

One: The Book of Ephesians
Small Group Discussion Resource
Ephesians 1:3-10

1. Watch the Bible Project video about the Book of Ephesians together or in advance. <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/ephesians/>
2. Read through Ephesians 1:3-10 together, taking notes on anything that stands out to you.
3. Think about the plans you make in your life, long term ones, short term ones. What stands out about the plans we make? Who or what is often at the centre of them?
4. Thinking then about God's plan, who or what is at the centre of God's plan? How does this impact our thinking about our involvement with God's plan?
5. It can sometimes be hard to see the Bible has having one grand design that flows from beginning to end. That might be because of the age of the text, or the different human authors, or the types of texts that make up our Bibles; what are the challenges you've faced in understanding the historical connection, and over-arching message of some or all of scripture?
6. When thinking through the redemptive narrative: Creation, The Fall, and then Restoration, why is it so important to understand that the story God has been telling begins in Genesis 1:1? What does this also tell us about the end of the story - and what is coming?
7. This section of Paul's letter is often titled "Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ". Read through verses 3-8 again, and try to find all the times it says either "in Christ" or "in him". Then discuss, what does this tell you about our relationship with God, "in Christ"? Why is it so important that we see ourselves through this "in Christ" mindset?
8. One of the two aspects of "in Christ" that Paul really focuses on is what we have, "in Christ." Throughout this section he often uses language to evoke the idea of a gift, or of wealth. Paul used this language intentionally to connect with his audience, why do you think

that was so important, and is that something we can relate to today in Canada?

9. Paul also writes a lot about who we are “in Christ”. Looking again at verses 3-8, what are some of the descriptions that Paul gives to describe *who* we are, “in Christ”?
10. When you think about your own identity, do you see yourself through that lens? That you are “in Christ”, what all that that means. Think about your own personal story, how has this changed over time?
11. In these verses, Paul repeatedly uses the word “us” to describe his audience. His language is meant to be highly inclusive. As a group, discuss this quote:

To the first century reader of this letter, the “us” included both Jewish believers and Gentile believers in the Ephesian church and beyond. First century Jews had a strong sense of being blessed, called, predestined. It was in their DNA. It was part of their history. But Paul wanted it to be clear that these things were being given over to all Christians now, whether they were Jewish or Gentile.

12. Thinking through the inclusivity of the language Paul uses, how can we make sure that we’re being appropriately inclusive as a church? Think through the implications in how we treat others, and how we treat ourselves.
13. Spend some time in prayer together as a group. Consider using this quote from Charles Spurgeon to guide or inform your prayers of thanksgiving:

“Our thanks are due to God for all temporal blessings; they are more than we deserve. But our thanks ought to go to God in thunders of hallelujahs for spiritual blessings. A new heart is better than a new coat. To feed on Christ is better than to have the best earthly food. To be an heir of God is better than being the heir of the greatest nobleman. To have God for our portion is blessed, infinitely more blessed than to own broad acres of land. God hath blessed us with spiritual blessings. These are the rarest, the richest, the most enduring of all blessings; they are priceless in value.”