



UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE

Ephesians

April 13-19

Ephesians 2:11-22

Things to Know

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*Studying God's Word **In Community***

Reminder: The goal of group time is not to re-preach the sermon, but to understand and apply God's Word together.

Sermon Recap

In Ephesians 2:11–22, we see how the cross of Christ tears down the walls that once divided people—between Jew and Gentile, insider and outsider—and replaces hostility with peace. Through Jesus, those who were once far from God and one another are brought near and made into one new people. In Christ, we are no longer strangers but members of God's family and living stones in His temple, where His Spirit

dwells. Because we are united with Christ, we are called to pursue unity and reconciliation with one another as His church.

The Wall That Divided Us (v. 11-12)

Before Christ, there was a deep and painful separation, not just between people and God, but between people themselves. This hostility is one that mirrors our own racial, cultural, and political divisions today.

The Cross That Unites Us (v. 13-18)

Through His death, Jesus tears down the wall that once divided us. His blood brings those who were far near, creating peace not only between us and God but also between one another. The cross doesn't just remove hostility; it replaces it with unity.

The Temple That Includes Us (v.19-22)

Because of Christ's work, we are no longer outsiders—we are fully included in God's people. Paul describes this with rich imagery: we are citizens of a kingdom, members of a family, and stones in a temple.

Discussion Questions

1. What words or phrases describe who the Gentiles *were* before Christ?
2. What specific things does Christ accomplish in verses 13–18?
3. Where do you see division or hostility in the world today that reflects this passage?
4. How does the gospel address hostility between people, not just individuals and God?
5. Do you tend to drift toward isolation or toward biblical community? Why?
6. Are there subtle ways you elevate differences over unity with other believers?
7. What fears or barriers keep you from fully engaging in community?

Read

Read Ephesians 2:11-22 and make observations about the text.

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
 - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
 - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
 - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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Scripture

Ephesians 2:11-22

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.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,²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

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Ephesians 2:11-22.

Living on Mission In Community

This passage makes it clear: the gospel doesn’t just save individuals—it creates a people. The people of God share an eternal mission in which we are called to fulfill together. The sinful nature still at work within us often hinders us from effective and collective Kingdom efforts. Here are some helpful actions steps to think through:

Pursue Reconciliation:

Take initiative to mend broken relationships within the church.

Practice Radical Hospitality:

Welcome others—especially those who feel like outsiders—into your life and community.

Live as One Body:

Refuse to let preferences, politics, background, or culture divide what Christ has united.

Engage in Shared Mission:

Within your group, think and make a plan of ways to advance the gospel in your spheres of influence together.

How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?

Optional Breakout Questions

Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:

1. How did you feed yourself?
 - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
 2. How did you feed others?
 - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
 3. How did you feed your flesh?
 - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*
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Leader Resources - April 13-19

Small Group Curriculum - Ephesians 2:11-22

1. Session Overview

This passage shows the sweeping power of the gospel—not only reconciling us to God, but also to one another. Paul reminds the Gentile believers of their former separation and then celebrates the radical unity Christ has accomplished through His death. In Jesus, hostility is destroyed, barriers are removed, and a new people is formed—one family, one body, one dwelling place for God. In Christ, we are no longer divided or distant—we are reconciled into one family and called to live as a unified people on mission together.

2. Opening

Prayer:

“Lord, help us to understand the effects of the gospel in our lives. If there be any division, any hostility, any brokenness between us your children, we pray you would reconcile us for your glory and our good. In Jesus name, Amen. ”

Icebreaker question:

Break into groups of 2–3.

Ask:

When have you experienced feeling like an outsider or not belonging? What made that experience difficult? On the flip side, when have you felt fully welcomed into a group or community?

3. Scripture Reading

Have someone read Ephesians 2:11-22 out loud.

4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)

1. Remember Your Former Separation

Paul makes clear in this passage that spiritual lostness is not just personal; it’s also relational and communal. Gentiles were separated from Christ, excluded from Israel, strangers to the covenants, and without hope. Spiritual maturity requires remembering who we were apart from

Christ. The alienation Paul speaks of is comprehensive: the Gentiles were cut off from salvation, community, the promises, and God's very presence.

2. Reconciled by the Blood of Christ

Because of the gospel, the former separation is shattered. Jesus brings nearness to those who were far off, peace between divided people, and the destruction of hostility between us. Christ isn't just peace, but He himself is our peace and we share in Him together. The dividing wall, referencing the temple barrier, is symbolically and spiritually destroyed in order that we might be one people for the glory of God.

3. A New Identity

Because of our shared faith in Christ, there is no longer Jew or Gentile, but one new shared identity, in which we are all fellow citizens of the heavenly kingdom and member's of God's household. The cross doesn't just save individuals; it creates a reconciled community.

5. Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Paul emphasizes corporate identity rather than just individual salvation?
2. What does it practically mean that Jesus "preached peace" to those far and near?
3. What is the significance of Christ being the "cornerstone"?
4. How does our unity as believers serve as a witness to the world?
5. What would it look like to invite someone "far off" into your life this week?
6. What kind of culture does our group currently have—more like acquaintances, friends, or the family of God?

Prayer:

"Lord, thank you for the family you have caused us to be born into. God, we pray that we would be stronger together. We pray for the reconciliation of all people through the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. It's in His name we pray, Amen. "

7. Memory Verse

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."
Ephesians 2:13

8. Leader Notes

- Create a space of vulnerability.
- Unity in Christ is not optional—it's essential to the gospel witness.
- Belonging to God means belonging to His people.

