That you may be one series: Study 3

UNITy in our own lives

(Ephesians 2:22, 3:14-21)

## BEFORE THE LESSON

It’s useful to remember that Paul’s letters were not written in chapters, though our Bibles organize Scripture in that way. In other words, each chapter of Ephesians can certainly be beneficial individually, but they were written as parts of a whole. If you have time, read the first three chapters of Ephesians in preparation for this study. Paul’s explanation in those chapters of who we are in Christ provides valuable context for what he prays for at the end of chapter three.

## STARTING THE LESSON

This study series examines Paul’s letter to the Ephesians in order to better understand the unity that God wants to bring “to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.” (Ephesians 1:10). Today we’ll be looking inward at the unity we personally can have with Christ. Paul sometimes wrote letters to correct members of the church, but this letter is not one of criticism. Instead, Paul writes that we may better understand our glorious inheritance in Christ, and act out of that understanding. As we read and study today, be aware of what Paul says about the things that are available to us as God’s children.

## starter question

**TIPS TO SHARE WITH LEADERS**

The purpose of these lessons is to better allow God to work in our lives, so make space for Him. Sit with God, wait on the Holy Spirit, and prayerfully consider this material as you review it prior to teaching. As you lead discussion, don’t be afraid to give your group time to consider their answers in silence. Feel free to dwell on the discussion questions that are prompting thought and conversation. One of your jobs as a leader is to impart information, but your focus should always be on what God wants to say to you and the group.

* What does it mean to be rooted in something?
* Do you think there’s a limit to what you can pray for?

## Opening PrAyer

Holy Spirit, please come. Bless today’s discussion, and continue your good work in our hearts and minds. Help us to see ourselves and others through your eyes, so that we may better understand your love for us.

## Discussion questions

### Question 1

* Kneeling to pray indicates Paul’s reverence both for God and what Paul is asking for in prayer. He expresses his reason for praying in Ephesians 2:22. In light of that verse, why would Paul take his prayer so seriously?

Paul knew the people for whom he was praying were being transformed by God as a dwelling for the Holy Spirit; as fellow Christians, we are being transformed too. Paul viewed that transformation as sacred, and we should as well. We should not take for granted that God has chosen to literally live within us.

### Question 2

**BIBLE PASSAGE REFERENCE**

Ephesians 2:22: And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Ephesians 3:14-21: 14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

* Verse 15 says God is the father from whom all other families come. Why do you think Paul chooses to refer to God in that way?

Just as we should be able to trust our earthly father with troubles and requests, we are able to trust our perfect heavenly father. Also, since God is the father of all, Paul’s wording is a reminder that we Christians are united in the same family.

### Question 3

* Does the thought of God’s Spirit dwelling in your inner being make you feel closer to Him, or farther away?

This is a discussion question. Some may feel peace at this realization, or feel they have a responsibility to God because of the gift He’s given. Some may be uncomfortable with the idea of a spirit inside them, or they may not feel the connection with God they think they ought to have.

### Question 4

* Have you ever felt strengthened by God’s power in the way Paul talks about?

This is a discussion question, an opportunity for the group to share experiences.

### Question 5

* Do you feel like God’s power is currently at work in you? Can you share an example?

This is a discussion question that will influence ministry time.

### Question 6

* What does it mean to be rooted and established in love?

In nature, roots anchor a plant and provide nutrients. In the same way, we can be anchored in God’s love, fed by it, and it can flow through us.

### Question 7

* Are there things in your life that help the growth of your roots in God’s love? Are there things in your life that eat away at that unity with Him?

This is a discussion question that will influence ministry time.

### Question 8

* Why do you think Paul prays in verse 18 that we may grasp God’s love together with all the Lord’s holy people?

Though God’s love can certainly be experienced in isolation (Paul was writing this letter from prison), Paul clearly views each believer as one part of a body, a citizenship, a family. A shared experience of God’s love strengthens the bonds between his people and makes the body of Christ stronger.

### Question 9

* How well do you think you grasp the love of God?

This is a discussion question that will influence ministry time.

### Question 10

* What do you think Paul means by a love that surpasses knowledge?

This isn’t a love that is unknowable, but rather a love that is past knowledge, a love so great that it cannot be completely known.

### Question 11

* How does Paul’s description of God’s love and power in this passage make you feel about your unity with God?

This is a discussion question. Some may feel uncomfortable at the enormity of such love, or feel they’ve never experienced it; some may view it as a source of joy.

### Question 12

* How does it affect your prayer life and your relationship with God to know that He is able to do far more than we can even imagine asking him for?

This will lead into prayer time. This realization may give some a confident prayer life; others may resent that God has denied them things that were within His power.

## Prayer ministry

* Lead the group in waiting for the Lord in silence for several minutes and reflecting on God’s love and power in their lives. Afterward, pray as a group, and encourage members to pray out loud or silently for the power, love, strength or knowledge they want from God. Feel free to lead the group to pray for whatever else is on their hearts as well—just determine the focus and duration of your prayer based on how much time you have available.
* Ask the group to share praises based on the material you’ve discussed today – recent times when they’ve felt that God has increased their knowledge of his love, for example, or times when God has filled them or increased his power within them. Then ask the group to share prayer requests based on the same material – areas of their life in which they need more of God’s presence. Encourage the group to pray for those requests throughout the week, and also to make note of God’s blessings to share with the group when you meet again.

**Note: This study was written as an act of service by Jason Dutton.**