

## The Essentials: Ephesians

### Session 1

#### Opening Collect

*Together:* Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Watch Video

#### Read: Ephesians 1:1-14

#### Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

1. When Paul thinks about what's going on in the world it results in wonder and praise. How might we cultivate this in our own lives?
2. The first thing that Paul points out is his amazement at our election. On the back of your question sheet, circle the words in the passage used to describe our election in Christ. What are some of the terms? How might those words define (or *redefine*) the way you think about election?
3. The second thing that Paul is amazed at is God's plan to unite all things into the life of God (v 10). This is not just a statement about human history, but a statement about the entire cosmos. Do you ever think about all of history having a sequence or "story"? If so, how have you thought about it?
4. Note specifically the description of God's grand cosmic plan (vv. 8b-10) and our individual places within it (vv. 11 and 13). Discuss how you, individually, being made part of this cosmic plan this makes you feel.
5. Union with God sounds abstract, but in fact answers the deep relational need for all people to belong to God and others. All of our experiences of belonging echo this deep cosmic plan. Have you ever heard the Christian hope articulated in this way?
6. Is there something in this passage that you sense God intends just for you to hear?

#### Closing Prayer

## **Ephesians 1:1-14**

Ephesians 1:1-14

[1] Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

[2] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, [4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, [6] to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. [7] In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, [8] which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight [9] making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

[11] In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, [12] so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. [13] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (ESV)

## The Essentials: Ephesians

### Session 2

#### Opening Collect

*Together:* Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Watch Video

**Read: Ephesians 1:15-23**

#### Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

1. As Caroline mentioned in the video, this is Paul's prayer for a community that he knew well. In your own words, what are the main requests?
2. Paul's language about knowing Jesus Christ is complex; it involves "a spirit of wisdom," "revelation," and "the eyes of your heart enlightened" (vv.17 and 18). This is a different kind of knowing than simply remembering facts. What does this suggest about what it should be like to "know" Jesus?
3. Paul prays that we might know what our ultimate hope is (v. 18). Why is it important to know what our future is as Christians?
4. Paul elaborates extensively on the topic of God's power. God's power was in Christ when he raised him from the dead (v. 19) and when he placed him above every name, rule, and authority—forever (v. 21)! Our reading says this power is also "for us" (v. 19). How might that change the way you perceive your own struggles and afflictions?
5. The church is a community unlike any other community; it is the body of Christ (vv. 22 and 23). What does it mean to belong to a community that is Christ's presence in the world?
6. Is there something in this passage that you sense God intends just for you to hear?

#### Closing Prayer

Ephesians 1:15-23

<sup>15</sup> I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love<sup>[e]</sup> toward all the saints, and for this reason <sup>16</sup> I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup> I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup> so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. <sup>20</sup> God<sup>[f]</sup> put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. <sup>22</sup> And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

NRSV

## The Essentials: Ephesians

### Session 3

#### Opening Collect

*Together:* Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Watch Video

**Read: Ephesians 2:1-10**

#### Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

1. Many Christians have described our reading as one of the most basic expressions of the Christian Gospel. How would you describe Paul's presentation of the Gospel?
2. Paul describes Gentiles as "dead in their trespasses" (v. 1) and his own Jewish family as "children of wrath" (v. 3). What do you think about this description? Why would he use such strong language?
3. Some people are tempted to think of God as being angry with sinners *until* Jesus atoned for our sins. But read verses 4 and 5 carefully. When does God start loving us? What do you think about it?
4. How do people typically gain status in the culture in which we live?
5. Verse 8 is likely the most famous verse in Ephesians. How does this declarative statement about our status contrast with our culture's understanding of status? How do you actually claim this reality in your life?
6. In the video, Margery mentioned how doing good works isn't about parading one's good actions, but is about testifying to the grace of God. It is saying look at what God has done for me! What might that look like to testify to God's grace in your life?
7. Is there something in this passage that you sense God intends just for you to hear?

#### Closing Prayer

## Ephesians 2: 1-10

You were dead through the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. <sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ<sup>[a]</sup>—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup> not the result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

## The Essentials: Ephesians

### Session 4

#### Opening Collect

*Together:* Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Watch Video

**Read: Ephesians 2:11-22**

#### Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

1. In our last session (vv. 1-10), Paul described his fellow Jews as “dead in their trespasses” (v. 1). Now he describes his Gentile (non-Jewish) audience as “without hope” (v. 12). What do you think about this strong language? Why does he single out both groups?
2. What are other ways he describes the Gentiles? Underline the language that describes Gentiles. Not the difference between the beginning of the passage and the end.
3. In the video David mentions that inclusion into the Covenant people of Israel constitutes our salvation. Discuss this idea based on what you’ve just read in the passage.
4. Read vv. 13 and 14. How does Jesus reconcile Gentiles and Jews?
5. God does more than “draw us near,” he makes us “members of the household of God” (v. 19). This household is described as being built on “the apostles and prophets,” with “Christ himself being the cornerstone” (v. 20). What could it mean that we are a household built on the prophets, apostles, and Christ? And what does that say about being a Christian?
6. The progressive description of Christ bringing the Gentiles “near” to God culminates in both groups (Jews and Gentiles) becoming a “dwelling place for God” (v. 22). In other words, Christ reconciles humanity with itself and with God. How does that change your understanding about the importance of Christian community?

## Ephesians 2:11-22

<sup>11</sup> So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth,<sup>[b]</sup> called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision”—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—<sup>12</sup> remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup> For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. <sup>15</sup> He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace,<sup>16</sup> and might reconcile both groups to God in one body<sup>[c]</sup> through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>17</sup> So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; <sup>18</sup> for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.<sup>[e]</sup> <sup>21</sup> In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are built together spiritually<sup>[f]</sup> into a dwelling place for God.

## The Essentials: Ephesians

### Session 5

#### Opening Collect

*Together:* Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Watch Video

#### Read: Ephesians 3

#### Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

1. Paul's description of his own purpose is quite specific and impassioned (vv. 1-13)! Do you have a sense of purpose that resembles Paul's in any way? Describe what it might be.
2. Chapter 3 closes the first half of Ephesians (chas 1-3) where Paul details the given, already accomplished truths of life in Christ. What might this prayer tell us about what Paul really wants for the Ephesians (and for us)?
3. Note the intentional irony in Paul's prayer that the Ephesians would "comprehend" (v. 18) God's incomprehensible love (v. 19). What might that suggest about "knowing" God's love?
4. Colin describes being "strengthened in the inner being" as developing one's spiritual faculties. This would include things such as a sensitivity to what God might be doing in your life, an awareness of your own sins, a sense of gratitude about the gifts you've been given, etc. Describe some other things that would be included in developing ones spiritual faculties.
5. Colin says the culmination of Paul's three prayer requests is that the Ephesians might be filled with the fullness (or *fulfillment*) of God. Fulfillment tends to happen experientially. What would it look like for you to be entirely fulfilled by God's love?
6. Why do you think this letter concludes the first section in the way that it does?

#### Closing prayer

### Ephesians 3

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for<sup>1</sup> Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—<sup>2</sup> for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you,<sup>3</sup> and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words,<sup>4</sup> a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ.<sup>5</sup> In former generations this mystery<sup>6</sup> was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:<sup>6</sup> that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

<sup>7</sup>Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power.<sup>8</sup> Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ,<sup>9</sup> and to make everyone see<sup>10</sup> what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in<sup>11</sup> God who created all things;<sup>10</sup> so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.<sup>11</sup> This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,<sup>12</sup> in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.<sup>13</sup> I pray therefore that you<sup>13</sup> may not lose heart over my sufferings for you; they are your glory.

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,<sup>15</sup> from whom every family<sup>15</sup> in heaven and on earth takes its name.<sup>16</sup> I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit,<sup>17</sup> and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.<sup>18</sup> I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth,<sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

<sup>20</sup>Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine,<sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

## The Essentials: Ephesians

### Session 6

#### Opening Collect

*Together:* Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Watch Video

#### Read: Ephesians 4: 1-16

#### Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

1. As Caroline notes, Paul spends three chapters describing our astounding position of privilege in light of Christ's work. Now in Cha. 4 he suddenly exhorts us to be a certain kind of people. What are the first qualities he asks us to embody (vv. 2 and 3)? Do these qualities surprise you given the status we have in God's eyes?
2. Beginning in v. 7, Paul talks about gifts. Do you have a sense of what your God-given gifts are? Are you comfortable sharing them with your group?
3. Our gifts are given to live out our salvation, not to earn it. How does this language of gifts change the nature of Paul's moral exhortation? How does this differ from asking someone to simply follow a moral code?
4. The second half of our passage is largely about Christian maturity. How do you think we grow in Christian maturity? Compare that to Paul's understanding in vv. 14 and 15.
5. In vv. 14 and 15 Paul describes Christian maturity as being anchored. How do we grow in this quality, according to Paul?
6. You already *are* "made alive with Christ" (2:5) and "made members of the household of God" (2:19). Now you are called to live a life befitting of that identity (4:1). How does that make you feel?

#### Closing Prayer

## Ephesians 4: 1-16

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup> Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. <sup>7</sup> But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. <sup>8</sup> This is why it says:

“When he ascended on high,  
he took many captives  
and gave gifts to his people.”

<sup>9</sup> (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) <sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup> From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

## The Essentials: Ephesians

### Session 7

#### Opening Collect

*Together:* Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Watch Video

#### Read: Ephesians 4: 17-32

#### Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

1. Read vv. 17-20. How does Paul describe “walking as the Gentiles do”?
2. In v. 18 Paul draws a connection between alienation from God, and hard heartedness and ignorance. How does distance from God result in a lack of compassion for others or a diminished awareness about what is going on in your life?
3. Paul uses language of putting away the “old self” and putting on the “new self” to describe the way these Gentile Christians should experience and express their conversion to the faith (vv. 20-24). What might it look like to do this even as a longtime Christian?
4. A key teaching in our passage is the way Paul believes that behavioral change occurs in the renewing of our minds (v. 23). 1) How do we renew our minds? 2) How does the renewing of our minds make us tenderhearted, kind, and forgiving (v. 32)?
5. Vv. 25-32 include a list of roughly seven moral imperatives. Read through these. Does it surprise you what Paul emphasizes? Why does he highlight these specific behaviors?

#### Closing Prayer

## Ephesians 4:17-32

<sup>17</sup>Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds. <sup>18</sup>They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart. <sup>19</sup>They have lost all sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. <sup>20</sup>That is not the way you learned Christ! <sup>21</sup>For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. <sup>22</sup>You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, <sup>23</sup>and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, <sup>24</sup>and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

<sup>25</sup>So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. <sup>26</sup>Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup>and do not make room for the devil. <sup>28</sup>Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. <sup>29</sup>Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up,<sup>[b]</sup> as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, <sup>32</sup>and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.<sup>[c]</sup>

## The Essentials: Ephesians

### Session 8

#### Opening Collect

*Together:* Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Watch Video

**Read: Ephesians 5:1-21**

#### Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

1. Read vv. 1 and 2. According to those verses what does loving like God look like? Discuss the word sacrifice.
2. In the Old Testament, a sacrifice needed to be pure before it could be offered to God. How do the commandments in vv. 3-5 help us to live lives of sacrificial love?
3. Paul's language in vv. 6-11 about not partnering with those who live in disobedience to God is challenging. Go back and read 2:22. In light of that passage, why would Paul make such a striking imperative about being distinct?
4. The video described how what we *are* in Christ should inform what *do* in Christ. How does that idea change the way you think about what you do with your body and with your language? How might your body and your language be used as expressions of what you really are in Christ?
5. In vv. 8-11 we are told to "expose works of darkness." The way to do this, Paul says, is not to nag people or run investigations, but is to simply "walk as children of light" (v. 8). How might living differently expose things in our culture that are "works of darkness"?
6. Our reading closes by commending Christians to "submit to one another" (v. 21). Read vv. 20 and 21 carefully. Why ought we submit to one another? What might that look like in our shared life at St. George's?

#### Closing Prayer

## Ephesians 5:1-21

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, <sup>2</sup> and live in love, as Christ loved us<sup>[a]</sup> and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

<sup>3</sup> But fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed, must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints. <sup>4</sup> Entirely out of place is obscene, silly, and vulgar talk; but instead, let there be thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup> Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure person, or one who is greedy (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

<sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes on those who are disobedient. <sup>7</sup> Therefore do not be associated with them. <sup>8</sup> For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— <sup>9</sup> for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. <sup>10</sup> Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; <sup>13</sup> but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, <sup>14</sup> for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

<sup>15</sup> Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>21</sup> Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

## The Essentials: Ephesians

### Session 9

#### Opening Collect

*Together:* Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Watch Video

**Read: Ephesians 5:22-33**

#### Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

1. Much of cha. 4 and 5 have been about how the Gospel changes our moral lives. Now Paul turns to discuss our households. Why are our households important for living out our faith?
2. In v. 21, Paul details the way *all* Christians are to submit (or be subject) to one another. Later, Paul connects this to the word “respect.” Discuss what this word might or might not mean.
3. While all Christians are to be subject to one another, Paul commands husbands to love their wives as Christ loves us. Considering Caroline’s discussion of the historical context, why would it be important for husbands to love as Christ loves? What might that look like?
4. Back in vv. 3-5 Paul emphasized the importance of sexual purity. In light of our current reading, what is so important about this moral topic?
5. In v. 32 Paul quotes Gen. 2:24 and describes it as a mystery that refers to Christ and the church. What about that passage illuminates the relationship we have with Jesus?
6. Vv. 31 and 32 infer that we are “one flesh” with Christ. What does that say about our efforts to please or earn affection from God?

#### Closing Prayer

### Ephesians 5:22-33

<sup>22</sup>Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. <sup>24</sup>Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.

<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup>in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup>so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup>In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, <sup>30</sup>because we are members of his body.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>31</sup>“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup>This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup>Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

## The Essentials: Ephesians

### Session 10

#### Opening Collect

*Together:* Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Watch Video

**Read: Ephesians 6: 10-23**

#### Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

1. In closing his letter to these Ephesian, Paul encourages them to be ready to battle against “spiritual forces” (v. 12). What do you think these spiritual forces are? Have you ever thought about spiritual forces as a primary force to struggle against?
2. In the video, Margery mentioned how the word “stand” is so important to this passage. What might be insinuated in this language of standing, or taking a stand, or standing firm?
3. Paul lists a variety of physical weapons and armor that correspond to spiritual “armor” (vv. 14-18). Circle the spiritual tools that Paul commends. Discuss how these spiritual tools might correlate to their physical counterparts.
4. Which of these items do you feel called to take up with greater intentionality? Why? Share with your group if you are willing.
5. Paul closes by telling the Ephesians how he sends Tychicus to relay his own message, and to “encourage [their] hearts” (v. 22). Encouragement is a primary intention of this letter (1:18). How has Ephesians encouraged you? Take a couple of minutes to reflect, and then share with your group.
6. What is a primary take away that you have received in this 10 week study that you can apply to your everyday life? Again, take a few minutes to reflect.

#### Closing Prayer

## Ephesians 6: 10-24

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For our<sup>[b]</sup> struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. <sup>15</sup> As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> With all of these,<sup>[c]</sup> take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

<sup>18</sup> Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. <sup>19</sup> Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

<sup>21</sup> So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus will tell you everything. He is a dear brother and a faithful minister in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> I am sending him to you for this very purpose, to let you know how we are, and to encourage your hearts.

<sup>23</sup> Peace be to the whole community,<sup>[e]</sup> and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.