

Connect Group Discussion Guide

LEADER
EPHESIANS - PT 1
9/13/2026

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Paul gives us a typical greeting, then he launches into a powerful message centered on all the blessings believers have when united to Christ.

He wants to raise awareness, appreciation, and application of these blessings within the churches. These blessings have past, present, and future components.

His overall tone is one of exuberance and astonishment as he talks about our present victory and future hope, all of which flow from and are found in Christ.

WARM UP

Open your group time with casual fellowship/questions. Taking a few minutes to connect before jumping into discussion helps create an environment where people feel known, valued, and ready to engage. See [Series Introduction](#) for tips and ideas.

READ THE PASSAGE

Ephesians 1:1-14 in ESV

As you have someone read the passage, have someone else jot down what keywords they notice. Which ones get repeated multiple times? Are there a few you want to look up in a concordance or app to see what they mean and where else they are used in scripture?

ENGAGE WITH THE PASSAGE

1. How have we been blessed, according to verse 3? What is "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places?"

Paul says that we're blessed in Christ by God the Father Himself. The rest of these verses are probably outlining some of those spiritual blessings: being chosen, made holy, predestined, given grace, redemption, etc. That's a lot of blessing! It's also not the kind of blessing we often think of in our culture, where we want health, riches, fame, and an easy life full of pleasures.

CONTEXT TO CONSIDER

Ephesus today is in Celcuk, Turkiye. It exists as an open archeological site.

Paul wrote Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon around the same time. He sent the letters with Tychius, who is mentioned several times in the New Testament, and Onesimus, a runaway slave.

3 Important Themes:

1. Christ reconciles all creation to Himself.
2. Christ has united people from all nations to Himself.
3. Christians must live as new people.

TIPS FOR YOUR CONVERSATION/ DID YOU KNOW?

- Remember that your Discipleship/Groups Pastor is here to support you every step of the way.
- Before you read scripture, pray a short prayer asking God's Spirit to help you understand what He wants you to receive from His Word. It is His breath that brings life and opens our minds and hearts to spiritual truth.
- Ask "Holy Spirit, help me/us understand Your word."

2. What does this passage tell us about our adoption?

The passage places the action on God--He is the one who chooses us, adopts us, gives us an inheritance, etc. This does not say that there is not a mysterious way by which we also choose (see John 7:17, Deuteronomy 30:19). Both can exist because God is just that amazing. Somehow, God predestines, and we choose.

3. Which of this long list of heavenly blessings have you noticed in your life?

Answers will vary. Look for adoption, grace, wisdom, insight, understanding His will, and the inheritance of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). Call these things out in your group if they have trouble seeing them for themselves.

4. What inheritance do you expect from your family? What inheritance do you hope to leave to the next generation? What inheritance is the Holy Spirit the guarantee, or down payment, of?

Personal answers may vary. The goal here is to see the difference between the things our earthly family can pass down to the generations and the eternal inheritance we can expect in Christ.

Established groups: For more on this, see Proverbs 13:22--it is righteous to leave an inheritance. Here, we see the incredible righteousness (appropriateness, rightness) of God in giving His children a place in His kingdom.

5. Matt listed 3 things about the universe of our souls: 1. They're designed by God, for God. 2. They have a destiny beyond and better than anything "in Ephesus." 3. They have a direction. Which of these 3 is hardest for you to fully realize in your day to day life?

The **first** is difficult because there is a wrestling of will that we have to surrender. Our souls are ours, but they are not primarily ours. They're His. The **second** is difficult because of the siren call of our context, and there are many pitfalls in finding that delicate balance between the spiritual reality and the physical one. We are both. We occupy both. They are not entirely separate, but we do not understand their mystery. The **third** is difficult because it is hard to discern what direction God has for us in a given moment.

NEXT STEPS

As you consider your next step, reflect on:

1) How is the universe of your soul?

2) What needs to be different this week to nourish and direct your soul toward faith?

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 2 or 3 for this question, so each person has others praying with them for the needs they're taking before the throne.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE FOR THE WEEK

Take some time this week to sit down with a Bible and some paper.

Ask God, "what does my soul need?" Re-read the passage and jot down notes. On one half of the paper, write "Ephesus," and on the other "Soul." On the Ephesus side, list what is going on in your situation--what your life looks like, what is happening around you. On the Soul side, write how your soul is doing, what it seems to lack, what next steps the Spirit is leading you to do.

How do the two sides interact with each other in your life? Spend some time in prayer with the Lord, inviting Him to show you what parts of your life nourish your soul and what needs to change for your sake and for His sake.