

# LEADERS GUIDE

## ► WELCOME TO THE LEADERS GUIDE

This guide is designed to be a tool for you as you lead your small group through the book of Ephesians. For each study you will potentially find 4 categories of tools:

- Notes - These are general notes on that section or tips on leading.
- Launch Questions - These questions have two purposes. They are questions that anyone can answer (non-believer, new believer, mature believer) to help the whole group begin engaging in discussion. They are also designed to help the group begin thinking about the specific topic the passage will deal with.
- Discussion Questions - This is the meat of the guide and includes mostly observation and meaning questions to walk your group through learning the passage.
- Summary Questions - These questions help the group come to a full understanding of the passage and give you a test to determine whether they understand the passage well or not.
- Application Questions - These questions will help your group members actually wrestle with what the text means for their lives. These are essential.

It is your job as a leader to make use of these tools in a way that fits your group. Based on maturity, some groups will need to go through their own study guide each week before they arrive. Other groups may be less mature and will just read and discuss the passage when they arrive each week. Some weeks you will have more time than others for discussion. This may leave more or less time for conversation and require you to filter certain questions out. It is your job to walk in the Spirit and make these decisions.

One final note. This guide is not designed to be a crutch for your own study of the word. The best way to be prepared each week is to study the passage well yourself. It is hard to help others study and apply the Bible if you have not taken the time to study it yourself and apply it to your own life.

Lead well!



# CONTEXT GUIDE

## ➤ NOTES

- This lesson is designed to help your group with the context of Ephesians by looking at Paul's first visit there recorded in Acts 19 and to help your group begin to get a basic understanding of the structure of Ephesians as a whole.
- As your group dives into the text for the first time this week, you want to balance beginning studying the bible with your group but at the same time thinking about those in your group that are new to the practice of bible study. Keep in mind that many will be intimidated by or simply feel uninterested in this endeavor. Your goal is to make it approachable and engaging. Having them turn in pairs to answer many of the questions can be helpful here.

## ➤ ACTS 19 DISCUSSION

- Have someone read Acts 19 outloud for the group.
  - Ask, what stood out to you as you read Acts 19? Let them discuss (this doesn't have to be long). Here are some things you can make sure they see.
    - Paul spent a long time with the Ephesians. He really cared about them. He probably knew the people there and their culture well.
    - There was a significant conflict between the Ephesians culture and Christian beliefs.
    - He saw some pretty radical life changes in the people there. It says they burned 50,000 silver pieces worth of books!
    - Though Paul spent a long time in Ephesus and saw a very fruitful ministry there, he also saw intense persecution there.

## ➤ LAUNCH

- Spend a good amount of time letting members of your group get to know each other. This is key in the early weeks of your group. This can be with casual unstructured time at the beginning or forced fun/ice breaker questions.
- After they have gotten to know each other a little more, in groups of 3 or 4 have your group answer the following question: What has been your experience with the Bible in the past? [Give them a few minutes to discuss.]
- Regardless of your experience of the Bible in the past know that our time in Ephesians this semester is going to be awesome. There will be plenty of opportunities for you to learn and grow a ton. Let's dive in.



# CONTEXT GUIDE

## ► BIG PICTURE DISCUSSION

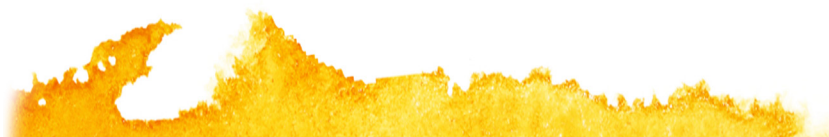
- Tell them that to understand any book, it is helpful to know the main idea of the book and the general organization of the book. This is why there is a table of contents and an introduction at the beginning of most books. Attempting to understand a New Testament letter is no different. Let's consider the main idea and the general structure of the book for a bit.
- If they have read the book of Ephesians ahead of time, ask them how they would describe the structure of the book as a whole and let them discuss a bit. If they haven't, just skip to the next question.
- Explain to them that the book of Ephesians is essentially divided into two sections. The first three chapters and the second three chapters. To help us understand these two sections let's look at chapters 1 and 5 as representations of each of these sections.
- Ask them to briefly glance over the verbs in chapter 1 and compare them with the verbs in chapter 5. What patterns do you see in the verbs of 1 and 5? [The verbs in 1 are mostly past tense and about what God has done for us. The verbs in 5 are mostly imperatives (commands) about what we should do.]
- Explain that now we have looked at chapters 1 and 5 to understand the first and second halves of the book, we are going to figure out how these two sections relate.
- Ask them to read verse 4:1. What is 4:1 saying? How does verse 4:1 contribute to the structure of the whole book? [It is the connection between chapters 1-3 and 4-6. Because of all that God has done (Chapters 1-3, our calling), we should now live or walk in light of that fact (Chapters 4-6, our walking). You can sum up these idea with "calling" and "walking". You can point out the cover of the study if they have their own copies and let them know that is the theme of the book of Ephesians.]
- Now you want to help them begin to understand the importance of 1-3 and 4-6. Ask, what would happen if you just had 1-3, but not 4-6? [I would feel lost. I would know what God has done for me, but I wouldn't know what to do with it. It would be a self-centered faith. It wouldn't change me very much. I would constantly be asking, "so what?"]
- Ask, what would happen if you just had 4-6, but not 1-3? [I would feel burdened. I would have to obey all this stuff, but it wouldn't affect me. I would get burned out. I wouldn't actually interact with God. I would just try to do stuff in my own power. I would be a legalistic Pharisee.]



# CONTEXT GUIDE

## ➤ APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- Ask, “in your relationship with the Lord, do you tend to emphasize chapter 1-3 ideas more or chapter 4-6 ideas more?” Or another way to put it is, “Which are you quickest to minimize? Why do you think that is?” [Let them discuss.]
- You can wrap up with a time of prayer. Again being sensitive to those that might be uncomfortable. Have the group ask God to help them grow in their understanding of Ephesians this semester and to help them with the area they need to grow the most: 1-3 ideas or 4-6 idea.
- Finish by casting vision for next time and our dive into chapter 1.



# 1:1-14 GUIDE

## ► NOTES

- As your group dives into the text for the first time this week, your goal is twofold. You want to help them to begin to learn *how* to study the Bible *and* you want them to begin to *actually* study Ephesians. A number of questions that will help them study the Bible better have been written into the study. Most of these type of questions come from what is called “inductive Bible study.” It is basically a way of looking at a passage from a number of different lenses. (You can find all of these lenses/questions listed under Observation in the explanation of COMA at the beginning of your study guide.) A simple way to put it is, you want their eyes looking down at their Bibles a lot. Chapter 1 has a number of really long sentences and key words that are not always clearly understood. You want to help them see the main idea of the passage (all of God’s blessing towards believers), and understand what each of those blessings mean. Below are a number of questions that will help them to understand the passage and learn to observe and interpret the text well.

## ► LAUNCH

- Share about a time in your life that after receiving a gift you later realized the gift was actually better than you first thought. [Give them time to share.]
- Today we are going to dive into our first section of Ephesians and look at a passage where we learn that what we get from God is better than we often first think.

## ► DISCUSSION

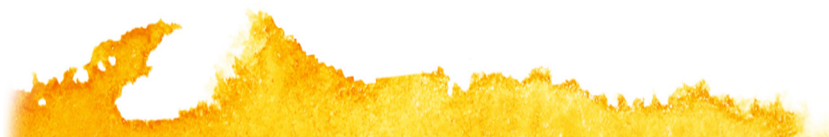
- Ask your group to read the passage silently. After they have finished, ask them, what stood out to you about the passage? [This doesn’t have to be a long discussion.]
- What would you say is the main idea of this section? [There is a good chance they won’t be able to answer this accurately. To help them get to the answer if they can’t get it, ask them to identify the main verb of the section. The main idea is that Paul is praising God for all the ways He has blessed us. “Blessed be,” is the key phrase/verb here. Blessed be God who has done all this stuff.]



# 1:1-14 GUIDE

## ➤ DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- If God's blessing is the main idea, let's look at all the ways God has blessed us. What are all the ways Paul says that God has blessed us? [He has given us every spiritual blessing. He chose us. He chose us to be holy and blameless before Him. He predestined us for adoption. He has blessed us with His grace. He has redeemed us, bought us back, through His blood. He has forgiven our trespasses. He lavished His grace upon us. He has made known to us the mystery of His will. All this has been His plan for a long time. He has a plan for us to unite all things in heaven and on earth. He has given us an inheritance. He sealed us with His Holy Spirit.]
- Discuss each blessing as a group, making sure everyone understands what each means. Here are some questions that will help you:
  - Do any of you guys have any experience with adoption? Either your family or someone you know. What is it like to be adopted? [Let them share. You might have a story ready to share to help bring this concept more alive in case no one has any experience with adoption.]
  - It says that we stand before God as holy and blameless. Think about this in your life now. How great would it be to stand before all your professors at the end of college and they say, "You were blameless. Here is your transcript with a 4.0!"? Or for your father at the end of his life to praise you for being a really great son or daughter? Or your boss praising you for perfect work? How would that feel? But what would it feel like to stand before God at the end of your life and have Him commend you?!
  - What does redemption mean? [Relational: restore a relationship. Financial: Make an account consistent with another. Greek word: buy something back. Jesus' death does each of these for us. His death makes our account consistent with God's. His blood buys us back and restores us to relationship with Him.]
  - Some follow up questions you can ask are: Why was His blood necessary for us to be bought back? Why did God choose this way? What were we bought out of? Why did we even need to be redeemed? What did we need to be redeemed from?



# 1:1-14 GUIDE

## ➤ DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- What is the biggest inheritance you have heard of someone receiving? How great do you think an inheritance from God is? What is this inheritance? What exactly is it that we inherit? (Include possessions and conditions/status)
- Note: predestination can be a touchy subject with some people. You may find it helpful to ask this question: Why is it good news that God chose us before we were even born? [This means I don't have to earn my salvation! This also means that if I didn't earn my salvation, I can't lose it either! This question and answer are helpful for helping your group members to see that predestination is ultimately good news.]
- After they have identified all of the various blessings and everyone generally understands them, you can ask them, which blessing seems most significant for your life?
- Ask them, what repeated phrases or ideas do we see in the passage? [Let them share a couple answers.]
- After you have let them share a couple repeated phrases say, "The phrases 'in Him' or 'in Christ' appears 9 times in this passage. Additionally, many of the blessings seem to have this phrase attached. Why is this phrase significant? What does it mean to be in Christ?" [Paul is appealing to our unity with Christ. We don't just get blessing arbitrarily. We get blessing as we are united with Jesus because he is the perfectly obedient son that has actually earned God's blessing. It's like being in someone famous' entourage and getting perks for being with them.]

## ➤ SUMMARY

- How would you summarize this section? [This is a good litmus test as to whether they understand that passage or not. The answer should be something along the line of, "God is worthy of praise for all the ways he blesses us through Christ."]

## ➤ APPLICATION

- If Christ is the source of all of God's blessing for us, it would be helpful to consider what we look to outside of Christ for blessing. What do you look to outside of Christ as a source of blessing in your life? [Be prepared with examples from your own life.]
- Which promise most seems like good news to you? What would it look like to trust God that this promise is true this week?



# 1:15-23 GUIDE

## ► NOTES

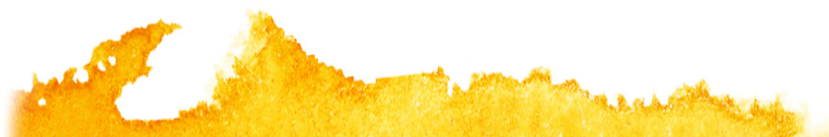
- Again as a leader, you are helping your group both to learn *how* to study the bible and to *actually* study the bible. This week you can help them to learn to break down sentence structure! It sounds boring, but it is essential to any reading, especially the Bible!
- If your group has done their study guide, you can just talk through their outline of the passage. If not, you can practice breaking down a complex sentence during your time.

## ► LAUNCH

- What is the most powerful thing you have personally witnessed or experienced? Maybe you rode in a really fast car. Maybe you experienced a gravity defying ride at an amusement park. Maybe you rode on a really big boat. You could have observing a rocket launch.
- Well today we are going to consider God's power and where that power is directed.

## ► DISCUSSION

- Have them read the passage silently.
  - You can use the the following questions to prompt discussion of the passage. Most of them are straight from the study guide.
  - Paul speaks using a number of metaphors and spiritual terms.
    - What does it mean to be given a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him?
    - What does it mean to have the eyes of your heart enlightened?
    - What are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints?
    - What does it mean to be seated at His right hand in the heavenly places?
    - What does it mean to be above all rule, authority, power, dominion, name, and across ages?
    - What does it mean to put something under His feet?
    - What does it mean to be given headship over all things to the church?
  - The questions in the study guide about Paul's big idea and power are linked. One of Paul's big ideas is that this incredible power, which God has used to do crazy things in Jesus, has also been directed at us. This is huge because this power seems really strong. Paul will go on to connect this idea more in the next section, as we will see with the opening "and" of 2:1. So you can ask your group, "what is Paul getting at in this section about power?"





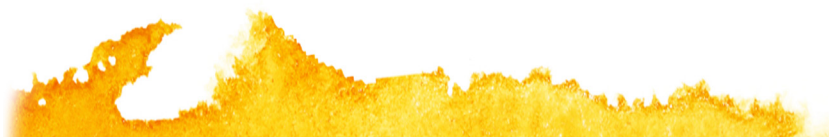
# 1:15-23 GUIDE

## ➤ SUMMARY

- Now that we understand the individual parts, how can we summarize or break down this massive sentence? [After having spent time in verses 2-15 explaining all that God has done, he is filled with joy and so he prays. He praises God and then asks God for several things. Specifically he asks that God would “give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him,” “have the eyes of their hearts enlightened,” so that they would “know the hope and inheritance to which we have been called,” and allow them to “know the power directed towards them.” He is praying that they would have a full understanding of all that God has done for them!]

## ➤ APPLICATION

- What is an area of your life where you tend to not believe God is working? What would it look like for you to trust God’s power in that area this week? [Answers will vary here. You can help them to see all the ways that God works in power. He gives us power to overcome sin. He gives us strength and creativity. He gives us power to love those that are hard to love. He works His power in our circumstances. Finally, we can trust that He is always working His power out in love for us.]
- This chapter, as well as teaching us about what God has done for us, gives us a glimpse into Paul’s prayer life. Which of the things that he prays for the Ephesians would you want to begin to pray for your own life? What strikes you most about his prayers? How can your own prayer life deepen based on what you see in Paul’s life?



# 2:1-10 GUIDE

## ► NOTES

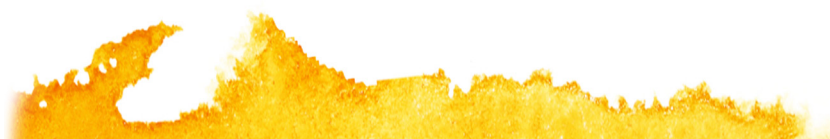
- This is a great passage for making sure your group is wrestling with the flow of Paul's entire argument.
- This is also a great passage for helping those in your group that don't have a basic understanding of the Gospel.
- Lastly, it is a great passage to help believers understand that they also need the Gospel.

## ► LAUNCH

- The main message of Christianity is often said to be good news. What would you say is that news? Why is it good?
- Regardless of how confident or unconfident you felt answering those two questions we are going to look at a passage that helps us really fill out our understanding of the good news of Christianity.

## ► DISCUSSION

- Have them read the passage silently and use the follow questions for discussion.
- Help them understand the flow of Paul's three sentences. These specific questions will help you towards this end:
  - What is the main contrast of the passage? [But.]
  - If "but" is the main contrast, what is being contrasted in this passage? [Our state before God acted in our lives and our current condition.]
  - How does Paul describe our state before God acts in our lives? [We were dead spiritually. We had no relationship with God. This was caused by three sources of evil. 1. Our own personal sinful desires. 2. Other people's sin against us (culture at large). 3. Satan's schemes against us. We were hopeless. Paul ends with the fact that we were objects of wrath!!!]
  - What is true of God's character that brings change? [He is rich in mercy, and He loves us.]
  - What three verbs does Paul use to describe what God has done for us? [Made alive, raised, and seated. You can ask them to talk about the meaning/significance of each. We were dead relationally relative to God so not we are back in relationship with Him. Were were seperated from him now we are raised to be with him. We are seated at the table with him an intimate and permanent way.]



# 2:1-10 GUIDE

## ► DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- How would you define grace? What are you saved from? How would you define faith? [Make sure your group understands each of these concepts. This maybe the most important concept in the whole book. Grace is a free gift. It is getting something you don't deserve and avoiding a punishment you do deserve. We are saved from sin; more specifically we are seperated from the penalty of or sin which is seperation and judgement from God. Faith is putting hope in something. You put your hope in a pilot to fly you from one city to another. Or you put your hope in a chair when you sit in it. You put your hope in Jesus' righteousness rather than your own to give you right standing before God.]
- 2:1 begins with the word "and", showing it somehow relates to what Paul has just said in Ephesians 1:15-23. What was Paul's message in Ephesians 1:15-23? What is his message in Ephesians 2:1-10? How does the idea he began in Ephesians 1 continue in Ephesians 2:1-10? [You are trying to help them see that the language of "made alive", "raised" and "seated" was used before in 1:20. The power that God used to raise Jesus from the dead and put Him above everything is the same power He also directs towards us! That's an incredible power to have directed towards us.]
- The last question in the study guide is crucial to understanding the book of Ephesians.
  - Ask them, "Who is Paul writing this letter to?" [You can point them towards 1:1 if they need help here. The saints...Christians!]
  - Ask them, "If Paul is writing this letter to Christians, why does he feel the need to explain such basic truth about the good news of what God has done for us? Isn't the news of what God has done for us in Jesus something we share with non-believers?" [The idea that they need to see here is that, though we are believers, on a daily basis we don't actually believe God has done all these things for us. Many think... God has blessed me and Jesus is my Savior, but functionally, I treat money, a relationship, power, status, etc. as my functional saviors, and I don't live as if these blessings from God are true. Or on the flip side I wallow in despair as if I have no blessing or savior.]

## ► APPLICATION

- How do you not believe the good news of what God has done for you in Christ? What are your functional saviors? Or where do you see despair and a lack of the real savior in your life?
- What would it look like to trust Christ as your Savior this week instead?



# 2:11-22 GUIDE

## ► NOTES

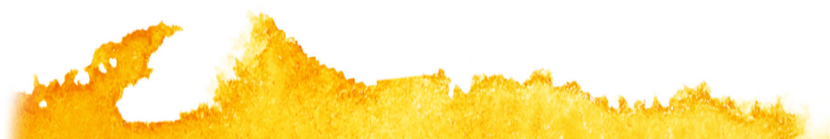
- This section is a great section to introduce the practice of using outside resources to study a passage. Namely you can introduce your group to a Bible dictionary. A simple one to use is: [biblehub.com/dictionary](http://biblehub.com/dictionary).
- This section mirrors the structure of 2:1-10 in that there is a before and after split. You were this... and now God has done this...
- The main thrust of this section is not our individual salvation, as emphasized in 2:1-10 rather the corporate benefits of being in the household/kingdom of God. You want your group to see the promises that they are now able to put their hope in.

## ► LAUNCH

- Share about time you were an outsider or you felt like an outsider. What benefits did you miss out on by not being on the inside?
- Today we are going to look at a passage that considers what it means to be an insider and outsider relative to God.

## ► DISCUSSION

- Have them read the passage silently and use the follow questions for discussion.
- What contrasts do you see in this passage? What is similar about the contrasts of this passage with the one we studied previously (Ephesians 2:1-10)? [You are trying to help them see that Paul is again reminding them what their life was like before God acted in their lives and what God has done for them.]
- This passage is challenging in that there are a number of terms that are spiritual or biblically historical in nature. Let's talk about these to help us understand the passage more. You can assign each of these questions to a different person/pair. They can use [biblehub.com/dictionary](http://biblehub.com/dictionary) for spiritual topics and simply Wikipedia for the non-spiritual topics.
  - Who are the Gentiles? [Non-jews.]
  - What is a commonwealth? [The word "commonwealth" means "public welfare general good or advantage." It generally refers to a political state as a whole.]
  - What is the commonwealth of Israel? [The nation of Isreal and all the common blessings they shared as the people of God.]



# 2:11-22 GUIDE

## ► DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- What are the covenants of promise? There are a number of covenants in the Bible, but these are a few that hold significant promises:
  - Abrahamic covenant? [Land and blessing for all people through Jesus.]
  - Mosaic/Old covenant? [Blessing for obedience.]
  - Davidic covenant? [A king will reign forever.]
  - New covenant? [A new heart and freedom from sin.]
- After you have answered these questions, you can continue helping them understand the passage by asking these questions:
  - Who is it that is near? [Jews.]
  - Who is it that is far off? [Gentiles.]
  - Why did both groups need to be reconciled? [Jews were given the Law as a condition to right relationship with God. They failed at keeping the Law. Gentiles were outside the community with access to God, and therefore never had a shot at a right relationship. So both had sins that needed to be paid for and a relationship that needed reconciling. We see this idea in the theme of peace. This is a repeated word in the passage. Jews and Gentiles now have peace with each other because they are now in the same family. And both groups have peace with God because our sins have been paid for.]
- What promises and benefits do we have now that we have been made a part of the household of God? [We have a King who will return to set all things right. We will have a physical place/home in His kingdom. We are insiders. We have a family. We are no longer strangers and aliens. We have the full rights of citizenship. We have access to God.]

## ► SUMMARY

- Why is it significant that we have been brought into the household of God?

## ► APPLICATION

- Which of the promises that we now have seems most significant to you? Why?
- In what situations in life do you find yourself feeling as if these things are not true? For instance, when do you feel like you don't belong? In what situations in life do you feel like you have no hope? When do you feel the most alone?
- What would it look like to trust that Jesus has brought you into the family/kingdom of God in those moments? How would your life look different?



# 3:1-21 GUIDE

## ► NOTES

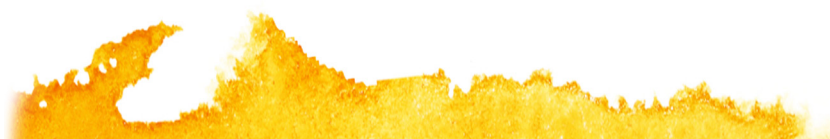
- From a basic reading comprehension perspective, this isn't a particularly difficult passage. You just need to help your group see the basic structure; namely, where Paul breaks off and where he picks his thought back up again.
- Though this isn't a difficult passage, it does close out the foundational first half of Ephesians. At this crucial place, Paul stresses an important point. Paul is essentially praying for the Ephesians because, though they trusted in the Gospel as believers, they still need to grow in understanding and believing it. This is true of your group as well.
- To help your group wrestle with the ways they still need to grow in understanding and believing the Gospel, there is an included article you can read with your group or give them as homework. It will greatly help the passage come alive for them.

## ► LAUNCH

- If you were going to summarize the gospel how would you summarize it? Turn to your neighbor and take turns sharing how you would summarize the Gospel with each other.
- If that is how you would summarize the gospel, would you say that the Gospel is simple or complex? [Let them discuss. There is no right answer here because as we will see in the passage the Gospel is both simple and complex.]
- Well today we are going to consider the simplicity and the complexity of the Gospel.

## ► INTRODUCTION

- Have them read the passage silently.
- The first question in the study guide mentions that Paul seems to break off mid-sentence in verse 1 and asks where he picks his thought up again? Turn to your neighbor and discuss where you think he picks his thought back up and why. [Give them a few minutes to discuss then ask what they came up with. Help them to see that Paul pick his thought again in verse 14. Note the "for this reason" repetition.]
- Ok so that structure means verse 2 through 13 is bracketed by a big parenthesis and helps us understand the whole passage. I want us to divide into smaller groups to discuss each of these sections. [Give them a moment to break into groups.]



# 3:1-21 GUIDE

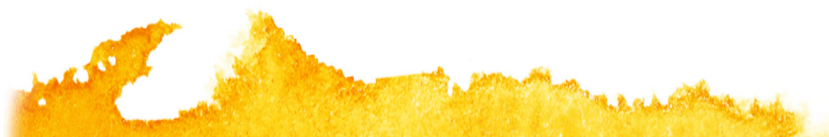
## ► DISCUSSION

### • 1st Section (vs. 2-13)

- In your groups, spend the next few minutes answering these three questions: How would you subdivide the section? What are the key phrases/words? What stands out to you about the section? [Let them investigate in their groups for a few minutes then discuss their answers with everyone.]
- Now, in your groups, spend the next few minutes answering these three questions: What are the key words and phrases in this section? What all do we learn about the mystery in this section? What is it? What is Paul's role relative to the mystery? [Let them investigate in their groups for a few minutes then discuss their answers with everyone.]
- How would you summarize this section? [Let them investigate in their groups for a few minutes then discuss their answers with everyone. Here is a good summary: The mystery of the Gospel, that the Gentiles now get blessing along with the Jews, has been revealed AND Paul has been called to make that mystery known.]

### • 2nd Section (vs. 14-21)

- What is Paul doing in this section? [Praying.]
- In your groups answer these two questions: What does Paul specifically pray? What stands out to you about the section? [Let them investigate in their groups for a few minutes then discuss their answers with everyone.]
- How would you summarize this section? [Let them investigate in their groups for a few minutes then discuss their answers with everyone. Here is a good summary: Paul prays that the Ephesians will understand all of the dimensions of the Gospel.]



# 3:1-21 GUIDE

## ► SUMMARY

- How is this prayer connected with the previous section? [It is because the Gospel has been revealed and Paul has been called to proclaim it that he prays.]
- How would you summarize the whole chapter? [Let them investigate in their groups for a few minutes then discuss their answers with everyone. Here is a good summary: Because the Gospel has been revealed, Paul prays that the Ephesians will understand all of the dimensions of the Gospel. Essentially he prays we understand ALL of the good news implications of our access, membership, inheritance, and life in the body.]
- Paul talks about love, the mystery, and the Gospel in this section. In what sense can these things be broad, long, high, and deep? [Let them discuss briefly. They don't have to fully get this concept yet as the article will help them understand it more fully.]
- To talk about this idea more and to finish up our time we are going to read a short article out of a book called Gospel Deeps that speaks to this idea.

## ► ARTICLE DISCUSSION

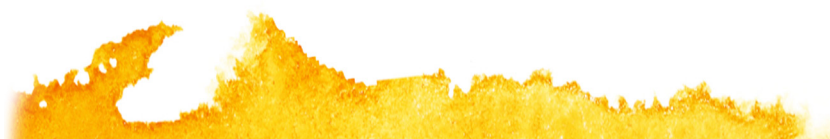
- [Have them read pages 17-25 and pages 28-29 of Gospel Deeps.]
- What is the author, Jared Wilson, getting at here?
- In what sense is the Gospel simple? In what sense is the Gospel complicated?
- How does this article shed light on Paul's prayer for the Ephesians?

## ► APPLICATION

- In what ways have you viewed the Gospel too simplistically?
- We have read about many different aspects of the good news of the Gospel in chapters 1 through 3 what aspect of that good news has stuck with the you most?

## ► PRAYER

- Spend some time in prayer, praying Paul's prayer for yourself and for those in your group. Pray that you would all be strengthened to comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.





# 4:1-16 GUIDE

## ► NOTES

- This chapter is a crucial chapter in our study of Ephesians because it is the turning point from calling to walking. The thrust of the studies from here on out will be to consider how we are told to walk *and* how the calling presented in chapters 1-3 supports that life.
- To start this section it is a good idea to review what has been studied so far.
- Essentially Paul is praying for the Ephesians because, though they have trusted in the Gospel as believers, they still need to grow in understanding and believing it.

## ► REVIEW

- What is the overarching theme and structure of Ephesians? [calling and walking; chapters 1-3 undergird 4-6]
- What all have we learned about our calling in chapters 1-3? [blessed, chosen, adopted, sealed, made alive, raised, seated, brought in, etc.]

## ► LAUNCH

- To get us started with this section, let's consider our university.
  - In what ways do you identify with or feel connected with other students at our university?
  - In what ways do you feel different or disconnected from other students at our university?
- Well, this week we are going to look at a passage that talks about the ways we are both similar and different as Christians.

## ► DISCUSSION

- Have them read the passage silently.
- Now that we are into the second half of Ephesians, what kind of verbs can we start to expect to see more of? [commands/imperatives]
- What are the imperative/commands) in this passage? [walk, grow]



# 4:1-16 GUIDE

## ► DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- Ok, let's look at walk first. We want to answer the question, "what does it mean to walk in a manner worthy of our calling?" To do that, let's break the question down.
  - First what does it mean to walk in a manner worthy of something? [To live in a way that is appropriate, fitting or becoming something.]
  - What is our calling? [God has called us to Himself. He has called us to salvation. This is chapters 1-3.]
  - Paul gives us a number of hints as to how our walk should match our calling when he lists humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, and maintaining unity. What truths has Paul proclaimed in chapters 1-3 that support these ways of walking? [Humility: Christ died for me; being dead is about the lowliest of all possible humble positions. Gentleness: He spoke peace to us. He lavished grace on us. In love he adopted us and treats us like children. The idea of children implies gentleness. Patience: Paul has twice used the formula "you were... but God..." If we were bad then he later blesses us, that presupposes his patience. In fact we weren't just bad, we were objects of wrath! He is clearly patient with us. Bearing: He bore our problems for us. He broke down in his flesh the hostility! He was rich in mercy and stayed with us. Unity: Christ united us with Israel and God. We are in Christ so we have been united with Him. We all have been given the Holy Spirit.]
- There are many reasons why our calling should dictate our walk. But there seems to be one aspect of our calling that Paul most wants to highlight as it affects our walk. What is it? [unity]
  - What does Paul want his audience to understand about unity? [Unity seems to find its foundation in the unity supplied by the Spirit. Paul seems to be emphasizing unity amongst believers; though many of these principles apply to our relationships with non-believers as well. The unity of the Spirit comes from this reality that though the Spirit is in all of us, He is still just one Spirit. We all share the same Spirit. Matching the reality of the sharing of the Spirit is our sharing of the same hope, Lord, faith, baptism, and God. We are united in one body with Christ as our head. Unity, when working properly, causes the body to grow up into maturity.]
  - In appealing to unity Paul nuances his discussion to suggest there is also diversity within the body of Christ. Though the body is united in origin, foundation, purpose, means, and identity there are different roles within the body of Christ.



# 4:1-16 GUIDE

## ► DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- What are each of these roles and how would you describe each? [Apostles are messengers of Christ and their roles includes most of the other roles. Prophets speak words/truth from God. Teachers communicate, explain, and help others apply truth. Evangelists share the good news with others. Shepherds care for, protect, and develop others.]
- Let's look at the second command: grow. Paul uses this second imperative to describe the goal of our unity and diversity. What does it mean to grow into Christ? [Our character becomes more like Christ's as our walk matches what He did for us. We come more under His headship; that is we trust and follow Him more. We are more stable since we are not unduly influenced by ideas that are not true. We stand firm in and live by truth.]

## ► SUMMARY

- Now that we have broken down each part of the passage, let's tie it all together.
  - Why is it important that we maintain unity and diversity within the body of Christ? What happens if we are united, but not diverse? What happens if we are diverse, but not unified?
  - How would you summarize what we have read? [Let multiple people answer. Here is a good summary: We are to live our lives in light of all that God has done for us, exercising our different giftings while remaining unified so that we may all grow spiritually mature in Christ.]

## ► APPLICATION

- Where are places in your life where you are least likely to be humility, gentle, patient, bearing with others, or maintain unity?
- What Gospel promise from chapters 1-3 do you need to believe to help you press into unity with other believers?
- What would your life look like this week if you trusted Christ to walk in light of your calling with humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with others, and maintaining of unity?
  - Give that God has shaped each of us differently for ministry, how is God calling you to live out your giftings in ministry?



# 4:17-32 GUIDE

## ► NOTES

- This section is another really helpful section in that it can help your group understand the book because it again makes heavy use of walk language the second word in the theme of our study. Again you are helping them to see how the good news of what God has done for us in Christ compels us to live differently.

## ► LAUNCH

- What is the biggest change you have witnessed in your own life? What was your life like before and after? What was the catalyst for the change?
- Well, today we are going to look at the how the Gospel brings about change in our lives.

## ► DISCUSSION

- Have them read the passage silently.
- This section again picks up the contrasts in previous sections. What is the primary contrast of this section? How is it similar the the contrasts in previous sections?
- Both the before and after deal heavily with what we think and know. What all do we learn about thinking and knowing in verses 17-24?
- To change the way we think Paul exhorts the Ephesians to put off their old selves and put on their new selves. What is your old self? What is your new self? How do you put one off and put the other on? [Help them study how the text actually answers these questions. The old is marked by deceitful desires. The new self like God in that it is righteous and holy. We put on the new self by renewing our minds.]
- In the second half of the passage (25-32) Paul goes on to describe in more detail how this new self is suppose to act. What all are we command to do in verses 25-32? [Speak truth with our neighbor. Be angry and do not sin. Let the thief no longer steal. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander and malice be put away from you. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another.]



# 4:17-32 GUIDE

## ► DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- A great sub-question you can ask them is: what is the difference between bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice? You can give them a few minutes to look up each of the words with a dictionary and compare the differences. It can be a convicting exercise as most people are able to personally relate to the nuances of each sin.
- For almost every command that Paul gives the Ephesians he backs it up with a reason. Why does he say is it appropriate for Christ to obey each of these commands? [Help them to see each of these and you can help point out where Paul talked about this before. Respectively: We are members one of another (2:19). We don't want to give the devil an opportunity (we were formerly were following him, 2:2). We should want to share with those in need (he has blessed up with every spiritual blessing, 1:3). We should give grace to others (he saved us by grace, 2:8). We have been seal by the Holy Spirit (1:13,14). It isn't stated by Paul inverse 31 but clearly God put away his wrath towards us (2:3,4). God in Christ forgave us (1:7).]

## ► APPLICATION

- The big focus of this section was on need for the Ephesians to not walking as the culture around them was walking but rather walking in light of all that God has done for them in Christ. How are you tempted to walk as the culture around you?
- Which of these command or commands is God calling you to walk in? How does the good news of what God has done apply to your situation?



# 5:1-21 GUIDE

## ► NOTES

- A significant chunk of this week's time can be on sharing. Maybe 40% on the text and 60% sharing personal experiences.
- This week if you are normally co-ed you will want to plan to meet separately.
- You will see it mentioned in the notes for the sharing time section but you need to be prepared to share openly about your experience with sexual sin, alcohol, or other addictions. You will set the tone for the group. If grace is true we can live in the light. They need this conviction modeled for them as you openly share about your sin.
- After your group has time to share be sure to remind them of the Gospel and help them with next steps. There are major problems if you exclude either.

## ► LAUNCH

- This week we are continuing our look at how we are to “walk” in light of our calling. Specifically we are going to look at some common addictions and temptations. To get us thinking about addictions let's read a short modern day parable.
- Read them the story of Rocky:  
Rocky is “the man.” You've met few students like him. He has great potential as a student leader. He is truly seeking to grow in his faith and has a strong desire to influence others. He is socially adept and well liked. This kind of key leader only comes along once every few years. Despite his leadership capabilities, Rocky has one seemingly minor problem. It's really a bad habit that he can't shake—Rocky is addicted to Charms Blow-Pops. While it started as a harmless pleasure, his habit is starting to extract a toll on his life. The cost of eating two-dozen Blow-Pops a day is adding up. A trip to the dentist reveals six cavities, which are not only painful, but expensive. Physically, his once chiseled frame is turning sloshy. What is more alarming is how his habit is beginning to affect his relationships. His roommates are getting increasingly annoyed at finding used Blow-Pop sticks all over their room. Every time Rocky tries to quit he gets irritable and angry. His friends notice that he is spending more and more time alone. Things hit rock bottom when Rocky is caught rummaging through his roommate's Dallas Cowboys piggy bank looking for change to support his fix. Humiliated, deflated and disillusioned Rocky comes to you for help. He relates to you that he's been keenly aware that his habit has become a real problem but he's been too embarrassed to talk about it with anyone. He says he's asked the Lord countless times to remove his compulsion, tried to memorize Scripture and



# 5:1-21 GUIDE

## ► LAUNCH CONTINUED

- even promised God he would completely swear off his sweet sensations. But while he might get a few days of freedom, nothing he's tried has brought lasting change. David prayed, "Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me" (Psalm 19:13). Unfortunately, this tongue-and-cheek story about Rocky illustrates an all too real experience for sincere believers. Like Rocky, many seeking Christ are frustrated, disillusioned and perilously close to despair because they are lumped up by habitual sins "that rule over them." And often these areas are kept hidden because of the fear of judgment and rejection.
- What strikes you most about this story? [Let them share. One thing you can help them to see is that most people identify with Rocky at some level. We have all had this kind of experience.]
- Well our passage today is going to help us consider how we can wrestle with the temptations of sexual immorality and alcohol.

## ► DISCUSSION

- Paul starts this section talking about our relationship with God. In the first two verses he list two commands. What two commands does he give the Ephesians? [Imitate God and walk in love.]
- What does Paul say our motivation for each of these commands is? [We are to imitate God because we are not only his children but beloved children. We are to walk in love because Christ gave himself up for us.]
- Ok so pretty easily we can see that we are to imitate God and walk in love. But Paul goes on to describe how this should play itself out in terms of our sexuality. To dive into this more let's look at all the commands that Paul gives to the church in Ephesus. What all does Paul tell the Ephesians to do and not to do in verses 3 through 14? [Divide them into groups and give them a few minutes to write down all the positive and negative commands. After the time is up pull them back together to discuss.]
- Let's dive a little deeper. Let's go back and look and not only what Paul commanded the church but why we are to obey each command. What reasons does Paul give for each of his commands? [Again give them time in groups to answer this questions and again pull them back together to discuss it.]



# 5:1-21 GUIDE

## ► DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- So we are starting to see how we are suppose to act as believers in terms of our sexuality. Let's see how else Paul exhorts the church. In verse 18 Paul encourages the Ephesians to not get drunk but rather to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This seems to hint at a connection between the two. To figure out what that connection might be answer the following question: what are the benefits of getting drunk? [Though this seems like a strange question coming from a bible study leader it is a helpful discussion. Answer can include: helps connect you with others, help you deal with stress, helps you forget pain, gives you confidence and makes you bolder, makes you happier, etc.]
- So if those are the benefits of getting drunk how might walking the Spirit provide us with the same things? [As we walk in he Spirit we are connect with other believers, we are given peace to deal with stress, we are given confidence and boldness, we are given joy, etc. You are trying to help them see that anything that can run to alcohol for they can find in the Holy Spirit but without all the negative consequences.]

## ► APPLICATION

- As we have seen Paul encourages the Ephesians to imitate God and love other. Specifically he encourages them to avoid sexual immorality to and walk in the Spirit rather than getting drunk. Let take some time to consider how we experience these and other temptations and addictions. What has been your experience with sexual immorality, drunkenness, drugs, or other addictions? [Here you need to set the tone. If you share openly then they will share openly. If you share for a short amount of time then they will only share for a short amount of time. This can be huge as a catalyst for community in your group. If you are vulnerable enough then you will find people sharing things they have never shared before with anyone! This can really help your group connect in a deep way and help people experience God's forgiveness and cleansing!]





# 5:1-21 GUIDE

## ► APPLICATION CONTINUED

- [After everyone has shared the impact of your response is huge! Thank everyone for having the courage to live transparently. Remind everyone that what was said here stays here. Then, in response to their sin, 2 things are essential. First remind them of the Gospel. In light of what they share they need to know they have been made clean by Christ, forgiven by Christ, and one day he will remove all of that sin from them. In the face of that sin Christ still loves them. Second you can help them think through next steps to take. Do they need to read a book on their addiction? Do they need to set up tighter boundaries? Do they need to setup an accountability partner in the group? Etc. Help them think through these things. Remember the Gospel meets you where you are at but it doesn't leave you where you are at.]

## ► PRAYER

- Finish up taking some time to pray. Have them pray through these topics:
  - Pray through the specific commands that Paul lists.
  - Thank God for his grace in forgiving them and cleansing them of their sin.
  - Have them pray about next steps they need to take to continue to grow in these areas.



# 5:22-6:9 GUIDE

## ► NOTES

- This chapter has a couple of topics that have the potential to cause strong reactions in your group members. Classically the sections on wives and husbands and the section on bondservants have the potential to be divisive. In the high value our culture puts on equality the topic of submitting and slavery can be difficult. It is ok if your group wants to discuss these topics. What you will need to be aware of is that many times these discussions are trying to answer questions that simply aren't in the text. It is your job as a leader to guide the discussion appropriately, letting the group discuss topics but moving the discussion on appropriately.
- To help you with the first topic the study eases into the topic of submitting by pointing out that we are all called to submit to one another. Ultimately God has given us all of these roles because he has our best intentions in mind and we can trust him.
- In terms of the second topic it is helpful to consider what the passage is trying to say and what its not trying to say. Paul's letter is not trying to make a comment on slavery as an institution. Complicating the issue is differences between modern day slavery and slavery in the first century, which are not addressed in the text. If you want to research this more use the dictionary at [biblehub.com](http://biblehub.com) and search slavery. What Paul is doing is suggesting a radical Gospel informed approach to treatment of slaves. In fact he uses the phrase, "do the same to them," suggesting that both should have a servants heart towards each other. This would have been radical for the day.

## ► LAUNCH

- What kind thing, that someone has done for you, impacted you the most?
- This week we are going to look at a passage that helps us consider how God's kindness towards us should affect our relationships.

## ► INTRODUCTION

- In this section Paul is going to layout proper relational dynamics for 3 relationship pairs. But before we look at that let's consider the last verse of the previous section. In 5:21 Paul says we are all to submit to one another. What does it mean to submit to one another? Why should this mutual submitting be a mark of Christian communities?
- What are the three relationships pairs listed in this section? [husbands/wives, parents/children, masters/servants]



# 5:22-6:9 GUIDE

## ► DISCUSSION

- **Husbands and Wives**

In the context of a marriage, what would it look like for a wife to submit to a husband?

- Paul describes how husbands should act towards their wives by comparing wives to us, the church. He describes at length what all Christ has done for us, the church. How does Paul describe all that Christ has done for us? [There is a lot here. He gave himself for the church. He sanctifies the church. He cleanses the church. He does all these things so the church will be holy and without blemish.]
- If Christ has done that for us, his church, what might it look like for husbands to love their wives?
- How might a husband loving his wife well affect a wife's respect for her husband and how might a wife respecting her husband affect a husband loving his wife? [A somewhat obvious answer, but love and respect feed each other. The respected husband loves better. The loved wife respects better.]

- **Parents and Children**

What does it practically look like to honor your parents? What is the difference between obeying and honoring? When is it appropriate to honor your parents, but not obey them? [High school students still under their parents roof and financial provision have to obey their parents. College graduates on their own still have to honor their parents, but are adults and are free to make their own decisions. College presents a bit of a grey in between where you are beginning to make your own decisions, but are still financially tied to your parents and therefore subject to their decisions. You can honor your parents by listening well to them when they give you advice or instruction. At the same time this doesn't mean you have to let them make your decisions for you. You have to walk with the Lord and ultimately obey your true heavenly father.]

- **Masters and servants**

Who are people that function as masters in your life? What does it look like for you to take on the role of a servant in that relationship? [Easy answers are professors and bosses in a work setting.]

- What was a time in your life when you had the opportunity to be a master over someone else? Were you a kind master or a hard master?



# 5:22-6:9 GUIDE

## ► SUMMARY

- If we were to summarize common themes across all three of these relationship pairs, what principles seem to characterize all these ways of acting towards others? [value of people, self-sacrifice, kindness, gentleness, mirroring Christ's relationship with us, etc.]
- Ok so these principles can serve to guide not just these 3 relationship pairs, but other relationships we have. What relationship, not listed here, do you live out on a regular basis? How might these general relational principles change the way you live out those relationships? [Dating relationships are an obvious one that would be good to make sure gets brought up. Others could include: roommate relationships, sibling relationships, teacher/student relationships, student organization leadership/members relationships, etc.]
- Now that we have considered how we might live out these relationships let's consider why we live them out and what motivates us to live them out. Paul lists a number of realities about God and Christ throughout the passage that impact how we are to live. What all do you see Paul say about God and Christ that seems to give direction to our behavior? [Christ is our head so we all have to submit. The big one is that Christ loved the church. Paul talks extensively about this in verses 25-27. God has made us one body in Christ. Though it isn't stated in this passage, it was clear in 2:3 that though God had every reason to be angry with us, He was loving and acted merciful towards us. We are promised blessing from Christ as we serve with a sincere heart. God is our master so we should be a kind master to others like He has been to us.]

## ► APPLICATION

- What relationship in your life needs change based on what we read today?
- What would it look like to live out our calling in your relationships?

## ► PRAYER

- Finish up taking some time to pray. Have them pray through these topics:
  - Thank God for loving us first and showing us what relationships are suppose to look like.
  - Confess any relationship where you need to pursue reconciliation.
  - Pray that God would help us to walk in relationships in light of our calling.



# 6:10-24 GUIDE

## ► NOTES

- This is your last week with your group in Ephesians. It is so great you have made it this far! Be encouraged.
- This week you are helping your group walk through the passage that describes the armor of God. This can be a challenging passage. For some this passage may seem like old hat and feel like something they are already familiar with. They will need help digging deeper in the passage and seeing new things they haven't before. Others may feel any talk of spiritual warfare is phoney and the analogy of armor cheesy. They will need help seeing the reality of the age we live in and the crucial need for the concepts beneath each piece of armor.
- As this is your last week you can end by celebrating with your group and praising God for all He has taught your group and done in their lives. To aid this there is a summary sheet in their study guide they can work through on their own. Encourage them to work through this. You can also encourage them to read Colossians now that they have finished Ephesians because much of Colossians will be familiar and come alive to them now that they have studied Ephesians in depth.

## ► LAUNCH

- Describe a time in your life you felt weak (emotional/mentally/physically).
- Describe a time you felt strong (emotional/mentally/physically).
- This week we are going to look at a passage that helps us find our strength in God.

## ► DISCUSSION

- In the opening verses of this section, Paul encourages the Ephesians to prepare for battle. In doing this he assumes a certain spiritual reality in verse 11 and 12. What is that spiritual reality? [Sin isn't just personal brokenness. Sin is also rebellion against God. This began in heaven when some of the angels led by Satan rebelled against God. This rebellion then spilled over into God's creation when Satan tempted Adam and Eve to sin. This ushered in a time of Satan's power and influence over the world and man. Christians have been freed from Satan's power but still find themselves in a state of conflict with all that oppose God and His kingdom.]
- What are ways you can see spiritual warfare in the world? And what are ways it is hard for you to believe this warfare is really going on?



# 6:10-24 GUIDE

## ► DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- In verse 10 and 13 Paul uses language that we are to “be strong” and “stand firm.” What is unique about the strength that he encourages here versus the strength the world would encourage us to have? [One follow up question you can ask to help your group is: what does it mean to be strong IN the Lord? The strength Paul encourages is different because the world tells us to be strong in our own power where Paul is encouraging the Ephesians to be strong in God’s power.]
- To help us figure out what it means to be strong in God’s power, let’s consider each piece of armor and how we put them on.
- Think about a man wearing a nice suit, what would happen if he didn’t have a belt to hold his pants up? What would happen to the rest of what he was wearing? [The belt doesn’t just look nice it hold his pants and shirt in place. The rest of his outfit falls apart with it.]
- How could truth function in a similar way to a belt? [Truth holds everything together in the sense that what we believe is how we put the world and our lives together. If we believe the wrong things the rest of our lives will quickly fall apart.]
- How do we put on truth? [We learn new things. We correct faulty things we wrongly believed. To do this we read our bibles. We sit under teaching at church. We study and memorize scripture.]
- Why was a breast plate significant in physical combat? [It protected your vital organs.]
- How would you define righteousness? How does righteousness protect us in a similar vital way to a breastplate? [Righteousness is defined by God’s own perfection in all that He is and does. Christians are commanded to pursue God like character in all that we do and so pursue righteousness. Ultimately though we are not righteous and need Jesus’ righteousness credited to us. So as we put on righteousness we are reminding ourselves that Jesus’ righteousness has been credited to us. We are also leaning on the Holy Spirit to help us begin living righteously. Doing so protects us from despair and having no righteousness or feeling the need to produce it on our own power. It also protects us from unrighteous living and all the implications of not following God and walking in sin.]



# 6:10-24 GUIDE

## ► DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- Having your shoes on enables you to be ready to act at a moments notice. Paul says we have a gospel of peace. What peace is there in the gospel and how does that peace enable us to be ready to act? [Much of this looks back to the second half of chapter 2. We have peace with God and one another. As I know I have right relationship with God and right relationship with other believers, I have a confidence and stability that let's me take on whatever the world might throw at me.]
- How do shields and arrows function in a battle? What might Satan attack me with that would be like an arrow? How does faith defend me like a shield? [Satan often attacks me with lies. Faith defeats lies as it grounds us in truth. I can know the truth (the belt) but I must also have faith to find my hope in that truth.]
- A helmet, like a breastplate, also protects vital organs, namely our brain. How does salvation uniquely protect the way we think? [As we have learned in Ephesians our salvation (calling) is the basis for our ongoing life as a believer (walking). If our salvation is the basis for how we live, then we must protect our understanding of our salvation. With God's strenght, we need to fight against anything that would tempt me to believe that God doesn't love me through Christ.]
- All of the other pieces of armor have generally be defensive up to this point. Now we are told to take up a sword. How does God's word allow us to go on the offensive in spiritual warfare? [God's word allows us not just to defeat lies from Satan. It also allows us to know what we should believe and live the way we should live. God's word also let us share the Gospel with non-believers and be a part of God taking more ground for His Kingdom.]
- Why is it necessary to pray at all times, in different ways, and keep alert? What would this look like in your life? [Let them answer and discuss.]
- Paul stresses the need to pray for opportunities for evangelism. What are ways you can impliment prayer for the lost in your life? [Let them answer and discuss.]

## ► APPLICATION

- Which piece of the armor do you most need to focus on putting on?
- How can you be strong in the Lord in the coming days and weeks?

## ► PRAYER

- Finish up taking some time to pray. Have them pray through each piece of the armor of God and ask God to give them strength.

