



WEEK 1 Take-Home - Study Ephesians together...

We're walking through select portions of Ephesians in the weeks ahead. Here are some thought questions & conversation starters to help you grow as you talk about your faith during the week.

Scripture for memorization & meditation:

"Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." ~ Eph.1:2

Questions for personal study...

- † *Atheists say there is no god. Polytheists say there are many gods (Hindus, Buddhists, Mormons, etc). Monotheists say there is one god. Do you know an atheist or polytheist? Pray for that person each day for the next week (At least!).*
- † *"God has blessed us in Christ." Your greatest blessing is this: you are in Christ! Each morning and evening this week thank God for blessings that are NOT physical blessings.*
- † *That we believe is "to the praise of his glory." We're here to make God look good by the way we live so others get a glimpse of our Maker through us - ask each other about how to live "to the praise of his glory" this week.*

Questions for discussion:

- † *Unbelieving Ephesians believed in a spiritual world; they just didn't know Jesus. Acts 19:18-20 tells us that after many of them became believers, they burned books the devil was using to mislead them. If Christians were to do that today what titles might end up in the pile?*
- † *Paul identifies himself as the author. Name three things you know about Paul. If you're having a hard time, scan your Bible in Acts 8-9 (Note: Paul's name before his conversion was "Saul")*
- † *Paul begins his letter by answering the basic question: "Who is God?" Individually prepare your answer (think for a minute about it) and then share your answers together.*
- † *Draw a simple cross on paper. Then around it add symbols & images that describe vv.7-9.*

- † *When Adam and Eve fell, they hid from God in disgrace, putting distance between themselves and God. How does sin still have that effect on us today?*
- † *Instead of punishing sinners, God punished his Son, Jesus in our place. God accepted the payment Jesus made for our sins on the cross. **vv.4-12** outline God's plan, through the Son, to bring the world of sinners back to himself. **vv.13-14** describe the Spirit's role in that same work. Work together to make job descriptions for **1.)** the Father, **2.)** the Son **3.)** Holy Spirit based on these verses*
- † *Election / Predestination confuse people who begin with the assumption that we deserve anything from God. They conclude, "It's not fair that some are lost." No, none of us deserve anything from God. That we receive anything is grace. Election (that God chooses believers to be his own) is not a doctrine to be figured out; it's meant to comfort us. Discuss the comfort from knowing that as a believer in Jesus I can also know God was already thinking about me & chose me for his own before time!*
- † *Redemption (v.7) is a word that can be understood easily in connection to the story of the exodus of the Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt. They were slaves; God set them free. How were you and I slaves? How did God set us free? What price did God pay to set us free from sin and death?*
- † *Why would God go to the lengths he did to save us through his Son? Find all the answers you can from these verses (Hint: It ain't because we're so lovely or deserving! That's paganism!)*

Tips for parents with young children this week...

Monday - Teach your kids this word: *grace*. Explain how God's love for them is undeserved. Maybe use the story of the Lost Son to illustrate this concept (Luke15:11-32)

Tuesday - Ask your kids to tell you what they remember about grace.

Wednesday - God does not love us because we're so good. He loves us because "*God is love*" (1 John 4:8) He declares us lovely by faith--and not faith in ourselves--but faith in Jesus our perfect Savior. Explain to your kids how you love them. It's not based on how good we are but because we're family. That's maybe the closest we can get to understanding God's love toward us in Christ.

Thursday - God is eternal. Have some fun with that; if your children are old enough, ask: *If you could ask God how old he was, what would he say?* Trick question--He doesn't have time!" (*Jokes on you*) We have time. Birthday time. Toddler years. Teen years. Middle age. Senior years. Death day.

Friday - Talk with your kids about blessings. List them. It's easy to get stuck thinking about problems, but when you start to write them down, there's always A LOT to thank God for. Especially have your kids work hard to come up with spiritual blessings, not just physical ones.

Saturday - Use the St Paul Church app or go to our webpage to answer some of the kid's questions there. stpauldale.com (Click on Youth Ministry to find "**123 kid's bible questions**")

Sunday - Spend some time praying with your children before or after church. Explain that you go to church to learn more about God, to help welcome other children, and to have fun with their friends. After church ask about things they saw or remember hearing from their time with their Savior that day.