

# Ridiculous Love

This is Who We Are

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## Enjoy your group and be enjoyed in your group

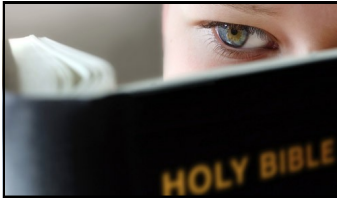
### **Listen.**

Lean in and hear what others are saying at your table. Ask questions. Silence your cell phone and even put it away unless you must be available for a child or an important call. Be sure not to dominate the sharing time. When someone shares let it be about them. Resist the urge to make it about you (i.e. “the same thing happened to me in 1998 and I . . .”). Be aware of those who are quiet and invite their input.



### **Protect One Another.**

We’re a bit like Vegas in that what is shared at the table, stays at the table. Make this a safe place for everyone. Other than that, we’re not like Vegas at all.



### **No Advice or Counseling.**

Resist the urge to give advice—this can often be very hurtful. We’re not here to *fix* one another but to support, care and point one another to the grace and truth of Jesus. Also resist the urge to tell someone in pain that “it will get better.” Typically, in the midst of great pain, a person wants simply to be heard. Affirm that what they are experiencing must be hard and then just listen.



### **Pray. Pray. Pray.**

Pray for your group throughout the week and invite others to pray for you as you participate.

### **Prepare.**

Get the most out of this study by using this study guide. Please make every effort to do the homework and come prepared for discussion. This will bless everyone, including you! Feel free to divide each lesson into smaller segments that you do 2-3 times a week rather than trying to do it all in one sitting.



Ephesus was a huge city filled with industry, the arts, a massive library and idol worship. These are pictures from Ephesus today. The library (top); Christian etchings in the sidewalks from the time of Paul. These etchings often marked the location of Christian gatherings (middle); The goddess Artemis who was widely worshiped at the time (bottom).

## An Introduction to Ephesians

Ephesians is a grand and sweeping letter written by Paul from a prison cell. Most likely it traveled to many different churches near Ephesus. It's a letter to churches about being the church.

In this letter, Paul tells us that the church is a gathering of people who look different than they once did. They are a community transformed by blessing and grace and the power of God. And because they are transformed they live differently — in their relationships with God, family, bosses, evil forces, and one another.

Ephesians is a book of worship and prayer. The introduction from verse 3 to verse 14 is one long sentence proclaiming the amazing work of God who has lavished his love on us. Twice Paul stops and breaks into prayers that express gratitude, truth and worship. Paul rejoices in Christ in us as well as hope, glory, power, love, the fullness of God, and the beauty of Jesus.

Worship fills the book of Ephesians. But it is also a very practical book. Want to know why it matters to be a Christian and in relationship with Jesus? Read Ephesians 1:3-14. Want to know how to have a life today and for all eternity with God? Read Ephesians 2:1-10. Are you struggling with a God who seems so exclusive? Read Ephesians 2:11-22. Does Church seem like a waste of time and merely a legalistic ritual? Find out the purpose of the church in Ephesians 3:1-13.

Do you desire to know who you are? Who you really are — not what others have told you, not the box you feel trapped in, not the negative messages that bombard your mind — but to know the identity your creator gives you? Read Ephesians 1-3 and discover that you are blessed beyond measure, chosen by God, marked as God's possession, alive in Christ, a participant in a new humanity, a part of God's plan and deeply loved.

## Using this Study Guide

The following page will explain the structure of this study. Note that at the end of each chapter is a section called **Going Deeper**. The **Going Deeper** section is optional, but do take a look at it. If you only do part of this section, do the Scripture Memory part. Each week a verse is given for you to commit to memory. Scripture memory is one of the most practical practices of the Christian life. It puts God's word in your mind and heart for easy access when you need a reminder of his truth and grace and wisdom to live life with others.

Thanks for joining us on this journey through Ephesians 1-3.



# {How to} S.O.A.P

## Scripture • Observation • Application • Prayer

S.O.A.P is a simple method of studying the Bible. We'll use this method throughout our study of Ephesians. The four key elements are: Scripture, Observation, Application and Prayer. Here is a description of each step:

### Scripture

- **Read it**—The first step is to read the assigned passage of Scripture (it's often helpful to read the verses before and after the passage to gain context).
- **Write it out**—Sometimes it helps to write the passage out in a way that helps us see it clearly. We'll do this each week in the study. Here's an example:

**Hebrews 12:1-2a** "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

**Hebrews 12:1-2a Re-written to better see connections, repeated words and themes:**

Therefore,  
since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,  
let us throw off everything that hinders  
and the sin that so easily entangles.  
And let us run with perseverance  
the race marked out for us,  
fixing our eyes on Jesus,  
the pioneer and  
perfecter of our faith."

- **Re-write it and personalize it** —It can also help to re-write the passage in your own words and in a way that makes it personal.

Here's an example of **Hebrews 12:1-2a**:

"Because I'm surrounded by all these amazing people of faith who gave testimony to the goodness of God (ch. 11) I will throw off everything that is hindering me for following God (fear, the distraction of social media, lack of discipline) and the sin that has me tangled up (envy, unforgiveness, pride, gossip, lying). I will run with perseverance, not giving up when it feels hard, doing the right thing when the wrong thing is easier. I will fix my eyes on Jesus because he is committed to my faith and he will perfect it. I will fix my eyes on him through worship each day.

### Observation

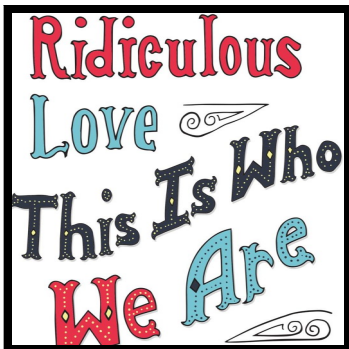
- **Ask Questions of the passage:** Who, what, where, when, why and how are great questions to ask.
- **Key Words**— Record the key words, repeating words and phrases that seem to jump off the page into your heart and mind. Be sure to look up their definitions in dictionaries, commentaries (<http://www.studylight.org/com>) and lexicons ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com)).
- **Cross-References** — Many Bibles have cross-references that lead you to other passages of Scripture to help you better reflect on what you are reading. These usually appear as little numbers next to a word. You can also find these when you read a passage at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

### Application

- **Apply the passage to your life and heart** — ideally this is something you can do within 48 hours of your study.
- **Ask:** Is there an action I can take? Is there a change I can make? Is there a truth I can memorize?

### Prayer

- **Pray the Scripture** — Use the passage as a guide for your time of prayer.
- **Write it out** — Write your prayer in your journal. Writing our prayers can help us slow down and make space to listen to God.
- **Pray** — does this passage point you to adoration of God? Confession of sin? Thanksgiving? Requests? Pray them all!



## Week One: We are Blessed in Christ

Ephesians is a book about the Church (all who are in Christ), who we are and how we live. This first week is an introduction to the book and to our identity in Christ. You can find **Ephesians 1-3** on page 43 of this study guide. First enjoy the teaching. Then enjoy the time in your group. Lean into all that God wants to show you about who you are and why you exist.

## Notes: We are Blessed in Christ

Use this page to record notes from the opening talk. [To watch or listen to this talk go to iTunes and then to the podcast page and search for Women at Christian Assembly. For easy access to the audio of this talk upload the Christian Assembly Women App at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/christian-assembly-women/id670451201?ls=1&mt=8> ]



## Week One Group Discussion

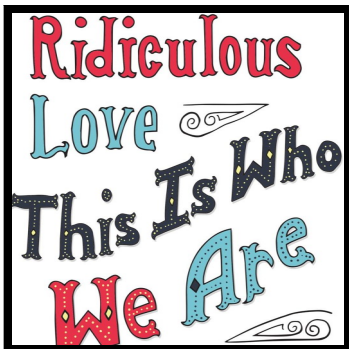
In your group discuss the message, but first take a moment to get to know one another. Use the following questions to help guide your time.

**Describe your spiritual journey in three words.**

**What are you hoping to get out of this study?**

**After listening to the message, share what most encourages you from Ephesians 1:1-3.**

**After hearing and discussing the message what are two things you can do to apply Ephesians 1:1-3 to your life this week?**



## Week Two: We are Chosen

It is no small thing to be chosen by God. Especially when we consider that the story of mankind begins with people choosing against God — choosing not to trust his words or his ways (**Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-24; Romans 1:20-23; Romans 3:11, 23-24**). People run from God and they keep running from God but he always runs toward people, lavishing his love upon them (**Luke 15; Romans 5:8; John 3:16-17**). Paul starts the book of Ephesians with a song of worship, proclaiming who God is and what he has done for us by choosing us to be his. **Ephesians 1:3-14** is actually one long sentence of exaltation.



### S.O.A.P

S.O.A.P is a way to study the Bible that involves **Scripture, Observation, Application** and **Prayer**. This is the outline we'll use throughout this study. See page 4 for a detailed explanation of S.O.A.P.

### Scripture

**Read Ephesians 1:3-14** and re-write it here in a way that is helpful for you to see the passage and/or make it personal.

## Observations

**1. What God has Done:** Record all the things this passage reveals about what God has done for us (i.e. he blessed us with every spiritual blessing, etc.)

What one thing from this list of what God has done, means the most to you today? Why?

**2. Key Words and Definitions:** Look up the definitions for the following key words.

Key Word	Definition (dictionary.com) and Lexicon (biblehub.com)
Blessing	
Chose	
Holy	
Adoption	
Pleasure	
Grace	
Lavished	

**3. Word Study:** Look at the following passages and record what they reveal about being Chosen by God.

Scripture	Chosen by God means . . .
<b>Deuteronomy 7:5-7</b> <sup>5</sup> This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. <sup>6</sup> For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. <sup>7</sup> The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.	
<b>Colossians 3:12-13</b> <sup>12</sup> Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. <sup>13</sup> Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.	
<b>1 Peter 2:9</b> <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.	
<b>John 15:15-17</b> <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. <sup>17</sup> This is my command: Love each other.	





## Application

**Apply it to Your Heart:** How will you live differently knowing that God has chosen you?

**Apply it to Your Relationships:** In light of the love and grace God has lavished on you in choosing you to be his possession, who can you lavish love upon in the next 48 hours? What will you do to show this love?

**Apply it to Your Everyday:** Throughout this passage Paul repeats the idea that we are chosen and blessed “for the praise of his glory.” What will it look like for you to live to the praise of God’s glory this week?

*An infinite God can give all of Himself to each of His children. He does not distribute Himself that each may have a part, but to each one He gives all of Himself as fully as if there were no others.*

**A.W. Tozer**

**Prayer:** The Psalms teach us to pray. Use **Psalms 139:1-10** to guide your time of prayer today.

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before,  
and you lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.



### For My Group

What are three things you want to share with your group from this study?

1.

2.

3.

## Going Deeper: We are Chosen

**Memorize:** One of the most helpful practices in the Christian life is Scripture Memory. Each week we encourage you to memorize a verses (or verses) from the passage studied. Here are the verses for this week.

### Ephesians 1:4-5

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup>he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

---

**Mix it Up:** Read **Ephesians 1:3-14** in The Message version of the Bible. Record what stands out below.

How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is!

He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him.

Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son.

Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah, his blood poured out on the altar of the Cross, we're a free people—free of penalties and punishments chalked up by all our misdeeds. And not just barely free, either. Abundantly free!

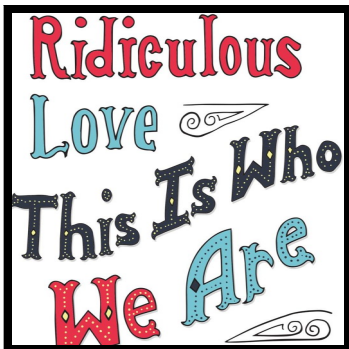
He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need, letting us in on the plans he took such delight in making. He set it all out before us in Christ, a long-range plan in which everything would be brought together and summed up in him, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth.

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for.

Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone. It's in Christ that you, once you heard the truth and believed it (this Message of your salvation), found yourselves home free—signed, sealed, and delivered by the Holy Spirit. This signet from God is the first installment on what's coming, a reminder that we'll get everything God has planned for us, a praising and glorious life.

**Notes: We are Chosen**

**Ridiculous  
Love**



## Week Three: We are His Possession

Last week we discovered that we are chosen by God and that he adopted us into a relationship with him that is grounded in his lavish love and grace. This week we continue to discover what it means to be marked as his possession and empowered by the same power that raised Christ from the dead.

Before you dive into this time of meditation and study, pause to pray that God will speak to you by his Spirit for your good and his glory.



### Scripture

**Read Ephesians 1:11-23** and re-write it here in a way that is helpful for you to see the passage and/or make it personal.



### Observations

**Key Words and Definitions:** Look up the definitions for the following key words. Also record what each word means to you today.

Key Word	Definition (dictionary.com) and Lexicon (biblehub.com)	What this Means to Me Today
Purpose		
Sealed [Marked with a Seal]		
Deposit		
Guarantee		
Inheritance		
Power		



**2. Cross-References:** Record what the following verses reveal about who you are and who God is.

Scripture	Who I am and/or Who God is
<p><b>Romans 8:28-29</b></p> <p>And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.</p>	
<p><b>Ephesians 3:10-12</b></p> <p>His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.</p>	
<p><b>John 14:16-18</b></p> <p>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.</p>	
<p><b>2 Corinthians 5:4-5</b></p> <p>For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.</p>	
<p><b>Colossians 1:16-17</b></p> <p>For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.</p>	
<p><b>Isaiah 40:25-26</b></p> <p>“To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.</p>	
<p><b>Colossians 1:27-29</b></p> <p>To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.</p>	

**Observations on Paul's Prayer:** Read through **Ephesians 1:15-23** and record all that Paul prays for the Ephesians.



What surprises you about what Paul prays for and doesn't pray for?

# APPLICATION IS EVERYTHING



## Application

**Apply It to Your Everyday:** Paul tells us that we have the same power in us that God exerted when he raised Christ from the dead (v. 19-20). In what area of your life are you currently feeling powerless? Why?

How might you lean into this power provided by God to make changes in your life (forgiveness, surrender, overcoming fear, love, faith, etc.)? What will you do this week to begin this change?

**Prayer:** Take a moment and pray Paul's prayer out loud for yourself and for 1-2 others. Yes, out loud. What strikes you about this prayer as you pray it out loud?

### For My Group

What three things do you want to share with your group from this study?

1.

2.

3.

## Going Deeper: We are Marked as His Possession

**Memorize:** Dallas Willard said, “Bible memorization is absolutely fundamental to spiritual formation. If I had to choose between all the disciplines of the spiritual life, I would choose Bible memorization, because it is a fundamental way of filling our mind with what it needs.”

### **Ephesians 1:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

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**Understand His Power and the Power He Gives:** Read the following passages on “power” and record below what they reveal about God and what they reveal about the power we now have in Christ.

But the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt with mighty power and outstretched arm, is the one you must worship.  
To him you shall bow down and to him offer sacrifices.

### **2 Kings 17:36**

Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

### **1 Chronicles 29:11-12**

[Jesus said:] “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

### **Acts 1:8**

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

### **Romans 1:16**

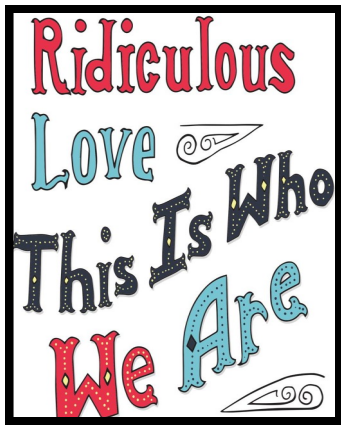
For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

### **1 Corinthians 4:20**

**Notes: We are His Possession**

**Ridiculous  
Love**





# Week Four: We are Alive

We are chosen by God and we are his possession. Throughout **Ephesians 1**, Paul is proclaiming the goodness of God to us! Remember the first 14 verses are actually one long sentence of praise to God for what he has done for all who belong to him. In **Ephesians 2:1-10** Paul continues in worship of God. He tells us who we were and who we now are in Christ. This is one of those passages in which a true understanding of the severity of sin helps us embrace the stunning gravity of grace. This is also one of the clearest passages about how one comes into relationship with God by grace rather than religious striving or moral purity. This passage reminds us that everything is grace — our salvation and our sanctification (becoming more like Christ).

## Scripture

Read **Ephesians 2:1-10** and re-write it here in a way that is helpful for you to see the passage and/or make it personal.

## Observations

1. **Past, Present and Future:** Make observations from **Ephesians 2:1-10** and fill in this chart.

Who I was Before Christ	What God did to Change Me	How I am Created to Live

How does **Ephesians 2:1-10** ring true with your own journey of faith?



**The Severity of Sin:** Read the following verses and quotes and record what surprises you most about the severity of sin.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

**Ephesians 2:1-2**

. . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

**Romans 3:23**

When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Romans 6:20-23**

*"Sin is desiring something not worthy of your heart...Honoring and worshipping something less than God."*

**Dr. Richard Lints**

*Sin isn't only doing bad things, it is more fundamentally making good things into ultimate things. Sin is building your life and meaning on anything, even a very good thing, more than on God. Whatever we build our life on will drive us and enslave us. Sin is primarily idolatry.*

**Tim Keller**

**What surprises you about the severity of sin?**

**How have you experienced sin as enslaving?**

**The Beauty of God:** List all that the above Scripture reveals about the character of God.

**4. The Gift of Grace:** Record what the following passages reveal about grace.

Scripture	Grace
<p><b>Romans 3:22-25a</b>  <sup>22</sup>This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup>God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.</p>	
<p><b>2 Corinthians 12:8-10</b>  <sup>8</sup>Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. <sup>9</sup>But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. <sup>10</sup>That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.</p>	
<p><b>Galatians 1:6-7, 11-12</b>  <sup>6</sup>I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— <sup>7</sup>which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ <sup>11</sup> . . . the gospel I preached is not of human origin. <sup>12</sup>I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.</p>	
<p><b>Ephesians 2:4-10</b>  <sup>4</sup>But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup>made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup>And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.</p>	
<p><b>2 Timothy 1:8-10</b>  <sup>8</sup>So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. <sup>9</sup>He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, <sup>10</sup>but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.</p>	

### A DEFINITION OF GRACE

*Undeserved acceptance and love received from another. An undeserved favor granted by a superior to an inferior. When used of divine grace toward mankind, it refers to the undeserved favor of God in providing salvation for those deserving condemnation.*

*To be favorable or merciful. It refers to the kind turning of either God or humans to persons in an act of assistance in time of need (Prov. 14:3; Ps. 4:1). Grace is found in the Old and New Testament*

**Adapted from the Hollman Illustrated Bible Dictionary**



## Application

**1. Apply it to Your Everyday:** In **Ephesians 2:5** Paul declares that we are now “alive” in Christ. Look over the following cross-reference passages and answer the application question below.

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

**Romans 6:4-10**

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

**1 Corinthians 15:22**

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

**Colossians 2:13-14**

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

**1 Peter 3:18**

What will it look like in your ordinary, everyday life, to be **alive in Christ** this week?

**Prayer:** Write out a prayer of worship for God’s grace in your life—yesterday, today and in the future.

## For My Group

What are the two most significant things you learned from this study?

1.

2.

### Going Deeper: We are Alive

**Memorize:** Chuck Swindoll said, “I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture. . . . No other single exercise pays greater spiritual dividends! Your prayer life will be strengthened. Sharing your faith will be sharper and much more effective. Your attitudes and outlook will begin to change. Your mind will become alert and observant. Your confidence and assurance will be enhanced. Your faith will be solidified.” Here are the verses to memorize this week:

#### Ephesians 2:8-10

<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**Doing Good Works:** Ephesians 2:10 says that we are God’s handiwork (his poem, his creative work of art) and that we were made to do “good works.” These good works were actually prepared in advance for us to do. Consider God’s unique design in creating you and what good works he has specifically prepared for you to accomplish.

List five words that describe your personality and gifting:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Who are the people you interact with on a regular basis?

Based on your personality/gifting and the people you interact with, what are some “good works” God has for you to do this week?



**Notes: We are Alive**

**Ridiculous  
Love**

Ridiculous  
Love  
This Is Who  
We Are

## Week Five: We are a New Humanity

When Paul was writing Ephesians there was a great divide between Jews and everyone else. Jews were the chosen people of God who worshiped one God, YHWH. Everyone else, from Greece to Rome to Egypt to China and beyond, were considered Gentiles. Most of them worshiped multiple gods depicted by hand-made idols. Jesus comes to break down the barrier between these groups. In this passage he suggests that the handmade idols of the Gentile are no gods at all and that the circumcision of the Jews (also handmade!) was not the elite ticket into relationship with God. Jesus came to create one new humanity (2:15) in which all people could know and be known by God through the shed blood of Christ (2:13) and the power of the Spirit (2:18). In Christ there is no place for prejudice or exclusion. All are welcome. All can join in this new covenant of promise and this new humanity.



### Scripture

**Read Ephesians 2:11-22** and re-write it here in a way that is helpful for you to see the passage and/or make it personal.

*If our churches are still divided in any way along racial or cultural lines, Paul would say that our gospel, our very grasp of the meaning of Jesus' death, is called into question.*

**N.T. Wright**

<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup> And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

**Revelation 7:9-10**

<sup>26</sup> So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, <sup>27</sup> for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

**Galatians 3:26-29**



**Observations**

**1. Past, Present and the Work of Christ.** Record what **Ephesians 2:11-22** tells you about who you were before Christ, who you are now in Christ and all that Christ has done to bring about this transformation of peace.

Who I was Before Christ	Who I am in Christ	The Work of Christ

**A holy Temple in the Lord.** The new humanity that the Cross of Christ and the power of the Spirit produces is a new “holy temple in the Lord” (2:21). We are this new temple “in which God lives by his Spirit” (4:22). The temple is significant throughout Scripture.

*The Temple in Jerusalem was not only the religious heart of the nation, and the place of pilgrimage of the Jews throughout the world.*

*It was also the political, social, musical and cultural heart of Jerusalem—as well as the place of celebration and feasting.*

*The reason for all of this was, of course, that Israel’s God, YHWH, had promised to live there. It was, many believed,*

*the place where earth and heaven met. But now (in Ephesians 2:19-22) Paul is declaring that the living*

*God is constructing a new Temple. It consists, not of stones, arches, pillars and altars, but of human beings.*

**N.T. Wright**

**Cross-References:** Read the following cross-reference passages about the temple and make your observations below.

Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

**1 Corinthians 3:16-17**

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?

You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

**1 Corinthians 6:18-20**

But Christ is faithful as the Son over God’s house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.

**Hebrews 3:6**

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

**1 Peter 2:4-5**

According to these passages, what does it mean for us to be God’s Temple?

## Application

**Apply It to Your Heart:** How will you live differently knowing that you are the Temple of God?

**Apply It to Your Relationships:** Since God has made us a New Humanity, united together in a faith that is available to all people, who are you being called to extend kindness and grace to this week?

**Apply It to Your Everyday:** Paul says that through Christ we now “have access to the Father by one Spirit.” How is God calling you each day this week to take advantage of this access you have to him?

**Prayer:** The promise of the gospel expressed in this passage is that we are brought near to God through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Meditate on **Ephesians 2:13** and pray for those in your life who you long to come near to Jesus. List their names below and make it your daily habit to continue to pray for them throughout this study.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

**Ephesians 2:13**

List those you are praying for to come near to Jesus.

**For My Group**

What are the three most significant things you learned from this study?

1.

2.

3.



## Going Deeper: We are Alive

**Memorize:** Psalm 119:12-16 declares, “Praise be to you, Lord; teach me your decrees. With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth. I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.” Memorize the following verse.

### Ephesians 2:13

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

---

**The Cross of Christ:** Ephesians 2:11-22 is ultimately about the significance of Christ’s death on the cross. Record here all that this passage says specifically about Jesus’ death (keywords: cross, death, blood).

Do a word study on the word “cross” in the New Testament. Go to [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) and search for this word. Record what you discover here.

What do these two passages reveal about Jesus and his death on the cross?

**Revelation 5:6-10**

**Isaiah 53:4-12**

*Before the cross of Jesus there are no innocent parties. The cross is not for some and against others.  
It is the place where all are guilty and all are forgiven.*

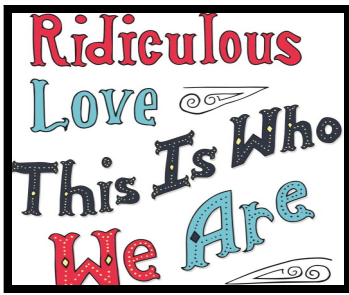
**Leslie Newbigin**

*Christianity is the only religion whose God bears the scars of evil.*

**Os Guinness**

**Notes: We are a New Humanity**

**Ridiculous  
Love**



## Week Six: We are Part of His Plan

Paul is in awe that the mystery of God's plan has been made known to him and that that plan involves all people, even us — the Church. This week we discover this mystery and what it means to be a part of his plan as his Church.

### Scripture

**Read Ephesians 3:3-13** and re-write it here in a way that is helpful for you to see the passage and/or make it personal.

### Observations

**Paul:** List all that you discover about Paul in this passage.

**Mystery:** What is the mystery revealed to Paul?



**The Church:** What is the purpose of the Church according to this passage?

**The Mystery:** Look at the following cross-references about this mystery and record what they reveal.

Scripture Cross-References	Observations
<b>Romans 16:25-27</b> Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.	
<b>Ephesians 6:19-20</b> Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.	
<b>Colossians 1:25-29</b> I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.	
<b>1 Timothy 3:16</b> Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great: “He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.”	
<b>John 15:15</b> [Jesus said:] I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.	

## Application

**Apply It to Your Life:** How can you participate in God's plan for the Church as expressed in **Ephesians 3:1-13**?

**Apply It to Your Relationships:** With whom can you share this mystery of the gospel (that God has made a way for us to be near him through Christ) this week?

**Prayer:** **Ephesians 3:12** says, "In him (Christ) and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence."

Pray today with freedom and confidence. As you pray, picture God who is present with you. Record your prayer here.

## For My Group

What are the three most significant things you learned from this study?

1.

2.

3.

## Going Deeper: We are Alive

**Memorize:** Psalm 1:2 says, declares, “[blessed are those whose] delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditate on his law day and night.” Memorize the following verse.

### Ephesians 3:12

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

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**Making the Mystery Known:** As the Church, we make the mystery of the gospel known when we share the story of the gospel along with the story of our lives. Use this exercise to help articulate how the gospel of Jesus has transformed your life.

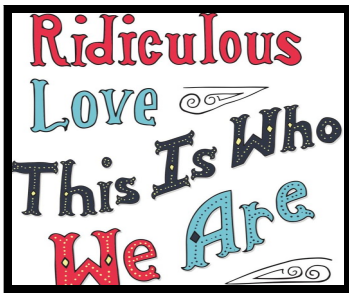
1. The gospel of Jesus tells us that God pursued us through Christ to free us from our sin (sin is the propensity to make anything in our life the ultimate thing above God — this can be good things that become ultimate things like family, friendships, careers, finances, possessions, etc.). How has Jesus freed you from sin?
2. The gospel of Jesus is about Jesus. What do you love about Jesus and how would you share this with a friend?
3. The gospel of Jesus tells us that our salvation is by the grace extended to us by God, not by our own works. Have you ever tried to work to gain God’s approval? What was that like? What has it been like for you to experience God’s grace?

**Notes: We are Part of His Plan**

**Ridiculous  
Love**







## Week Seven: We are Loved

Multiple times in Ephesians Paul breaks out in prayer. The first three chapters of Ephesians are filled with worship (1:3-14—this is what God has done!) and prayer (1:15-23; 3:14-21—this is what God can do!). Paul's prayer in **Ephesians 3:14-21** is a prayer for these young churches to live in the power and the love of God. The identity of the Christ-follower is ultimately grounded in the love of Christ.

### Scripture

**Read Ephesians 3:14-21** and re-write it here in a way that is helpful for you to see the passage and/or make it personal.

### Observations

**Knowing God:** List all that this passage tells you about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

### Pause • Pray • Worship

Before you continue in your observations, pause and pray this beautiful prayer for yourself and those you love.  
Worship the God who is described in this passage.

**Key Words:** Look up the definitions for the following key words in the dictionary and/or in a lexicon ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com)—enter the passage and then you can find the words in each verse. This is a super helpful tool).

Power —

Dwell —

Established —

Love —

Grasp —

Know —

Glory —

**Prayer:** Take some time to observe what Paul teaches about prayer in **Ephesians 1-3**.

How would you summarize what Paul is praying for in **Ephesians 3:14-21**?

Compare the prayer in **Ephesians 3:14-21** with the prayer in **Ephesians 1:15-23**. What is similar? What is different?

What does Paul NOT pray for in either of these prayers that surprises you?

## Application

**Living in the Power and Love of God:** Paul prays that “you being rooted and established in love, may have power . . . to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.” How will you live differently this week knowing this love that Christ has for you?

If you really grasped the love of Christ for you, how would it change your relationships? How might it ease your anxiety?

**Prayer:** Take a moment and pray Paul’s prayer out loud for yourself and for 1-2 others.

### Getting the Big Picture

**Reflecting on Ephesians 1-3.** Take a moment to look back through this study and capture what has impacted you.

What three words would you use to summarize **Ephesians 1-3**?

How has this study transformed your thinking and your living?

What’s the most important thing you experienced about Jesus in this study?

## For My Group

What are the two most significant things you learned from this study?

1.

2.

### Going Deeper: We are Loved

**Memorize:** Scripture memory gives the Holy Spirit a vocabulary to speak into our lives. We can be confident of truth when it is the very Word of God that comes to mind when we pray and go about the routine of our daily lives.

#### Ephesians 4:14-17a

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

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**The Love of Christ:** Paul's prayer in **Ephesians 3:14-21** is that we will know the love of Christ. Look up the following verses and record what they reveal about this love.

1 John 4:9-11

Romans 5:8

Romans 8:1-4, 31-39

1 Peter 5:6-7

Psalm 86:15

What strikes you most about God's love for you today?

**Notes: We are Loved**

**Ridiculous  
Love**



# Ephesians 1-3

One of the most important things to do when studying Scripture is to read the passage through many, many times and to also read it in its context (what comes before and after the passage). Each week we will look at a section from Ephesians 1-3 but first we need to read the whole thing in one sitting. Don't Panic: It's only three chapters. As you read look for:

**Repeated words and phrases. What the passage tells you about God. Commands. Promises.  
What the passage tells you about yourself.**

Sometimes it helps to use different colored highlighters or markings to put next to repeated words or ideas. You can also make lists in the margin. You will want to read the passage through at least three times. The first time, read quickly and just take it all in. The second and third time take it slowly and circle/highlight words and make your list! [iPad Users: Use the margin to write your notes but you may find it best to just print out the passage!]

## Ephesians 1

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup> For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will — <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace <sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, <sup>9</sup> he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup> to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment — to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

<sup>11</sup> In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, <sup>12</sup> in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

<sup>15</sup> For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, <sup>16</sup> I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup> I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. <sup>18</sup> I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, <sup>19</sup> and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength <sup>20</sup> he

exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

## Ephesians 2

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. <sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

<sup>11</sup> Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— <sup>12</sup> remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, <sup>15</sup> by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup> and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. <sup>17</sup> He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

<sup>19</sup> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.



## Ephesians 3

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

<sup>2</sup>Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup>that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. <sup>4</sup>In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup>which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. <sup>6</sup>This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

<sup>7</sup>I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. <sup>8</sup>Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup>and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. <sup>10</sup>His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, <sup>11</sup>according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. <sup>12</sup>In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. <sup>13</sup>I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I kneel before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. <sup>16</sup>I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup>may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,<sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

<sup>20</sup>Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, <sup>21</sup>to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

## People in my group and prayer requests

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