



Merge Group Questions #1

Ephesians 1: 1-2- Immeasurably More! Christ's Victory Through The Church (Merge Group #1)

For the next four weeks we will be basing our teaching on the very word of God. We will have available a resource for you if you choose to want a copy. (You will see that below) You also as a facilitator may have other resources you want to use as you work through this series so please feel free to use those and please contact Yves Gerard and Caroline Trembley if you need any assistance. Here is their contact information: confusius2016@hotmail.com / tremblaycaroline@hotmail.com

Along with that, this year, we as a merge group leadership wanted to give some consistent shape with our unity series for our church. We thought that it would be good, as you gather in your groups, to be more interactive and participatory to create movement.

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Below you will find a format that will help you create movement as merge group hosts and facilitators. Please feel free to add to what we have here and enjoy the time spent with your group as you gather.

Please allow the Holy Spirit to use these times as you do life together weekly. Our heart as a leadership is to help each of you grow in your life as a Christ follower as we move people through our Four Chair disciple making process.

We will be praying for you as you study and facilitate these next four weeks under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. May God richly bless you as you serve him in this way.

Merge Group Guide

The Merge Group guide below is based on Sunday's teaching for our new church UNITY series called... ***Immeasurably More!*** from the book of ***Ephesians***. As your merge group gathers, use this guide below to give shape to your time together.

Begin by Practicing the Lord's Supper Together (5 minutes)

Begin your night by partaking of the bread and the cup together. Have each person bring their own Communion elements or provide elements for the group. To facilitate your time, you can either ask a member of your Merge Group to come ready with a short prayer, scripture reading, or assign someone to read the Apostles Creed we've provided below.

For those of you that may not be familiar with the Apostles Creed, it is a proclamation of faith that has been recited throughout the years and has often been used as an act of worship and reflection prior to receiving the Lord's Supper. (***We have used it often within our own church family Sunday gatherings***) It is a proclamation of what we as Christ followers believe. After reading this ancient creed (aloud), spend a moment in silence before continuing:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church (universal Christian church), the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

CHECK-IN (10 MINUTES)

As we focus on this series, we want to continue to create space for checking in on each other but doing so in a shorter amount of time. Take a few minutes to do a whole person check-in (emotional, spiritual, physical) with your merge group, creating space for each person to answer the question below:


- **How did you experience the Grace of Jesus in your life last week? Who or what are you praying for this coming week?**

If the need arises, spend a few minutes praying for one another, asking God to meet needs and help each person carry what feels heavy right now.

READ THIS OVERVIEW (5 MINUTES)

This first sermon introduces the Book of **Ephesians** as a needed lens for hard and confusing seasons of life. Rather than minimizing pain or disruption, Ephesians helps us see God rightly so we can interpret our circumstances faithfully. The letter reveals a God who is both cosmic and personal: the Father orchestrating an eternal plan, Jesus Christ as the victorious Messiah and King, and the Holy Spirit actively empowering, unifying, and dwelling within God's people. Ephesians reminds us that God is at work on a scale far bigger than we can see, even in the midst of darkness.

At the same time, **Ephesians** calls us to remember who we are. God transforms unlikely people in unlikely places, forming a church meant to display Christ's victory through love, humility, and unity. The danger is not failure or hardship, but forgetting our first love and the story we belong to. This letter invites us back into that epic story—where Christ has defeated sin, division, and death, and where ordinary faithfulness in everyday life becomes a powerful witness to God's renewing work in the world.



QUESTIONS (20 Minutes)

1) When you walk through difficult or unsettling seasons, what tends to get challenged first—your circumstances, your emotions, or your understanding of who God is?

2) Craig emphasized that the most important question we ask when reading Scripture is, “Who is God?”

As Craig described God as both cosmic and personal—Father, King Jesus, and present Holy Spirit—which aspect of God do you find easiest to believe, and which one do you find hardest to live as if it’s true?

3) Where have you seen God work in ways that surprised you—either in your own life, in someone else’s story, or in a situation that once felt beyond hope?

4) What are some signs that someone—or a church—can be spiritually active but slowly drift from love for Christ? What helps you personally remember and return to that first love?

5) Craig described Ephesians as an epic story we are invited into, where Christ’s victory is lived out through humility, patience, and love in everyday life. What is one ordinary area of your life right now where God might be inviting you to reflect that victory in small, faithful ways?

In this last part of your evening, I wanted to direct your attention to a book I came across by Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson.(brothers) It is called B.L.E.S.S.. 5 Everyday Ways To Love Your Neighbour And Change The World. In this book they outline what you see here as a starting point to affect the lives of people around you and the world as you end your night in prayer and interaction.

Our goal as a church OF merge groups, is to move groups to loving their neighbours and changing their world. I will have these books available for you as a facilitator if you want to have a copy for your personal use as you lead people through this part of your gathering.

Missionary Practice For The Week Ahead: BLESS (10 Minutes)

▷ B.L.E.S.S.

- **(B)**egin with Prayer:
 - Pray for the people in your life and the places that you're in.
 - People: Who do you live, work and play with that is far from God? Pray that God would create spiritual curiosity in them, and then spend time with them.
 - Places:
 - Where does pain exist here? Pray for healing.
 - Who makes the decisions here? Pray for integrity.
 - Who throws parties here? Pray for community.
 - Where are the pennies spent here? Pray for provision.
- **(L)**isten:
 - Listen to and discover the needs of others and for the places where God is at work.
 - Before you can help others find Jesus, you need to listen to them first - their hopes, pains, challenges and dreams. In your interactions with others today, take the posture of a learner. Lay down assumptions and practice being present in conversations.
- **(E)**at:
 - Share meals, drink coffee, and spend time with people in your life that don't yet know Jesus.
 - Who can you eat with (or have coffee with) that is far from God? A co-worker over lunch? A neighbour during the day? A friend or family member over the weekend?
 - Is there a place that you regularly visit (coffee shop, gym, etc.)? Ask God to grant you opportunities to eat with people.

(S)erve:

- Who can you serve this week? Who do you know that has a practical need?

Ask them how you can help.

- Before jumping into serving, have you taken the time to pray for, listen to and eat with these people? Doing these things first helps you discover the way that you really need to serve them.

• **(S)tory:**

- Share the story of Jesus and what He is doing in your life with others.
 - Start by sharing how God has blessed you and made a difference in your life.
 - Share your story in such a way that demonstrates that Jesus is also at work in their life.
 - Don't Feel like you have to tell your life story at once. Think "bite-size" stories.
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Prayer (10 Minutes)

Spend a few minutes praying for God's grace over each other, that we might become a people who surrender our lives to Jesus, and that there might be a sweeping renewal of the Holy Spirit in our city of St.Catharines and the Niagara Region. Ask that God would stir up within us a desire to be with him in prayer and to serve him, one another, and our neighbour in love.



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