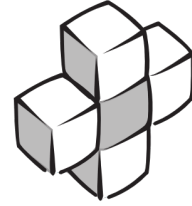




SMACC
Making Disciples of Jesus Christ



Bible Study Series:

Ephesians



Our Mission:

*To glorify God together in response to his grace
by making disciples of Jesus Christ*

About These Studies

These studies were written by various SMACC leaders for use among young working adults and university students. You are most welcome to use and adapt these studies for your own context. Where you do so please provide the following acknowledgment.

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Study 1: “Spiritual Blessings” (Ephesians 1:1-14)

Getting started

When was the last time you received a gift or were chosen for something important? How did you feel?

Context

1. Who wrote this letter and who was it addressed to?

Digging in

Read Ephesians 1:1-14

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title

3. List down all the spiritual blessings that Paul mentions.

4. What do the following words mean?

- a. Holy

- b. Blameless

- c. Predestined

d. Adopted

e. Redeemed

f. Sealed

5. What does “the mystery of his will” refer to? (v9)

6. What does it mean to be “sealed with the promised Holy Spirit”? (v13-14)

Application

7. Knowing you have received spiritual blessings from God, what can you do to glorify God now?

8. How have you not been putting God at the centre of your life?

9. How can you encourage others to stand firm until they obtain their inheritance from God?

Prayer

10. What can you be praying for after today’s study?

Study 2: “Only By God’s Grace” (Ephesians 1:15–2:10)

Getting started

1. Imagine that someone gave you a lottery ticket as a gift, knowing full well that it would be the winning ticket to a billion-ringgit prize. How would it change your life?

Context/Recap

Ephesians, a letter by Paul, was written while he was imprisoned in Rome and addresses the faithful believers in the churches in Ephesus and the surrounding regions. In Ephesians 1:1-14, Paul reminds the Ephesians of God’s spiritual blessing and inheritance in Christ - so that all things will be united in Christ to the praise of His glorious grace. Paul assures them that their inheritance is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 1:15-2:10

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title

3. Why does Paul thank God for the church in Ephesus?

Ephesians 1:15-23

4. What does he hope that God will grant the Ephesians?
5. What does Paul mean when he prays for these things?

Ephesians 2:1-10

6. What does Paul mean by “we were dead in our trespasses” (Chapter 2:1-4)?

7. How has God shown us the immeasurable riches of His grace (2:7)?

8. What does it mean for us to be “alive in Christ”? (cf. Romans 6:1-14)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. – 2 Corinthians 5:17

9. Can we boast in our works? Why or why not? (cf. Ezekiel 36:25-27)

Bringing Things Together

10. Fill in the following summary table

Our state	Dead to Sin	Alive in Christ
Who is our master?		
We are by nature?		
How are we living?		
What is our destiny?		

Application

11. Reflect on your answer to the launch question. What is our response towards God's gift of eternal life to us?

12. Read Ephesians 2:10 again. How does this look like practically?

13. Have we been walking this way? How can we pray to be more diligent in it?

Study 3: “A New Community” (Ephesians 2:11-22)

Getting started

1. Why is that people from different backgrounds, cultures and races find it so hard to get along? Why do attempts at uniting different people often fail?

Context/Recap

So far, we have seen that God has given every spiritual blessing to those who trust in Jesus. We have learnt that God’s eternal plan for the universe is to unite everything under the rule of Jesus. Even though we were dead in sin, we were saved by God’s grace through the death of Jesus. Today, we will learn that not only does Jesus’ death reconcile us so we are at peace with God, but it also brings us peace with one another. No matter what nation or culture we are from we can be part of God’s people and citizens of heaven.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title

3. ‘Therefore’ (v11) – means Paul is giving the Ephesians an instruction based on what he has already written. How does this passage relate to the salvation Paul has described in 2:1-10?

4. What does Paul want the Ephesians to remember? Why do you think Paul wants them to remember this?

5. Things change significantly from verse 13 onwards! Paul proudly announces that God brings an end to the great division by giving us hope and help.
 - a. What does it mean that Christ has become “our peace”? (v. 14)
 - b. What kind of peace has Jesus brought?
 - c. What is the “dividing wall of hostility” that separated Jew and Gentiles? How has it been abolished?
 - d. Do you have to be Jewish to be saved and be one of God’s people? Why? Why not?
6. What difference does Jesus make to Gentiles like us who were once cut off from Christ? (compare verses 11-12 and verse 19-22)
7. What do we learn about God’s house (the church) from vs20-22? How might this affect the way we treat one another?
8. How would you summarise the central message of these verses?
9. Why is it that only the cross unites believers from different backgrounds, cultures, and races?

Application

10. What assurances can we take from this passage concerning our status as Christians?

11. Is there anyone whom God does not welcome into his church? Why?

12. Do we continue to see divisions within the church or UCF? What does this passage challenge us to do about those divisions?

13. How can we ensure we are built on the foundation of the apostles?

Prayer

14. What can we thank God for in the light of this study? What can we pray?

Study 4: “Unveiling of the Mystery” (Ephesians 3:1-13)

Getting started

1. When was the last time you knew about an important secret that you wanted to tell everyone around you? What was the secret?

Context/Recap

So far, we saw Paul has written a letter to the Ephesians while he is imprisoned in Rome. He reminded them of God’s spiritual blessing and inheritance in Christ to them even when they were dead in our sins. We also learnt that we are now at peace with God and with one another through Jesus’s blood.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 3:1-13

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title

Ephesians 3:1-4

3. Where was Paul when he wrote the letter? And why is Paul in that situation? What does it mean when Paul says he is the prisoner of Jesus?

4. What does a steward do?

5. What did Paul receive and what was his role as the steward of God's grace? (Col 1:26-27)

Ephesians 3:5-6

6. During what time was the mystery hidden?

7. What is the content of the mystery? (Galatians 3:26-29, 1 Cor: 12:12-13, Romans 8:14-17)

Ephesians 3:7-11

8. What was Paul's duty as the minister according to the gift of God's grace?

9. Why did Paul regard himself as the least of all the saints?

10. What made the transformation of Paul possible? And what is he doing as a response?

11. Why did Paul eagerly preach the mystery of the Gospel to everyone especially the Gentiles?

12. The unveil of God's mystery through Jesus Christ was God's eternal purpose, what does this say about God?

Ephesians 3:12-13

13. What did Paul urge the Ephesians to do?

Application

14. God's mystery was hidden for ages (even angels and prophets do not have the privilege to know the mystery) until it was fully revealed in Jesus Christ. Paul as the faithful steward risked his life and suffer so much to bring light of this mystery to the Gentiles (which is us).

a. Did we cherish this mystery that was revealed to us? (through the Spirit and the Bible)

b. As compared to Paul, do we regard receiving the gospel as the gift of God's grace?

c. Have we been quick to lose heart when we face difficult times in our walk with God?

15. Think about what you answered in the first question, does the Gospel mystery excites and urges us to tell it to everyone around us?

Prayer

16. What can we thank God for in the light of this study? What can we pray?

Study 5: “Seeking the Fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:14-21)

Getting started

1. As a Christian, what do you most often find yourselves praying for?

Context/Recap

We’ve made it about half-way through the Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. We have seen God’s grace through Christ and how it unites us all as Christians, and soon Paul will go into how we are to live with this newfound truth. But before he does, Paul has another prayer to share.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 3:14-21

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title

Ephesians 3:14-15

3. Paul begins with, “For this reason...”. What reason is he talking about? (cf. Eph. 2:19-3:1)

4. What is Paul’s position when he prays? Why do you think he does this?

Ephesians 3:16-19

5. What does Paul pray for the Ephesians?

v16-17a	
v17b-19	

6. What is the role of each person in the Trinity here?

7. What does it mean to be strengthened with power in your inner being (cf. Ezekiel 36:26-27)?

8. What is strange about the statement made in verse 19?

9. In verse 19, we see that the goal of knowing the love of Christ is to be filled with all the fullness of God. What does this mean (cf. 1:22-33 and 4:13)?

10. What does it mean to be strengthened with power in your inner being (cf. Ezekiel 36:26-27)?

11. What is strange about the statement made in verse 19?

12. What helps us to know this love that surpasses knowledge?

13. In verse 19, we see that the goal of knowing the love of Christ is to be filled with all the fullness of God. What does this mean (cf. Eph. 1:22-33 and 4:13)?

Ephesians 3:20-21

14. What does verse 20 remind us about God? Does this change the way we think about verse 19?

15. How is God glorified in verse 21?

Application

16. In what ways has this passage challenged your understanding of the purpose of this fellowship?

17. In what ways has this passage challenged you to pray as a Christian?

Prayer

18. Close by praying for each other, using Ephesians 3:14-21 as a guide.

Study 6: “Unity of the Body” (Ephesians 4:1-16)

Getting started

1. Imagine you are doing a group project. What must happen for the team to work together well? What will happen if one member doesn't do their job?

Context/Recap

Paul wrote a letter to the Ephesians while he was imprisoned in Rome and reminded them of God's spiritual blessing and inheritance in Christ to them even while they were dead in their sins. In Ephesians, Paul also talks about how we are now at peace with God and with one another through Jesus's blood. He reveals to us the mystery of Christ: which is that Gentiles are fellow partakers in the gospel.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 4:1-16.

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title

Ephesians 4:1-6

3. What is the calling we have received? (Eph. 2:11-18)

4. How does Paul call the Ephesians to live with one another?

5. What things could cause us to divide against one another?

6. How can we avoid these divisions?

7. How do we live at peace with one another:

a) During congregational service?

b) While serving on the same team with others?

c) During the regular week outside of church?

Ephesians 4:7-10

8. Who has been given gifts?

Ephesians 4:11-13

9. What are the specific gifts Paul mentioned in v11? What is their role?

10. Who does the work of ministry? Do we often think of church like that?

11. In what ways can we use our gifts and perform the work of ministry in:

- a) Our community?
- b) Church?
- c) During the rest of the week?

12. What does God want his people to be like?

- a) How can we help ourselves grow towards maturity?
- b) How can we help others grow toward maturity?

Ephesians 4:14-16

13. What does a mature church look like?

14. Why is truth AND love important in our speech? What if we don't have either one?

Prayer

15. Pray for one another, especially in light of the passage.

Study 7: “A New Life” (Ephesians 4:17-32)

Getting started

1. What is the purpose or goal of your life? (i.e. What motivates you as you live your life every day?)

Context

In last week study, we saw that Paul urges us to be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, because through the Gospel we have been united to Christ and with one another. We should avoid division by being humble, gentle, patient and being with one another with love.

We also saw that each one of us is to be equipped to do the work of ministry to build up the body of Christ. The goal is the unity and maturity of our church, that we may resist false doctrine. We do this by speaking the truth to one another in love.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 4:17-32.

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title

Ephesians 4:17-24

3. Paul insist the Ephesians must no longer live like the Gentiles. How does Paul describe the Gentiles? What is the key problem with their way of life?

4. In what ways are people in our society like this?

5. Why should the Ephesians live differently from the Gentiles?

6. How should the Ephesians live instead?

Ephesians 4:25-32

7. Paul gives many examples of how the old way of living is different from the new. Use the following table to examine them.

8.

Verses	NOT...	BUT...	Reason
4:25			
4:26			
4:28			
4:29			
4:30			
4:31-32			

9. "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit." (v30). What does this verse tell you about the Holy Spirit?

10. What do all the aspects of the 'new self' have in common?

Application

11. Should you be able to tell that someone has become a Christian simply by observing their behaviour? Why?

12. How can we guard ourselves from unwholesome talk?

13. If we are modelling Christ in the way we relate to each other, how will this look practically?

Prayer

14. v32 tells us the most important, basic Christian attitude, which is to be kind, loving and forgiving to another as God has forgiven us in Christ. Are there times when you struggle to love or forgive others? How can we be praying for you so that you can be more loving and forgiving?

Study 8: “Be Careful How You Walk” (Ephesians 5:1-21)

Getting started

1. If someone asks you "What does it mean to walk as a Christian?" how would you respond?

Context

In last week’s study on Ephesians 4:17-32, we were taught to put off our old self and put on our new self in Christ. Since we are one in Christ, our former lives which were corrupted in deceitful desires shall no longer remain; now we are renewed and transformed in Christ to pursue true righteousness and holiness in the likeness of God till all things unites in the fullness of time. We saw how it was applied practically in the latter part of the chapter, which bring us back today as we continue on chapter 5, emphasizing how we live a holy life in love as children of light and of those who are wise.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 5:1-21.

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title

Ephesians 5:1-5 – Therefore, be imitators of God

3. Above all that has been written in chapter 4, we are to imitate God (v1), v2 continues on talking about walking in love. On what basis do we walk in love?

4. What are not proper to be named among saints? Why? (cf. 2 Timothy 3:1-9, Ephesians 1:1&4)

5. V4 tells us that filthiness, foolish talk or crude joking are out of place, what examples can we see in us or around us? What should be the response?

6. What does it mean for those who are sexually immoral or impure or an idolater to have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God? (cf. Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30)

Ephesians 5:6-16 – Therefore, do not become partners of them

7. In v6 “Let no one deceive you with empty words...”:
 - (a) Who is “no one”? (Ephesians 4:17-19)

 - (b) Why is it so serious to not be deceived with empty words? (cf. Ephesians 2:2; 1John 3:10)

8. In v7, what is (or are) the justification(s) of not partnering with them? (cf. Isaiah 9:2, 1 John 1:5-7)

9. How should we then walk as children of the light? How is it different from darkness?

11. Are your criteria for a spouse aligned with God's word?

Prayer

- Pray for the married couples in church to model the union between Jesus and the Church
- Pray that those who are single will serve God well in their singleness.
- Pray that we will all be satisfied by Jesus and not our relationships

Book recommendation

Not Yet Married by Marshall Segal

3. State the types of relationships in the following verses below. Briefly explain who should do what.

Verses	Relationships	Instructions given by God through Paul
6:1-3		
6:4		
6: 5-8		
6:9		

Ephesians 6:1-4: Children & Parents

4. How are children to obey their parents? Why?

5. How does 'honour' differ from 'obey'? Why should children honour their father and mother? (cf. Deut. 5:16; Ex 20:12)

6. What does Paul mean by 'do not provoke your children to anger'? Explain with real-life examples. How, then, are fathers to bring them up?

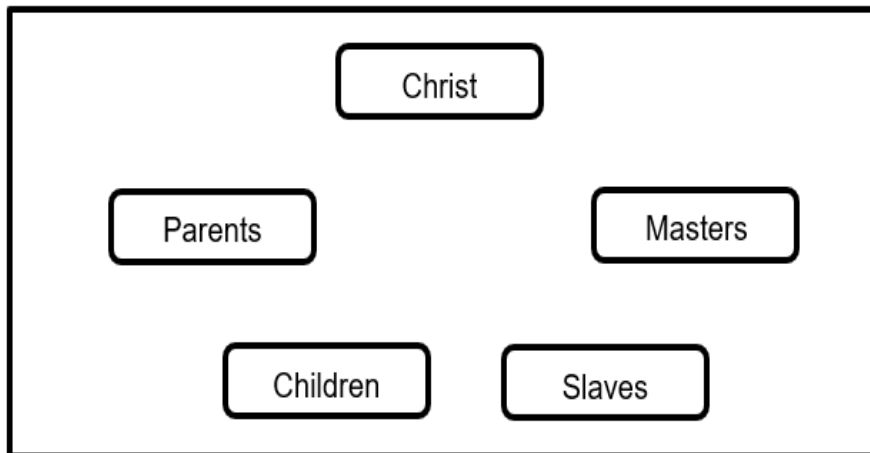
Ephesians 6:5-9: Bondservants & Masters

7. Who are the slaves really serving as they work?

8. Why is the master forbidden to treat his slave however he wants?

9. How might this section of the Scripture apply to us today, especially in a world where slavery is rare?

10. In the box below, draw arrows to indicate who submits to who.



Bringing It Together

11. How would you summarise Paul's instructions in one sentence?

Application

12. Reflect on the current state of your relationship with your parents/employer(s). Based on what we learned about how God want us to relate to one another today, share about any areas/attitude in your life that you think you'll need to change?

13. Reviewing what we have learned so far from the book of Ephesians, how does the submissive attitude help us in our maturing process to

a. build up a church?

b. become more like Christ?

Prayer

14. Pray for one another, especially to consider how submission looks like in our capacity.

Study 11: “Spiritual Warfare” (Ephesians 6:10-24)

Getting started

1. If you were a soldier going to war, what would you wear in order to protect yourself from getting injured or killed? (Note: you should answer this question base on your own experience / imagination / fashion sense / etc.)

Context/Recap

This final stirring passage is not just about our personal battle with evil; in the context of the whole letter, it is about the big ‘battle of the gospel’, with God’s holy people on one side (backed by God himself), and the devil and all his forces on the other. At stake is the proclamation of the gospel, the perseverance of God’s people, and the ongoing unity and growth of the church.

Digging in

Read Ephesians 6:10-24

2. Break into pairs. Identify the main sections and give them a short title.

Verses	Title

3. What do you think Paul means by - “be strong in the Lord?” How do we do it? (v11)

4. Who is the enemy that we face? How does 1:19-22 encourage us as we consider the battle?

5. Having been armed with God's armour and power, what outcome should we be looking for?

6. What are the parts of the full armour of God we are to put on?

Piece of Armor	What does it represent?

7. Congratulations, you have discovered the full armour of God! Very well done! Now you will have to draw it! (You didn't see that coming, did you?)

8. How does God's armour assist us in the battle?

9. How have these armour pieces been described earlier in Ephesians?

- Belt of truth: 1:13, 4:15, 4:21, 5:9
- Breastplate of righteousness: 4:24, 5:9
- Shoes with readiness of the gospel of peace: 2:14-17
- Shield of faith: 1:15, 2:8, 3:12, 3:17, 4:5, 4:13, to extinguish arrows of the evil one
- Helmet of salvation: 1:13
- Sword of the spirit: 1:13, 4:30, 5:18

10. What do you learn about the armour from these Old Testament passages?

- Isaiah 59:17 – the helmet of salvation, and the breastplate of righteousness.
- Isaiah 31 – the shield of faith
- Isaiah 11:4-5 – “Truth bound around his sides”
- Isaiah 52:7-10 - the shoes of the gospel of peace

11. Considering Q8 & Q9, what then does the armour represent, and how do you wear it?

12. What do we learn about prayer from verse 18-20?

13. Why is prayer so important in the battle?

14. Why is Paul sending Tychicus to them?

15. What is Paul's final prayer for this church? How does it summarise Paul's message in the rest of the letter?

Application

16. When do you think you'll find it hardest to stand firm?

17. What will be helpful to remember when those times come?

18. Think about the various pieces of armour in which of these areas are you vulnerable?

19. Think about the various pieces of armour in which of these areas are you vulnerable?

20. Consider your prayer life. How does passage encourage you in prayer and shape your prayers?

