

Empowered by Christ's Love

TEACHING NOTES

God's mysterious plan (Ephesians 2:19-22, 3:1-13)

Growing in Christ (Ephesians 3:14-21)



Where we are to find life (Ephesians 3:16-19)

KEY VERSES

Ephesians 2:19-22, 3:1-21

KEY THEMES

The Church in Christ

Growth through the love of Christ

God's instrument – the Church (Ephesians 3:10-11)

Lesson objective: *To understand how we grow through Christ's love so we can more fully understand how to find life in Christ alone*

PERSONAL STUDY**Session 1****Prepare your heart and mind**

Take a few moments to give thanks and praise to God. Ask Him to use this study time to teach you something new about Him, giving you the opportunity to draw closer to Him.

God's Love

How do we know that God loves us? The answer sounds a lot like the song many of us learned as a child, the Bible tells us so. "When we look into the Bible we see evidence from the very beginning of God's love and provision for those whom He created. We see that God loves to be with His people. He went with the Israelites by day as a pillar of cloud and night as a pillar of fire. They went wherever He went. We see that because of the sin of humanity we were separated from God. His love prompted Him to redeem us through the blood sacrifice of His Son. We see that He wants us to be sure of His love and commitment. Therefore, He has given us His Spirit which identifies us with Him and His church. We are never without the love of God.

What do you know about God's love?

Read the following scriptures and identify the way each one describes God's love.

John 3:16 and 1 John 4:9

God's love is...

Ephesians 2:4-5

God's love is...

Romans 8:37-39

God's love is...

Ephesians 3:17-18

God's love is...

God's love is sacrificial, immeasurable, inescapable, and more. You can know the many facets of love, but our head-knowledge needs to permeate our hearts. We can know about something, but not necessarily live in it. To reflect God's love in our lives, we need to grasp His love in our hearts. You can have knowledge without relationship, but God wants relationship.

**Read Ephesians 3:19**

What are some things we can do to better understand the depth and breadth of God's love?

God's desire for us is to experience His love and respond to it. However, through life's difficulties, our hearts can become hardened. But God continues to pursue us with His love. As we experience the intense love of God, our hearts are softened to receive and extend His love. The love He shows for us is not intended to be for us alone, but is to be extended to those around us.

**Read Ephesians 3:17, Hebrews 13:6, and 1 John 4:16-19**

God's love and the continual experience of it brings meaning to our life. Write down some of the values found in the scriptures above. What are some other benefits of understanding God's love?

Key verse

Using the provided scripture card, put to memory Ephesians 3:19.

May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Prayer time

Thank God for His undeserved love that He pours out over and over until you get it. Thank Him for the value that comes into your life from the experience of that love. Ask Him to continue to grow your relationship in depth and breadth.

Session 2

Prepare your heart and mind

Take time to pray that the tasks of today will not become a distraction to focusing on the study and hearing God's truth.

Duty verses delight

Paul's writings (inspired by God) invite us to *experience* God's love at a deeper level; a level that begins to appreciate and understand the love of Jesus Christ. To grow in spiritual strength and maturity is to live in the reality of what God has done for us and surrender to the Holy Spirit. As we experience God's love we *delight* in this relationship. Unfortunately, our relationship with God often times can feel more like a *duty*.

In your own words define *duty*:

In your own words define *delight*:

Does your relationship with God feel more like a duty or is it a delight? Why?

Duty is a relationship out of obligation, guilt, or responsibility. Delight is having extreme pleasure in knowing you are loved, valued and chosen by God.

Our relationship with God is not based on our spiritual performance. We cannot gain God's favor by the number of times we pray, read His Word, or go to church. These should be the byproducts of our love for God.



Read Ephesians 1:4-6

When did God first love us?

We were chosen, valued, and loved by God even before we were born. When are times you have experienced extreme pleasure in knowing the Creator of the universe loved you?

One way to *delight* in God's love is to remind yourself of ways you have seen His love demonstrated in your life. Take time now to identify a few of these.

When we are motivated and captivated by love, we seek to spend time and grow in our knowledge of God. Spiritual growth is not passive; it is interactive and takes intentional living. When your walk with God begins to feel more like a duty than a delight, what are ways you can respond out of relationship rather than obligation?



Read Ephesians 3:16-19

Why is it important for our spiritual roots to grow strong?

What are the results of having spiritual strength?

What are some of the ways a person who doesn't have spiritual strength and maturity may respond to life's trials? How would this compare with someone whose life is rooted and grounded in God's love?

**Read 1 Corinthians 13:2**

Besides having Bible knowledge, why is love more important for our spiritual maturity?

When a person has spiritual maturity, they begin to be aware of the love that has been extended to them and in turn seek the Holy Spirit to help them die to self in order to love.

**Read Ephesians 3:20**

What is the desired result of Paul's prayer? How does this differ from the common worldview that our good behavior earns us good things from God?

Paul's prayer is for believers to delight in the love God has for them. What does Paul say God is able to do? How?

Key verse

Continue working to memorize Ephesians 3:19. Attempt to write it out from memory:

Prayer time

Ask God to reveal to you areas you consider your relationship with Him a duty and miss out on the unconditional love He has for you. Ask God to help you grow deeper in your knowledge of His love for you. Thank God for His pursuit of you.

PARENT GUIDE

This week we have been looking at some very important connections for us as believers. Ephesians tells us we are members of God's family. Once we are saved, we have a special relationship with God and other believers. It is so important to know these connections because they guide us in many ways, especially in our relationships. Be sure to read the table talk questions listed below ahead of time.

Table Talk Questions

Why does a lamp need to be connected to an outlet in order to work?

What are some examples of things that are connected? (*As a family, try and come up with several different examples.*) Why is it important for these things to stay connected?

Read Ephesians 2:19-22 together.

In what ways are believers connected in this passage?

If we moved to a new town, how would you feel going to a new school?

This is how the Gentile people would have felt. They were outsiders. In verse 19, it says that the Gentiles use to be strangers and foreigners, but now they are citizens along with all of God's children. God invited them to join His family.

Application

It is important for us to realize that because we have placed our trust in Christ this connects us to believers around the world. Together we make up His family, also known as the Church. We are connected to Jesus when we are saved and the Holy Spirit comes to live in our hearts. God's plan is that we will encourage and love believers around the world because they are family.

Prayer

Spend a few moments praying together as a family. Ask if anyone would like to pray and, if no one volunteers, go ahead and pray over your family. Pray specifically for your connections with the other members of God's family.

ADDITIONAL STUDY**Read Ephesians 4:1-16****Observation**

(Who? When? Where? Why? What does it say? What do I notice?)

Interpretation

*(What are the key themes or truths? What is the writer's intended meaning? What is the context?
What questions do I have?)*

Application

(How do I apply it? What does this mean for me?)

