

**THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS**  
**“THE COMMUNITY OF GRACE”**  
**(EPHESIANS 2:19-22)**  
**MARCH 11, 2007**

**MEMORY VERSE:**

*Ephesians 2:19, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”*

**INTRODUCTION**

Before receiving Christ, the Gentiles were “without God.” Now, they were being built up as His dwelling place. This truth points to the original three-part promise in the Old Testament: “I will be your God, you will be my people and I will dwell in your midst.” In the Ephesians passage, Paul explains step-by-step what Christ has accomplished to “bring near” to God those people who were previously “far off” (Gentiles). Christ abolished the law of commandments, created a single new humanity in place of two, reconciled both to God and made it possible for there to be true peace with God and others. As a result of God’s amazing grace extended to us through Christ, we are no longer strangers and sojourners, “aliens in a foreign land,” visitors without legal rights. On the contrary, now we are “fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” Christ is the cornerstone on which God’s church is built and the church is the people in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. Because God is love and Christ is Lord, the members of the church should live in harmony with one another in accordance with what God says in His Word.

**UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT**

1. Who is Paul referring to in Ephesians 2:19 when he states, “You are no longer strangers and aliens?” When Paul talks about the “saints” or “God’s people,” to whom is he referring? Why does he make these distinctions?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. When we place our faith in Christ, Paul says we become “fellow citizens” and “members of the household of God.” According to Philippians 3:20-21 and Galatians 3:26-29, what are some of the implications these phrases bring to mind?

3. Read Ephesians 2:20. The teaching of the prophets and apostles are foundational to our faith in Christ. In this verse, was Paul referring to Old Testament or New Testament prophets and apostles? Where did they receive the knowledge and foundation for their teaching?
  
4. How do the images that Paul uses in Ephesians 2:19-22 emphasize the unity Christians should have with one another? How do Ephesians 4:15-16 and 1 Peter 2:5 support Paul's emphasis on unity in Ephesians 2?
  
5. How does the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles to each other and to God (Ephesians 2:11-22) help fulfill God's will and purpose in Christ? (Ephesians 1:9-10)

### **OUR WALK WITH GOD**

1. Christ's sacrifice on the cross provided a way for both Jews and Gentiles to have direct access to the Father. Because of this gift of grace, all people who place their faith in Christ are a part of God's family and can approach the Father with "boldness and confidence." Are you an active part of God's family? If you are not involved in a ministry at the church, what is it that is preventing you or holding you back from becoming involved? What steps can you take today to change this course and become more involved in church ministry?
  
2. The church should be a family of reconciled brothers and sisters who love their Father and each other. God intends for His people to be a visual model of love and reconciliation to a world that is hopeless and doomed. While this is God's intention for the church, there are still struggles and difficulties that exist today. What are some issues that cause dissension or discord in churches today? How can these issues be resolved and avoided?

3. What practical steps toward unity can you take in the next few days with a Christian you differ with?

### **GOING DEEPER**

In the days before bricks and blueprints, construction was even more challenging than it is today. A good finish to a sturdy and safe building required a good beginning. Special attention was paid to the placing of the first stone, called the cornerstone. It served as the frame of reference for everything else that would be added to the structure. Read Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 21:42; Acts 4:10-12; Romans 9:33 and 1 Peter 2:6. What do these verses reveal to us concerning the cornerstone of the Christian faith?

### **ADDITIONAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK**

For myself I care not what a man's label is; the people whom I really know, and in whom I am interested, are the people of whom these things are true. I am not interested in their country, in their color, in their gifts, abilities, possessions, or any label that the world of men may attach to them. If a man tells me that he knows that he is a hopeless, vile, condemned, damned sinner, and that he relies only on the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ died for his sins, that His body was broken and His blood shed for his sins, that he trusts only to the atoning, reconciling work of Christ, that Christ was his Substitute, and that God in Christ by the Spirit has made a new man of him and given him a new nature, I am one with such a man. I belong to him and he belongs to me, and I will not allow anything finally to separate us. And it seems to me to be more and more sinful that we should allow anything to separate us... True unity is the unity of the Spirit, this unity of the new nature, this unity that is Christ and Him crucified, the unity of His blood, the unity of the Lord Himself.

May God in His infinite grace, give us ability to see these things. The unity of the Spirit is the only true bond of peace. Thank God, all who belong to Him, born of His Spirit, are His, and are one, in spite of their blindness and sinfulness and their failure to implement such a glorious truth!

“God's Way of Reconciliation,” D. Martin Lloyd-Jones

**SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP STUDY FORMAT**  
**STUDY SEVEN – “THE COMMUNITY OF GRACE”**  
**EPHESIANS 2:19-22**

CONNECT ..... 20 MINUTES

Time of Fellowship

Opening Prayer

Icebreaker Question:

What was the most meaningful or memorable vacation you have had with your family? (either present family or while you were growing up as a kid). Why was this time so meaningful or memorable?

MEMORY VERSE (Memorize and say aloud in your group) ..... 5 MINUTES

*Ephesians 2:19, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ..... 35 MINUTES

PRAYER AND PERSONAL SHARING ..... 30 MINUTES

1. Commit to God those relationships in your life where you need to be reconciled to other Christians. Ask the Lord to break down the walls that separate you from your brothers and sisters.
2. Thank the Father for sending Jesus to break down the barriers that existed between us and Him. Thank Him for the peace we can now experience and pray that we will commit to this peace and unity in the body of Christ.
3. Pray for the personal needs of one another in your group.