

## COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE

**Enlightened to Hope**

EPHESIANS 1:15-23

**OVERVIEW**

Everything—literally everything—in heaven and on earth is being united in Christ (1:10). Only when we understand who Christ is can we begin to understand who we are. We often read Paul’s letters thinking about all Scripture calls us to do. But before Ephesians calls us to do anything, it reminds us what God has done in Christ.

Our identity is not based on what we do, but who we are. Our identity is not earned and achieved but declared and received. Our identity, as Christians, is found “in Christ.” We are united to Christ—and that changes everything about us! Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus explains what we were (apart from Christ), who we are (in Christ), and then how we should live as followers of Christ, all for the glory of Christ.

**APPLY // EPHESIANS 1:11-14**

1. Read Ephesians 1:1-14.
2. In verse 11, Paul references the inheritance we *have obtained*. How does the past tense – “we have obtained an inheritance” – encourage you in the difficult circumstances of life? How does this truth spur us on when our lives are marked by comfort more than difficulty?
3. What are some practical ways to call to mind we already have an inheritance?
4. Remember who Paul is writing to – a community, not just individuals (as noted by the “we,” “us,” and “our” in verses 3-14). How does robust gospel community help us recall our inheritance and live with an eager anticipate of fully acquiring it?
5. In verses 3-14, Paul repeatedly says the triune plan of redemption is “according to the purpose/good pleasure of [God’s] will.” How does this truth fuel your love for our triune God?
6. Why is it important that we keep the phrase “to the praise of his glory” ever before us?
7. What part of Paul’s “doxological explosion” in verses 3-14 encourages you the most? Why? How does this encouragement equip you to disciple others?

**STUDY // EPHESIANS 1:15-23**

Study the passage of Scripture aiming to faithfully interpret and apply what you observe. Remember we study God’s word not just to increase our knowledge, but to increase our trust in and treasuring of Jesus Christ.

1. Read Ephesians 1:15-23.
2. What had Paul heard about the Ephesian believers? What did these things prompt him to do for them?
3. What does Paul pray for them in verse 17-18a?

- a. What does it mean to have “the eyes of our hearts enlightened”?
  - b. Read 1 Corinthians 2:12-16. What have we received and for what reason? How is the believer contrasted with the natural man (the unbeliever)?
4. What three things does Paul pray the Ephesian believers will know?
    - i. What is “the hope to which he has called you”?
    - ii. What does this phrase “the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” mean?
      1. NOTE: This could be referencing the saints inheritance from God, or it could be referencing God’s inheritance in the saints. Both are theologically true (cf.
    - iii. What is the “immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe”? How is this power demonstrated?
  5. What do you notice about the person and power of Christ in verses 20-23?
  6. What does it mean that God put “all things under [Christ’s] feet”?
  7. What does it mean that God “gave [Christ] as head over all things to the church”?
  8. In verse 23, Paul says the church is Christ’s body. What does that mean? What does this phrase tell us about the importance of the church?
  9. At the end of verse 23, how does Paul describe the church? What does it mean that the church is “the fullness of him who fills all in all”?
  10. Summarize Paul’s authorial intent of verses 15-23 in a couple of sentences.
- General Bible study questions:
    - **God:** What does this passage teach me about the character of God?
    - **Humanity:** What does this passage teach me about myself and my need for God?
    - **Christ:** How does this passage teach me that God has met my needs in the person and work of Jesus Christ?
    - **Response:** How should I respond with my affections and my actions?

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Relationships developed and deepened during accountability provide regular encouragement, and when necessary admonition, to spur each other on to delight in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Ask one another heart-probing, clarifying questions, and help each other apply the gospel to your lives.

**QUESTION:** Are there areas where you’re living more for your glory than God’s glory? Identify evidence of grace in each other’s live where you see a pursuit of God’s glory.