

GROWTH GROUP GUIDE: EPHESIANS OVERVIEW (CSB)

Mission: Challenging one another to find everyday opportunities to pursue and point to Jesus.

PART 1: THE FOUNDATION (Chapters 1–3)

Loving God's People: One New Family

In the first half of Ephesians, Paul explains that our community isn't built on shared interests or politics, but on being "in Christ."

- **Group Discussion:** Paul uses the word "together" constantly—made alive *together*, raised *together*, seated *together*. Why is it so difficult for us to actually live "together" in authentic community?
- **Diagnostic Question:** How are you pursuing authentic community with other believers right now? What gets in the way of that in your current season?

Looking to God's Word: Our Wealth in Christ

Paul lists our "spiritual blessings": adoption, redemption, forgiveness, and an eternal inheritance.

- **Group Discussion:** If you truly believed you were a "masterpiece" (2:10) and "dearly loved" (5:1), how would that change the way you talk to yourself during a stressful work week?
- **Diagnostic Question:** How is the reality of your identity in God's Word challenging your current insecurities? What can you do to prioritize this Word daily?

PART 2: THE WALK (Chapters 4–6)

Listening to God's Voice: Walking in the Spirit

Paul transitions from what God *did* to how we *walk*. He tells us to "be filled with the Spirit" and to "listen" by not grieving the Holy Spirit.

- **Group Discussion:** Paul contrasts "walking in darkness" with "walking in the light." How do you practice "listening" to the Spirit's promptings when you are in the middle of a busy day?
- **Diagnostic Question:** How is God directing you to change your "walk" or your talk this week? What do you need to quiet in your life to hear that direction better?

Living Sent: The Armor of Mission

The book ends with the Armor of God. This isn't just for personal protection; it's so we can "boldly make known the mystery of the gospel" (6:19).

- **Group Discussion:** We are called to have our feet sandaled with the "readiness for the gospel of peace." Where is the one place this week you feel the most "unready" to represent Jesus?
- **Diagnostic Question:** What everyday opportunity have you used to point someone to Jesus? What opportunities did you miss, and how can the "Armor of God" help you next time?

GROUP PRAYER & SUMMARY

- **Closing Thought:** We pursue Jesus by looking at Chapters 1–3 (Our Wealth) and we point to Jesus by living out Chapters 4–6 (Our Walk).
- **Final Action:** Pick one person this week to whom you can extend "grace-filled speech" (4:29).

FACILITATOR CHEAT SHEET: EPHESIANS OVERVIEW

The Structural "Lens" (The 3-3 Split)

As a leader, help the group see the two distinct halves of the book:

- **Chapters 1–3 (Who we are):** This is all about what God has done. It is 100% grace. There are almost no commands in these chapters.
- **Chapters 4–6 (How we live):** This is our response. Now that we know who we are, Paul gives dozens of commands on how to act in marriage, work, and community.
- **Facilitation Tip:** If people start feeling guilty about their "walk," pull them back to their "wealth" in Chapter 1. We don't walk to *get* God's love; we walk because we *have* it.

Applying the Lead Practices to the Text

1. Loving God's People (The "Vertical to Horizontal" shift)

- **The Concept:** In Chapter 2, Paul says Jesus killed the enmity between groups.
- **Leader Insight:** Community isn't just "hanging out." It's "holding up." When one person's "Armor" is slipping, the group helps them tighten it. If the group is shallow, ask: "Which of the blessings in Chapter 1 do you find hardest to believe about yourself?"

2. Looking to God's Word (The "Indicative vs. Imperative")

- **The Concept:** God's Word gives us the *Indicative* (the facts of grace) before the *Imperative* (the commands).
- **Leader Insight:** Help the group see that "Living Sent" (Ch 6) is impossible without "Looking to the Word" (Ch 1).

3. Listening to God's Voice (The "Spirit-Filled" Life)

- **The Concept:** Being "filled with the Spirit" (5:18) in the Greek is a continuous action—like a sail constantly being filled by the wind.
- **Leader Insight:** Listening to God's voice isn't just for the "super-spiritual." It's a daily dependence. Encourage the group that "quieting the noise" is a battle worth fighting.

4. Living Sent (The "Ambassador in Chains")

- **The Concept:** Paul calls himself an "ambassador in chains" (6:20).

- **Leader Insight:** We often wait for "perfect circumstances" to point people to Jesus. Paul did it from prison. Challenge the group: "What 'chains' (limitations, health issues, busy schedules) are you currently in that could actually be a platform for the Gospel?"