

Growth Group Leader Guide

This “growth group leader guide” is meant to be just that, a guide. Please feel free as the leader of your group to add questions or comments, as you feel necessary to fit your group’s dynamics.

Also, don’t feel pressured to cover every question.

Ephesians – “The depth of God’s grace lived out in love.”

Ephesians 3:7-13

3-Points of Sunday’s Sermon

- **Paul’s Calling**
- **God’s Eternal Purpose**
- **Our Eternal Benefit**

Read Ephesians 3:1-13

- Paul speaks of a mystery: that Gentiles are now welcome in the family of God. Why was this such a big deal?
- Is reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles old news, or does it matter and apply to our lives today? Explain.
- What are some of the riches of Judaism that Gentiles have access to in Christ?
- **Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21.** How does this passage relate to the mystery talked about in Ephesians (Ch. 2 & 3)?
- What new insights does this passage add to the startling notion that in Christ *everything* changes?
- If Christ is the Great Reconciler, and we are His “ambassadors,” what does this mean?
 - **Leaders Cheat:** An ambassador served as a representative of a king from one country to another.

- What is the practical significance of the truth expressed in 2 Corinthians 5:17 for relational conflict in marriages, families, churches, and between races and nations?
- In the Cross of Peace, Sir Philip Gibbs has written: “Today there are all sorts of zig-zags and crisscrossing fences running through the races and peoples of the world. Modern progress has made the world a neighborhood and God has given us the task of making it a brotherhood.” Is this just wishful thinking? How is this really possible?

I. Paul’s Calling

- Paul views his stewardship as being a “minister according to the gift of God’s grace” (v.7). Yet Paul also views himself as the “very least of all the saints” (v8). Why do you think Paul called himself the least of all the saints?
- Paul seems to find a perfect balance of being both a confident leader and a humble servant. How did he accomplish this? **Read 1 Corinthians 15:10** to help answer this question.
- What does Paul’s understanding of God’s powerful grace say about his view of his imprisonment?
- Why would Paul use “The unsearchable riches of Christ” to describe his preaching to the Gentiles?
- Read the following verses and discuss how they relate to Ephesians 3:8.
 - Ephesians 1:3
 - Ephesians 1:18
 - Ephesians 3:18-19

II. God’s Eternal Purpose

- When the church reads the phrase “hidden for ages in God who created all things,” what does this add to their understanding about God’s plan for Israel and the Gentiles?
- God’s intent in Paul’s preaching of the gospel is that the “manifold wisdom of God” would be made known through the church to the powers “in the heavenly places” (v10). Based on all that Paul has said so far in Ephesians, what is this “wisdom”?
- Why would the Lord intend the powers (angels) to see this wisdom?

- What do the angels learn from the church and this revealed mystery? How does verse 10 affect the way you think about the importance of the church and unity within the church?
- Do you agree or disagree with the following quote? Explain.
 - The Church does not exist simply for the purpose of saving souls, though that is a marvelous and important work. The supreme purpose of the church, as Paul makes explicit here, is to glorify God by manifesting His wisdom before the angels, who can then offer greater praise to God. The purpose of the universe is to give glory to God... Even now, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” (Ps. 19:1). The church is not an end in itself but a means to an end, and the end is glorifying God. The real drama of redemption can only be understood when we realize that the glory of God is the supreme goal of creation. – **John MacArthur**
- What is the “eternal purpose” talked about in verse 11?

III. Our Eternal Benefit.

- In Christ, Paul and the church have “boldness and access with confidence” (v12). To what activity do these terms refer?
- How does this boldness, access, and confidence contribute to the church’s encouragement as they hear of Paul’s suffering in prison on their behalf?
- Discuss the following quote. Do you agree or disagree with it? Explain your answer.
 - The bottom line is, the Church is not an option for believers, nor is supporting it an option. I am not saying you have to go to church to be a Christian, but you also do not have to go home to be married. However, if you do not frequent your home, your marriage will be in jeopardy. Attendance and participation in your local church is not an option. Paul’s gospel was Christ and the Church.
As we all know, the Church on earth is imperfect. Nevertheless, we must be committed to the local manifestation of the universal Church. We must be committed to regular worship and should worship with all we have. – **Kent Hughes**
- What are some ways you could get more involved in the church? And/or, what are some ways you could encourage others to get more involved in the church?