

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE**But Not...**

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-16

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.

REVIEW // EPHESIANS

1. Re-read Ephesians (if you didn’t do so last week).
2. Have people share specific ways they’ve been encouraged through our study. Identify specific truths from the text.
3. Spend significant time praying through Ephesians. Suggestions below.

PRAYER

1. Praise God for who he is (use Ephesians to identify aspects of his character)
2. Praise God for who we are and whose we are in Christ (use Ephesians to help your prayers)
3. Pray that Restoration Church would “display the manifold glory of God” (Eph. 3:10).
4. Pray that Restoration Church would eagerly walk in unity (4:1-3).
5. Pray that every member would help each other mature into the fullness of Jesus (4:13).
6. Pray that we would walk as beloved children of the Father and in sacrificial love like our Savior (5:1-2).
7. Pray that we would walk in purity and thankfulness (5:2-5).
8. Pray that the marriages in our church would model Christ and the church (5:22-33).
9. Pray for the children to come to know and trust Jesus (6:1-4).
10. Pray that we would compassionately care for those who desire to be married and/or have children but that’s not where God has them.
11. Pray that we would work hard in all that we do as unto the Lord (6:5-9)
12. Pray that we would be ware of the spiritual battle and put on the whole armor of God (6:10-20)
13. Pray that we’d love God and others by being other-oriented, both inside out church and in partnering with faithful gospel workers/churches (6:21-24).

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 2 Corinthians 1:1-2.
 - a. Who wrote this letter? To whom?
 - b. Why is it important that we understand the context of the author and recipients?
 2. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-5.
 - a. Identify and discuss the terms/adjectives used for God.
 - b. What does it mean that "God comforts us in all our affliction"? How does he do that?
 - c. According to verse 4 what is one of God's purposes for our suffering? What might this look like inside a local church?
 3. Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-16. (We'll focus on 7-10 and 16-18)
 - a. What treasure is Paul talking about in verse 7?
 - b. What's the significance of Paul saying we are "jars of clay"? What does that mean?
 - c. What do you notice about verses 8-9?
 - d. According to verse 10, what does it mean to carry "in the body the death of Jesus?"
 - e. What does the "so that" in verse 10 tell us?
 - f. Notice verse 16 repeats verse 1. What does it mean to "not lose heart"?
 - g. What does it mean that our "outer nature is wasting away" but our "inner nature is being renewed day-by-day"? Is this how we often think? Why or why not?
 - h. In 1:8 Paul says he was "burdened beyond [his] strength." Now he says his affliction is "light and momentary." What does Paul mean in each instance? How can both of these be true? Why is his burden now "light and momentary"?
 - i. What does it mean that current affliction is "preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison"?
 - j. What is Paul's direction in verse 18? What does it mean to "look to things that are unseen"?
- 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?
 - **God:** How does this passage help me hope in heaven?

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: What is one application for your life from the book of Ephesians?