

Ephesians

Transformed by Grace, Empowered by Peace

Study 9

The Gospel and the New Community Part 2



Ephesians 2:17-22



Ephesians 2:17-22 (NIV)

He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

1) a) Fill in the blanks. Based on verses 19-22, fill in the change of our identity in relation to God.

Different images in increasing unity	Progressive change of identity in relation to God
	<p>foreigners and strangers</p>
	<p>fellow citizens with God's people</p>

	<p>members of God's household</p>
	<p>a holy temple in the Lord</p>

b) Discussion question. Now that we are a citizen, family, and temple of God. What are some of the benefits we have? (Opposite of what *Zenois* have)

What we were as foreigners (<i>Zenoi</i>)	What we are now (from the previous answer)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strangers in a foreign land ● Very few rights ● Not accepted ● Language barriers ● Isolation ● Culture shock ● Prey to both police and thugs ● Mosaic law categorizes them with widows, orphans, poor, and Levites 	<p>Have rights under God</p>
	<p>Accepted by God</p>
	<p>Reconnected with God and able to communicate with God</p>
	<p>No isolation from God and the community</p>
	<p>Protected from predatory devils that want to influence us to do evil and spread hate</p>

c) Discussion question. Now that we are a citizen, family, and temple of God. What are some of the benefits we have

d) Discussion question. What does it mean that Christ is the cornerstone?

e) Objective question. Select the correct answer. Verse 20 says that we are “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.”

How is the foundation of truth determined?

A. Truth is determined by the reader (definition: truth is relative and determined by the reader’s preference. Truth is not more than perception and not bound to the author's intent as we cannot know)

B. Absolute truth from God (definition: truth is determined by the original intention of the author. If the author is God then the truth is unchanging and eternally applicable, you cannot add to the foundation)

C. Chief truth from God (definition: Only the basic truths apply, it’s relative to the experience of people with time, the truth can be discarded if out of date. Science has made some parts of the Bible obsolete)

f) Discussion question. Referring to Galatians 1:6-8, what is the danger if each reader are interpreting the bible themselves without consideration for what the author (eg. the apostles) meant when he wrote it?

Distort gospel, under God’s curse

Galatians 1:6-8 (NIV)

No Other Gospel

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God’s curse!

There are all kinds of ways to distinguish doctrines.² In this book I suggest four basic categories. We could explore further subcategories as well, but this fourfold ranking should help as a starting point:

- First-rank doctrines are *essential* to the gospel itself.
- Second-rank doctrines are *urgent* for the health and practice of the church such that they frequently cause Christians to separate at the level of local church, denomination, and/or ministry.
- Third-rank doctrines are *important* to Christian theology, but not enough to justify separation or division among Christians.
- Fourth-rank doctrines are *unimportant* to our gospel witness and ministry collaboration.

g) Discussion question. The excerpt above is taken from the book “Finding the Right Hills to Die On: The Case for Theological Triage (The Gospel Coalition)” by Gavin Ortlund. Would different levels of doctrines according to the tiers have the same consequence of God’s curse or only when it comes to the gospel?

Background information

Exegesis and eisegesis are two conflicting approaches to Bible study.

Exegesis is the exposition or explanation of a text based on a careful, objective analysis. The word exegesis literally means “to lead out of.” That means that the interpreter is led to his conclusions by following the text.

The opposite approach to Scripture is eisegesis, which is the interpretation of a passage based on a subjective, non-analytical reading. The word eisegesis literally means “to lead into,” which means the interpreter injects his own ideas into the text, making it mean whatever he wants.

h) Objective question. Select the correct answer. Which is the method we should use to do Bible study?

A. Exegesis

B. Eisegesis

The story was told of the great nation of Sparta famous for its Warriors and the visiting King came to visit the King of Sparta and he heard from Legend that Sparta was surrounded by huge walls that would actually protect the city-state from Invasion and he looked around there was no walls, at all! And he asked the King of Sparta: “I heard about your famous walls, where's the walls?”

And the King of Sparta smiled and said: “You see where my soldiers are? Every single one of my soldiers is part of the wall.”

That's exactly what it means they all form a complete whole and this is the whole structure. being joined together, growing, and being built. It's a non-static structure. It's being constructed which means all the stones up in the temple if you can see historically they're actually cut and then fit together. So this gives us the same idea that as we grow into God's Temple, the Lord is actually cutting us, preparing us, pruning us so that we would fit into each other into that nice tapestry that makes up the temple of God. - Dr. Peter Ng

i) Reflection question. Share your personal journey, of one instance when you were cut/pruned to fit with the church.

Takeaway

In Ephesians 2:17-22, apostle Paul tells the Ephesian church that they were foreigners to God, but they are now Citizens, family, and a temple through Christ, having access to the Father by one Spirit. He also reminded that Christ and the apostles form the foundation of this church.

Case Study

Case 1 – The Gospel and the New Community

Berry Wong had been attending the 4th Baptist Church of Bangsar for over 5 years but had been

doing so intermittently. Most times he catches the service online. When he does attend the service he usually ducks out just as the last song is being sung. He has resisted joining any life group at all. He does go to their Wednesday night Bible study just to hear the teaching for an hour and then he makes sure he goes home. When some of the people there ask him to stay he makes the excuse that he lives very far away and cannot join the discussion groups.

Berry has always maintained that his faith is a very personal one and it's only him and Jesus that really matters. He claims to pray to God daily and even fast occasionally. Jesus meets his needs, and Berry is happy and does not need anyone. He has a family but he does not bring his kids to Sunday school as he says they are nonbelievers as is his wife and he should not force them so he prays for them and leaves them alone. Berry is an extremely gifted individual and plays the saxophone, violin, and piano with degrees in each one. He has his own ministry to the poor and goes street-feeding every week alone.

1) a) Discussion question. If you are speaking to Berry, how would you encourage Berry to participate more in church life?

b) Discussion question. Berry says the people in the church are too old for him to relate to, they have no common interests with him and he has been hurt by criticism of his musical talent in a previous church and does not want to interact. How would you respond to Berry?

c) Discussion question. Refer to Hebrews 13:17, how can you use that to explain to Berry that he really should join the church and be part of the body to be accountable?

Hebrews 13:17

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

“Individualism destroys your personal meaning because we are meant to live for others. Individualism works against the mission of the church. When we go anywhere in the world the vision that we show the world is a vision of a reconciled Humanity, everywhere else in the humanity they will be split and fighting. If the world can see people of different races and different backgrounds who were once enemies are now reconciled they will be able to see that, this is something special when Jesus left he addressed the church with the Great

Commission, he says to them all authority in Heaven and Earth has been given to me. Go therefore and Make Disciples of all Nations this is actually given not to individuals, it is all in plural, it is given to the church as a whole. -Dr Peter Ng.

d) Discussion question. Dr Peter mentioned in the video lecture that individualism works against the mission of the church, why is that?

e) Discussion question. What do you think Berry should do to experience God more in his life?

Case 2 – The Gospel and the Culture



THE CHALLENGE OF OUR CULTURE

- Reject -universal or binding ethic, morals that are absolute, truths that are transcendent
- Attendance but not membership
- Help me find and express myself
- Self-exaltation and self-fulfillment.
- Church cannot challenge my life choices



2) a) Discussion question. What are some examples of culture influencing us?

b) Discussion question. How can we identify our personal biases and influence from a culture outside of God?

c) Reflection question. Between i) Scripture, ii) Logic, iii) Experience, and iv) Tradition. Which one guides you in deciding "truth"?