

BRIARCLIFF CHURCH
Small Group Study Guide: Ephesians
Week of October 15 (Week 7)
Ephesians 3:14-21



REVIEW OF CHAPTER TWO

We just finished studying Ephesians 2 and saw that it has two major divisions with similar structure and thought. Both halves of Ephesians 2 begin with a description of life without Christ: dead (vv. 1-3) and separated (vv. 11-12). Then in both cases we have the great reversal: “But ... God” (v. 4) and “But now” (v. 13). In the first half of Ephesians 2 - verses 1-10, Paul’s main argument is that despite the depth and darkness in which we lived, God raised us up to the heavenly heights by grace through faith. In the second half - verses 11-22, Paul addresses the Gentiles specifically by pointing out how alienated they were from God and from His people - the Jews. Paul reminds the two hostile communities that in Christ they are now one new humanity, and they are built as a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Paul’s emphasis in the second half of Ephesians 2 is on the “oneness” of the two groups of people.

BIG IDEA

Unity in the body of Christ comes through the knowledge of the power of Christ’s love and demonstrating it toward each other.

OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

Paul began his prayer in Eph. 3:1-13 in view of what he said in Eph. 2:11-22, but he diverted to another topic - the mystery of the church. Now he picks up his prayer in Eph. 3:14-21 connecting to the truth he elaborated on in Eph. 2:11-22. The Jewish and Gentile believers need no longer be at enmity with each other (2:15). Therefore, Paul prays that the unity that was theirs spiritually might be realized experientially in their relationship with one another. With that in mind, Paul prays for four truths that John Stott likes to think of as “a staircase by which he climbs higher and higher in his aspiration for his readers”. The four elements of Paul’s prayer are strength (v. 16), love (v. 17), knowledge (v. 18), and fullness (v. 19) (Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*. 134).

OBSERVING THE TEXT

Starting with God

1. What do you understand about the God (Trinity) - his character, nature, and work, in Ephesians 3:14-21?

CONNECTING WITH OTHER TEXT

7. In Philippians 4:19, Paul promises that God will provide for us according to his “riches,” just as he prays in Ephesians 3:16. What kinds of riches is Paul alluding to in both places? What types of blessings for God’s people is he concerned with?
8. Read Romans 8:38-39. What language does Paul use in those verses that is similar to the language you have been studying from Ephesians 3:18-19? What truths about God’s love for his people is he seeking to explain in both places?

APPLYING THE TEXT

1. What does Paul’s example teach you about how your prayer life should be?
2. In verse 17 Paul prays that “Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.” The idea of “dwelling” in this passage is for “Christ to be at home” in our hearts. In other words, that Christ is the controlling factor in our attitudes and conduct. How is Christ dwelling in your heart?
3. Being filled with the fullness of God—godly character, is directly related to how rooted and grounded we are in Christ’s love. As we consider the unity of our church, how are we reflecting the fullness of God in our lives?

PRAYER

PRAYER GUIDE

October 15, 2023

Read Ephesians 3:14-21

Paul continues his prayer for the Ephesians that he began in Chapter One. His first prayer is for believers to *know* the power he has given; the second is for them to *use* it. Make a commitment to use his divine power that is in you. Remember, it is released by faith.

Monday: ¹⁴ *For this reason I bow my knees before the Father.* This is more than physical posture but speaks of the heart—deep humility and intensity. Let your first act of prayer be bowing before the Father in total submission. Write out your prayer of submission.

Tuesday: ¹⁶ *that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.* Think for a moment about this: Even though you may be weak, you can pulsate with divine power. What strength do you need? Write your prayer of asking for his divine power to work through you for his glory.

Wednesday ¹⁷ *so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith: rooted and grounded in love.* *Dwell* means to allow Christ to be totally at home in your life, free to move anywhere he wishes. What areas of your life would be embarrassing for Jesus to dwell—TV room, hall closet, bedroom, etc? Make a list and clean house for Jesus to fully dwell.

Thursday: ²⁰ *Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.* Take a moment to wrap your head around that! Now, write your prayer. Ask and think! Remember, *he is able to do far more abundantly.* Ask God for help in not asking too small.

Friday: ²¹ *to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations.* How can you be a part of the church in bringing glory to Jesus? How can you encourage others to do the same? Do it today!! Also, write down the name of people that are not a part of the church and pray for them.

For more resources, visit www.briarcliff.church/ephesians