

Session 2

WHO AM I?

MONTHLY VERSE

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20 NIV

MONTHLY QUESTION

In what area of your life do you need to place more trust in God?

CONTENT

Read one of the following book, as assigned by your mentors:

The Gift of Being Yourself by David G. Benner - OR - *The Search for Significance* by Robert S. McGee

ASSIGNMENTS

Book Content

Use the *Book Reflection* guide to capture the highlights. Come ready to discuss what you've learned. Print a copy for everyone if you're able.

Scripture Reading

Read Ephesians 1-3.

Deeper Dive

If you would like to dive deeper into this topic, either now or after you complete this group, consider reading the additional book from the Content section above.

Scripture READING

READING THROUGH PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

BACKGROUND

Ephesians is a letter written by Paul to a church in Ephesus. Paul wrote this letter while imprisoned in Rome. He had a special connection to Ephesus, a city where he planted a church, and he visited multiple times (Acts 18:19, 26, 20:31). Paul encouraged his apprentice Timothy to stay in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3) and likely wrote letters to the Corinthians during his stay in Ephesus.

AS YOU READ

Read actively. Highlight sections that stand out to you. Write questions in the margins of your Bible, in a note on your phone or tablet, or in a journal.

Review. Begin reading by reviewing what you read and noted the day before.

Choose a verse or phrase. Each week, choose one verse or phrase from your reading that stands out to you. It may be something you are intrigued by, something that makes you uncomfortable, something that resonates with you, or something you want to examine further. Write it down and then answer these questions:

- What strikes you about this verse or phrase?
- How can you apply it to your life?

SESSION 2 READING PLAN

- **WEEK 1:** Read all of Ephesians. Reading it out loud will take about 20 minutes. The goal is not to study Ephesians word by word or sentence by sentence, but to experience the overarching theme of Paul's letter.
- **WEEK 2:** Explore the overview of Ephesians through The Bible Project (thebibleproject.com/explore/ephesians).
- **WEEK 3:** Read or listen to all of Ephesians in *The Message* paraphrase. You can find this on the YouVersion app or on BibleGateway.com.
- **WEEK 4:** Read Ephesians 1-2.

CONSIDER

Consider purchasing a study guide or commentary that asks reflective questions and deepens understanding. Here are three study guides recommended by other leaders:

- *Be* series, by Warren Wiersbe
- John Stott Bible Studies
- *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters* by N.T. Wright

Assignment

STUDY ASSIGNMENT & BOOK REFLECTION OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW

In your Leader Development Group, you will read several books. Some may resonate more than others, but we encourage you to read them all. To get the most out of each book, read actively and answer the questions.

ACTIVELY READ EACH BOOK WITH THESE GUIDELINES:

- **Space out your reading.** Don't try to cram it into a few reading sessions.
- **Highlight important or meaningful sections.** Take notes on what you are learning and pause to apply it.
- **Revisit the sections you have highlighted and noted.**
- **Consider an audio book.** If you don't enjoy reading, consider purchasing an audio book. You can take notes as you listen.

BE PREPARED TO SHARE YOUR RESPONSES TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How would you summarize this book? What was the author's main point?
- What was insightful? What was challenging? What do you want to explore further?
- What is a personal application for you? What will be different this month because of what you read?
- What quotes stood out?

Example

STUDY ASSIGNMENT & BOOK REFLECTION EXAMPLE

Book: Counterfeit Gods

Book Reflection by Jane Doe

My Summary

Counterfeit Gods shows how idolatry creeps into core areas of a Christian's life. Keller teaches the reader about the prevalence of idolatry in the Bible and in the human heart. He deals with some of life's biggest idols: love, money, success, and power.

Insights/Explore More

Our hearts are "idol-making factories" that transform the good gifts God blesses us with into "ultimate possessions" in our lives, replacing God in our affections.

The idols at a glance:

- **Love:** Misplaced desires for romance set us up for destructive and unfulfilling relationships with our spouses. Declaring romance as the only thing a person needs for a meaningful life offers unrealistic expectations and can have disastrous consequences.
- **Money:** Lures of wealth and success are contrary to the gospel of Christ, who came in poverty and suffered. Greed is a dangerous and pervasive idol, so much so that most people are unaware of their own overindulgences.
- **Success and Power:** Socioeconomic brackets convince us that our incomes and spending are average, when most of us have a standard of living like that of royalty compared to the rest of the world.

The great deception of idols is that we are led to believe they are only bad things. But evil is far more subtle and deceptive. "The greater the good, the more likely we are to expect that it can satisfy our deepest needs and hopes."

Personal Application:

What is God saying to me? What am I going to do about it?

- I've recognized several key idols in my life after reading this book. I'm convicted to constantly ask the Lord to have mercy on me, a broken sinner who puts him second all too often.
- Understanding that the human heart is an idol factory, I must steep myself in Scripture to root out idols, turn to Christ to find forgiveness for my sin, and rely on the gospel as my power source for finding ultimate freedom from them.
- I've discovered my idols are all good things in my life. The solution is not to love the good things God has blessed me with less, but to love the best blessing more—his Son. Any other path will lead to enslavement to my flesh.

Meaningful Quotes

"A counterfeit god is anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living." (p. 34)

"When people say, 'I know God forgives me, but I can't forgive myself,' they mean that they have found an idol whose approval is more important than God's." (p. 63)

"Fear-based repentance makes us hate ourselves. Joy-based repentance makes us hate the sin." (p. 101)