeping you from trusting in Jesus?”

Try to discern their willingness or unwillingness to believe.

For those willing, help answer their questions if possible.

For those unwilling, offer to pray for them and talk further at another time.

#### GROW

Everyone who believes in Jesus should then grow in their relationship with God. We grow by knowing God more deeply and living more like Him personally.

We begin to know Him and we become like Him by following His way of living (Ephesians 4:15).

#### GO

Followers of Jesus have the great calling and opportunity to go into the broken world to share the love of God and the good news of the gospel message (Matthew 28:19-20).

## DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY

Discovery Bible Study is an easy and meaningful way to read the Bible with friends in your life who do not know Jesus. The simple practice consists of reading a section of scripture and answering five basic questions. The goal is to facilitate an encounter between God's truth and your friend's heart. Be praying for God to reveal Himself to your friend through His Word.

Choose a passage of scripture, read it aloud (1-2 times).

Ask someone to retell it in their own words.  
Answer these five questions:

1. What does this passage teach about God?
2. What does this passage teach about people or myself?
3. What stands out most in this passage?
4. Since God's word is true, how should I change as a result? What will I do in response to this passage?  
Consider the following:
  - Is there an example for me to follow?
  - Is there a sin for me to avoid?
  - Is there a command for me to obey?
  - Is there a promise for me to claim?
  - Is there a challenge for me to face?
5. With whom am I going to share this passage and what I am learning from the Bible?

### Suggested Passages

Read through these 4 Core Passages about Jesus:

- John 3:1-21 (You must be born again)
- Mark 2:1-12 (Jesus has authority to forgive)
- Luke 7:36-50 (Forgive much/Love much)
- Luke 18:7-14 (Self-righteous/irreligious)

Read through the book of John.

## Creation to Christ

Read through these passages for bigger picture of the Biblical narrative.

- Genesis 1:1-25
- Genesis 2:4-24
- Genesis 3:1-13
- Genesis 3:14-24
- Genesis 6:5-8
- Genesis 6:9-8:14
- Genesis 8:15-9:17
- Genesis 12:1-8, 15:1-6, 17:1-7
- Genesis 22:1-19
- Exodus 12:1-28
- Exodus 20:1-21
- Leviticus 4:1-35
- Isaiah 53
- Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-20
- Matthew 3; John 1:29-34
- Matthew 4:1-11
- John 3:1-21
- John 4:1-26, 39-42
- Luke 5:17-26
- Mark 4:35-41
- Mark 5:1-20
- John 11:1-44
- Matthew 26:17-30
- John 18:1-19:16
- Luke 23:32-56
- Luke 24:1-35
- Luke 24:36-53
- John 3:1-21

# spiritual practices

## PRAYER OF EXAMEN

The Examen is prayerful reflection on the events of your day in order to detect God's presence and activity in your life. This type of prayer was developed by Ignatius of Loyola in the 1500s. Its regular practice helps us to both grow in communion with God and in awareness of the motives, desires, struggles, and opportunities in our daily lives. The Examen is often practiced at the end of the day using a journal to record thoughts.

### 1. **Become aware of God's presence.**

- Take a few deep breaths.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to increase your awareness of God's promised presence with you.

### 2. **Review your day. Consider a few of the following prompts:**

- For what am I most grateful today? For what am I least grateful?
- When did I give and receive the most love today? When did I give and receive the least love today?
- When did I sense the deepest connection with God, others and myself? When did I have the least sense of connection?
- What was the most life-giving part of my day? What was the most life-thwarting part of my day?
- When was I aware of living out of the fruit of the Spirit? When was there an absence of the fruit of the Spirit?

### 3. **Pay attention to your emotions.**

- List a few feelings that were present throughout the day: Embarrassment? Fear? Elation? Contentment?
- What was the context of these emotions?

### 4. **Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.**

- Ask the Holy Spirit to bring one element of your day to mind. Focus specifically on that experience.
- Sit with it, listening in prayer, and journal what you sense God is speaking.

### 5. **Look toward tomorrow.**

- As you look toward tomorrow, what emotions or feelings are present: Excitement? Anxiety? Dread? Delight?
- Allow your expectation of the coming day to form a prayer to God.

## PRAY MODEL

**PRAY\*** is a simple acronym to help frame your time of prayer.

### P - PAUSE

- Take a deep breath and center your mind and heart on God's presence with you.
- Don't rush; be still and sit quietly with Him.
- Slowly let go of distractions surrounding you and focus on the nearness of God.

Silence and stillness reorient our minds and hearts to pray from a place of love, joy and peace.

“But as for me, the nearness of God is good for me; I have made the Lord God my refuge,” **Psalm 73:28**

### R - REJOICE

- Begin praising God for who He is and for how He loves His good creation; the natural world, all people and you.
- Thank Him for specific things in your life, family, church, community and the world.
- Acknowledge your identity as a “gift recipient” of the abundant grace of God.

“For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.” **John 1:16**  
“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.” **Psalm 150:6**

### A - ASK

- Tell God what is on your heart and mind.
- Ask Him for what you need and want.
- Cast your burdens upon Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:6-7).
- Listen to Him as He reveals His heart to you as well.
- Try keeping a list of people and specific areas of your life that you are praying about.

Prayer is a conversation of talking and listening; communion and communication.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” **Philippians 4:6**

### Y - YIELD

- Finish your prayers with a heart posture of surrender; trusting in His love for you.
- Try opening your hands, palms up, as an outward expression of your inward desire.

Jesus is our great example of both asking God for His deepest needs and of yielding the outcome to the Father's will.

“And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.'”  
**Matthew 26:39**

# additional study resources

## ONLINE RESOURCES

netbible.org | cross references, word studies  
biblestudytools.net | word studies  
blueletterbible.org | word studies  
planobiblechapel.org/soniclight | commentary  
bestcommentaries.com | commentary database

*Grace Bible Church does not always agree with the views of these commentaries. These are good tools to help understand hard passages, but the particular theological views reflect the author of the commentary and not those of Grace Bible Church.*

## DISCIPLESHIP/BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

*Living By the Book* by Howard Hendricks and Charles Swindoll  
A more in-depth book on how to study the Bible using the tools discussed in this packet.

*The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert Coleman  
A highly motivational analysis of Jesus' own principles of evangelism and discipleship.

*The Lost Art of Disciple Making* by Leroy Eims  
This practical resource will give you a detailed structure to follow and great content to cover as you begin to disciple a new believer.

*A Survey of Bible Doctrine* by Charles Ryrie  
An easy-to-read, relatively short systematic theology primer that you can walk a new believer through to ground them in the faith.

*Rooted* by Grace Bible Church, College Station, TX  
Nine conversations that establish a new believer with foundational truths and practices to follow Jesus for a lifetime. <https://www.grace-bible.org/resources/bible-study/46/rooted>

FIND MORE RESOURCES AT [GRACE-BIBLE.ORG](https://www.grace-bible.org)

