

Separated Unto Death, United Unto Life

Ephesians 2:11-18

Slide 1

I. Introduction: God's Power Experienced Corporately

1. While undoubtedly having some Messianic Jews in their mix, the Ephesian church was in the heart of Gentile country. **It was to this mixed company that the soaring truths Paul presents here speak to how total is God's transforming power.**
 - A. It is a power that transforms the one, but His power is also experienced corporately.
2. Before we get into today's teaching, let's take a look at the Temple complex in Christ's time:

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[Temple Slide]

- B. As we move outward from the Temple building or the Holy of Holies, we enter into the Court of Priests, the first of several courts. **Here only male members of the priestly tribe of Levi were allowed entrance.** As we continue to move outward, we have the Court of Israel where any male Jew could enter. **Then into the Court of Women, which any Jew could enter.**
- C. From the Court of the Women, one descended five steps to a level area in which there was erected a 4.5' stone barricade that went around the temple enclosure; **then, after another level space, there were fourteen more steps that descended to the Court of the Gentiles.** According to the Jewish historian Josephus, the wall dividing Jews from Gentiles was marked at intervals by stone inscriptions stating that no foreigner was permitted to enter the Jewish enclosures upon penalty of death.¹

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 83.

With this picture in our minds, go with me to Ephesians 2:11.

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II. **Ephesians 2:11-13: Brought Near**

1. Whenever I read “therefore” in the Bible, I hold my breath. **Just where is God leading us?** What does He have to show us or say to us? **What will he reveal about Himself?** What we know is that with each “therefore”, God is bringing much needed clarity to something we need to know!
2. It is these verses that so concisely speak of the Gentile’s spiritual status then (before the cross of Calvary) and now (on this side of the cross). **What was once so far away as to be impossible and even unrecognizable is now within their spiritual grasp.**
3. In the first of three “therefore’s”, Paul exhorts the Gentiles to “remember” (for we are prone to wander) that not so long ago, they were children of wrath warring against their Creator and Redeemer.
 - A. He reminds them that they were not only children of wrath, but they were so blinded they did not even know their destiny.
 - B. He reminds them that while they lived among the Jews, they were not heir to the promises (God) made first with Adam and then with the nation of Israel beginning with Abraham. **They did not know of and were not a part of God’s covenant promises (a promise backed by God’s faithfulness and trustworthiness).**
 - C. He reminds them that “they had NO HOPE! NONE! NADA! ZERO!” **Salvation was a completely foreign concept.**
4. While the emphasis in these early verses was clearly on the Gentiles, Paul’s words at the end of verse 11, held great meaning for the Jews. **Even though Israel herself was near, for she had the**

covenants of promise, she walked with NO HOPE because she was circumcised in the flesh since the days of Abraham, but not in her heart. Meaning she had taken on the outward trappings of faith in God, but was not living a faith-directed, grace-enabling abiding relationship with and testifying of Him.

5. **Here in v2:13**, Paul masterfully uses space to bring home the central reality of how the infinite space (separation resulting from sin) between a Good and Holy God and His fallen creation was bridged. **Paul's choice of words here in vs 11-13, offers many subtle interpretive options for what he had in mind for near and far.**

I think its best taken in the context of vs 2:11-18 overall and with other developed themes and doctrines in the Bible. **Here, Paul certainly leads us to conclude that:**

- A. the Gentiles were far away from God with no hope of being in His presence...destined to an eternity away from Him. **In v4, we have the transforming power of God summed up in two words" "But God" that Paul is exhorts them to "Remember".**
 - B. While the Jews were "near", in the sense that they were recipients of God's covenant promises, they had not entered into the peace we will be reading about shortly. **Developing this thought one step further, we see a clear warning from Paul; that you can know who God is without receiving His gift of salvation...where believers are not just near, but they abide in and He in us.**
6. At the end of v13, Paul adds the clause "by the blood of Christ". **In doing this, Paul shifts (note: NOT diminishes) from the importance of our receiving Christs gracious gift of salvation BACK TO the gift-Giver. Our sin is evil and catastrophic. Don't ever become so self-absorbed and self-focused that we lose sight of the inherent truth of God's love, faithfulness, mercy, and forgiveness. Let us NOT cheapen His grace...consider:**

- A. For you, God became man;
- B. For you, the Son asked that the Roman Crucifixion and, more importantly, the cup of God's wrath be removed;
- C. For you, Jesus endured the wrath of the Father as payment for your sin;
- D. For you, the Christ cried from the cross, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

The stench and stain of sin cost God beyond our ability-to-conceive. I raise this again and again because we have the tendency to either (a) downplay this cost and therefore the "Cost-Payer" (is that a word?) or (b) beat ourselves up that God could never forgive me. I raise this again and again that we may rejoice that God determined to offer us a way back to the One we were made to honor, glorify, and be with; and

- E. For you, Christ came, died, and rose again; that you may be brought near and ultimately in Christ Jesus.

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III. Vs2:14-18: From "Near" to "In"

1. If Christ's gift of salvation can be thought of as the first of three treasures in today's passage, in these final verses Paul draws attention to two additional treasures from God:

- A. An eternal, ongoing relationship with Him; and
- B. Peace (peace with Him, peace in the cacophony of the world, peace in the midst of the enemy's attacks, peace even in our warring flesh).

Let's first take a look at peace.

2. Paul's words here would have sounded familiar to some, maybe many of the Jews for Isaiah 57 records:

¹⁷ I was enraged by their sinful greed;
 I punished them, and hid my face in anger,
 yet they kept on in their willful ways.
¹⁸ I have seen their ways, but I will heal them;
 I will guide them and restore comfort to Israel's mourners,
¹⁹ creating praise on their lips.
 Peace, peace, to those far and near,"
 says the LORD. "And I will heal them."
²⁰ But the wicked are like the tossing sea,
 which cannot rest,
 whose waves cast up mire and mud.
²¹ "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

– Isaiah 57:17-21, NIV

3. First thing we note in v14 is that God does not simply bring peace like he has a trailer full and doles it out in some order of priority. Instead, His peace is in never-ending supply as He, Jesus, is our peace. As we draw in to Him, we have access to the unlimited wellspring of peace.

The peace Paul is talking about here is “eirēnē”, meaning a state of “well-being” or of harmony. More specifically, Paul is saying Christ:

- A. First, united each of us with Himself;
- B. Second, He did the impossible by setting aside (by fulfilling the law) the enmity between Jew and Gentile alike.
 - i. The separation from Jew and Gentile was not just a notion. With 613 commandments, even more rules, and related cultural norms, separation of Jew from Gentile was “normal” and “expected”, because faith is essentially

a world-view and a world-view governs how we engage with the world around us.

Even further, think about my brief description of the primary courtyards associated with the Temple...**if everyday interactions between Jew and Gentile did not speak loudly enough of the division between them, the Temple complex removed any doubt.** Those separate courtyards, the levels, and the signs of Gentiles entering upon risk of death spoke volumes!

- One thing we didn't talk about regarding the temple was the veil. **It was a physical representation of the greatest separation of all...** the spiritual separation between God and His creation. **It was at Christ's death that this veil was torn from top to bottom (Mark 15:38)** representing that man can move from "near to in" that is in view here in Ephesians 2.

This is why we, as Christians, must stand against Cultural Social Justice and for God's Biblical Social Justice!

- Minor (meaning short, but not unimportant) Point: A key tenant of being woke is "division", the exact division we see in this passage today. **The division that Christ died to eliminate.** One person against another based on their differences, rather than one person for another based on their shared heritage as children of God. **Put differently, the woke diminish what God made in His image with one group while raising the second group to the pinnacle of being god themselves.**

- ii. In all of this, Paul was helping the Gentiles to process all that they were hearing, that is Christ had set aside the law WHILE keeping an emphasis on the morality of the Jewish faith as He taught and lived out. **I believe the Lord led us to examine this Scripture at this depth so we may see that Jesus made an upside-down world right-side-up.** He took two peoples and made them one AND not just one, BUT one with Him – this is the UNITY the God of the universe has in mind for us!

iii. Before we leave Paul's writings here regarding peace and reconciliation, let's examine them from the corporate reconciliation first noted in v14 and later emphasized in v16:

(1) The Cross of Calvary not only offered (and offers) the path for each to be reconciled to Himself, but all (believers) to be reconciled together or corporately in Him. **It is in and through this reconciliation that enduring peace is the normal of everyday “being” and not a result of man’s doing.** Two thoughts about this idea of “being” verses “doing” peace:

a. This reconciliation means that we are not just not at war, but that we are friendly. **Yet, it goes beyond even this as it carries with it the idea that we are unified in goals and objectives.** Yet, it goes beyond even this as it means we are no longer complete aliens from God (**with no access and no hope of access; really with no understanding of nor desire for God**), but have a free and clear path to ongoing relationship with Him whom is our peace. **Paul says it this way in 2 Corinthians 5:16-20:**

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

– 2 Corinthians 5:16-20, NIV

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b. Countless time and resources have been spent by good people toward the admirable goal of achieving world peace. **For many, peace is held up as one of the highest of virtues.** Yet, in Solomon's words, this has proven to be like chasing the wind. **Why?** Because the enemy of peace is not war between competing man ideas, but with alienation from God – simply put, it's a sin issue! **To know peace, in the experiential and spiritual sense that God wants to bless us with, we must keep the main thing, the main thing.** Know, love, and obediently walk with God.

4. V18: Finally, let's consider the Treasure of an Ongoing Relationship With Christ.

A. We have a duty to live in this harmony. **Christ died that we would not have enmity with Him nor with one another.** No matter your socio-economic position, **your career path**, the sins of your life, **whether Yankee or Southerner**, no matter our outward differences, **differences of circumstances, differences of opinions...the unity of Christ is found in and through the agency of the Holy Spirit...**and the expression of this unity is found in our (corporately) living in His unity.

B. While reconciliation may rightly be thought of as a process concluding with a specific event, having access reflects our having an ongoing relationship with the LORD of the universe. **Thank you Jesus!**

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IV. Closing

1. The Gospel reduces all people to the same starting point; that is Calvary brings us all near. **At the same time, the Gospel lifts those confessing Christ to the heavens.**
2. Individual Salvation and corporate unity are supernatural gifts from God. **That is, our peace and unity cannot be found in man's**

This is why the H.S. is front in center in our Core Values, Teaching, prayers and Everyday living

intelligence (philosophy) or application of this intelligence (politics/force), but only by being knit to the holy one together in the heavenly places. Believer and unbeliever alike, will you join me in receiving and walking lives reconciled to our God?!

V. Communion

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- 1 John 1:5-9

Ephesians 2:11-18

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I. Introduction: God's Power Experienced Corporately

II. Ephesians 2:11-13: Brough Neat

- Hopeless apart from Jesus
- “But God...”
- You can know who God is without receiving His gift of salvation. Don’t ever become so self-absorbed and self-focused that we lose sight of the inherent truth of God’s love, faithfulness, mercy, and forgiveness.
- Gift 1: Salvation

III. Ephesians 2:14-18: From “Near” to “In”

- Gifts 2 & 3: An eternal, ongoing relationship AND peace.
- Christ first unites with Himself and then He does the impossible(outside of Him) of uniting Jew and Gentile.
- Unified in worship, goals, objectives, and purpose.
- Earthly wars (aka lack of Biblical peace) are a sin issue.

Additional Scripture References: Is 57:17-21, NIV; 2 Co 5:16-20, NIV

IV. Closing: Knit to the Holy One

- To all, Calvary was gruesome death. To those receiving Christ, is was also the joy of eternal life, together, with Him.

V. Communion: 1 John 1:5-9

5-Day Devotional **Ephesians 2:11-18** **Separated Unto Death, United Unto Life**

Day 1: Remembering Where We Were

Reading: Eph 2:11-13

Devotional: "Remember." This simple command carries profound weight. Before Christ, we lived without hope, separated from God by an insurmountable chasm. The Gentiles were "far off," excluded from covenant promises. Yet even the Jews, though "near" through heritage, lacked true peace without heart transformation.

Today, pause and remember your "before Christ" story. What hopelessness characterized your life? What emptiness filled your days? This remembering isn't meant to shame but to magnify the miracle: you have been "brought near by the blood of Christ." The infinite distance has been bridged—not by your effort, but by His sacrifice. Let gratitude flood your heart today as you consider the staggering cost of your nearness to God. What specific aspects of hopelessness characterized your life before knowing Christ's peace?

Day 2: The Cost of Being Brought Near

Reading: Isa 53:1-12

Devotional: "By the blood of Christ"—five words that contain the universe's greatest transaction. We often focus on what we receive (salvation, peace, hope) while minimizing what it cost the Giver. For you, God became man. For you, Jesus endured the cup of wrath. For you, He cried, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" The stench and stain of sin cost God beyond our ability to conceive. Don't cheapen His grace by either downplaying this cost or believing you're beyond forgiveness.

Today, sit with the weight of Calvary. Let the reality of Christ's suffering pierce through your spiritual complacency. Then let the wonder of His love overwhelm you—He deemed you worth it all. How does contemplating the cost of your salvation change the way you approach God today?

Day 3: Jesus is Our Peace

Reading: Eph 2:14-16, Isa 57:17-21

Devotional: God doesn't simply distribute peace from an abundant supply—He IS our peace. Jesus didn't just bring harmony; He embodies it. He demolished the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile, between humanity and God, between warring factions within our own hearts. The temple veil that separated humanity from God's presence was torn from top to bottom at Christ's death, signifying complete access. Peace isn't achieved through human effort, philosophy, or politics—it flows from reconciliation with God.

As you draw near to Christ today, you access an unlimited wellspring of peace. In the chaos of your circumstances, in the warfare of your flesh, in the attacks of the enemy—He remains your peace. Not a temporary ceasefire, but permanent harmony with your Creator. In what area of your life do you need to access Christ's peace rather than striving for peace through your own efforts?

Day 4: One Body, One Spirit, One Hope **Reading: Eph 2:16-18, 2 Cor 5:16-21**

Devotional: The cross accomplished both vertical and horizontal reconciliation—bringing us to God and to one another. Christ created "one new humanity" from previously hostile groups. This isn't mere tolerance or coexistence; it's supernatural unity. We share common goals, common identity, and common access to the Father through one Spirit. The world's answer to division is power, force, or superficial unity that erases distinctiveness. God's answer is the cross, which reduces all people to the same starting point while simultaneously elevating all believers to heavenly places.

Today, examine your relationships with other believers. Are you living in the unity Christ died to create? Do you see fellow Christians through the lens of Calvary or through worldly divisions? The ministry of reconciliation has been entrusted to us—we are ambassadors of the peace Christ achieved. What walls of division do you need to allow Christ to demolish in your relationships with other believers?

Day 5: Access to The Father **Reading: Eph 2:18-22, Heb 4:14-16**

Devotional: "Through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit." Access—not just a one-time entry, but ongoing relationship. You are no longer a complete alien with no hope of approach. The Holy of Holies, once entered only by the high priest once a year, is now your constant dwelling place. You have a free and clear path to ongoing relationship with the God of the universe. This isn't about a past event of salvation alone; it's about present communion.

Today, you can approach the throne of grace with confidence. You can pour out your heart to your Father. You can experience His presence, hear His voice, and walk in His peace. Don't settle for knowing about God—live in relationship with Him. Keep the main thing the main thing: know, love, and obediently walk with God. How will you exercise your access to the Father today through prayer, worship, and abiding in His presence?

Small Group Study Guide

Ephesians 2:11-18

Separated Unto Death, United Unto Life

Opening Prayer: Begin your time together by asking God to open your hearts to His Word and give you wisdom to apply His truth to your lives.

Opening Question: Share about a time when you felt like an "outsider" looking in. How did it feel when someone welcomed you into their group or community?

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. **Reflect on verses 11-12.** Paul tells the Gentiles to "remember" their former state. Why is it important for believers to remember where they came from spiritually? What are the dangers of forgetting?
2. **The sermon emphasized that Gentiles had "NO HOPE."** How does our culture today reflect this same hopelessness apart from Christ? Where do you see people searching for hope in all the wrong places?
3. **Paul warns that you can be "near" (like the Jews with their covenant knowledge) without actually receiving salvation.** How might someone today be "near" to Christianity without being "in" Christ? What's the difference?
4. **Personal Application:** When did you move from being "far off" to being "brought near by the blood of Christ"? Share your testimony briefly with the group.
5. **The sermon lists what Christ endured "for you."** Which aspect of Christ's sacrifice strikes you most deeply right now, and why?
 - a. God became man
 - b. Jesus asked for the cup to be removed
 - c. He endured the Father's wrath
 - d. He cried, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"
6. **The pastor warned against two extremes:** (a) downplaying the cost of our salvation, or (b) believing God could never forgive us. Which extreme are you more prone to fall into? How can we maintain a biblical balance?
7. **Christ abolished the "dividing wall of hostility."** The Temple had physical barriers separating Jews from Gentiles, with signs threatening death. What are

the "dividing walls" in our church or community today? How does the Gospel call us to respond to these divisions?

8. **Read verse 16 together.** Paul emphasizes that Christ reconciled both groups (Jew and Gentile) to God "in one body." Why is corporate reconciliation (unity among believers) essential to the Gospel message, not just individual salvation?
9. **The sermon mentioned that "woke" ideology promotes division based on differences, while Christ died to eliminate division.** Without getting political, how can the church be a counter-cultural witness to unity in a divided world? What practical steps can we take?
10. **Verse 18 says we have "access to the Father by one Spirit."** What does it mean practically to have ongoing access to God? How should this truth change our daily lives and prayer habits?
11. **The sermon stated: "We have a duty to live in this harmony."** What conflicts or divisions exist in your life right now (family, church, workplace) where you need to actively pursue Christ-centered peace and reconciliation?

Key Takeaways:

1. **The Reality of Separation** - Before Christ, Gentiles were far from God with no hope, no covenant, and no access to His presence.
2. **The Cost of Reconciliation** - Christ's blood bridged the infinite gap between a holy God and fallen humanity at an incomprehensible cost.
3. **Christ IS Our Peace** - Jesus doesn't just bring peace; He IS our peace, uniting us vertically with God and horizontally with each other.
4. **From Near to In** - Salvation moves us from being "near" God to being "in" Christ, with ongoing access to the Father.
5. **Corporate Unity** - The Gospel creates supernatural unity among believers, breaking down human-made divisions.

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. **2 Corinthians 5:18-20 calls us "ambassadors" with a "ministry of reconciliation."**
 - a. Who in your life needs to hear the message of reconciliation with God?

- b. Is there someone you need to be reconciled with personally?
- c. What's one specific step you can take this week?

2. **The sermon closed with this question: "Will you join me in receiving and walking lives reconciled to our God?**

- a. For believers: What does "walking" a reconciled life look like practically this week?
- b. For seekers: What questions or barriers keep you from receiving Christ's gift of reconciliation?

Closing Prayer:

- Thank God for the costly gift of reconciliation through Christ's blood
- Ask for hearts that remember where we came from and never take grace for granted
- Pray for supernatural unity in your church and small group
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any divisions we're tolerating or creating
- Pray for opportunities to be ambassadors of reconciliation this week

Discussion Questions

Ephesians 2:11-18

Separated Unto Death, United Unto Life

1. How does understanding the physical layout of the Temple courts, with its barriers between Jews and Gentiles, deepen your appreciation for what Christ accomplished on the cross?
2. Paul urges the Gentiles to 'remember' their former state of hopelessness. Why is remembering where we came from spiritually important for our ongoing walk with Christ?
3. What is the difference between being 'near' to God (like the Jews with their covenants) and being 'in' Christ, and how does this distinction challenge cultural Christianity today?
4. The sermon states that 'you can know who God is without receiving His gift of salvation.' How does this warning apply to those who grow up in church or religious environments?
5. In what ways does the modern 'woke' emphasis on division mirror the Jew-Gentile separation that Christ died to abolish, and how should Christians respond?
6. Paul writes that Christ 'is our peace' rather than simply giving us peace. How does viewing peace as a Person rather than a circumstance change how you pursue peace in daily life?
7. The sermon emphasizes that world peace cannot be achieved through human effort because it is fundamentally a sin issue. How does this truth reorient our approach to conflict resolution in relationships and society?
8. What does it mean practically that believers have ongoing 'access' to the Father through the Spirit, and how can we live more fully in this reality?
9. How does the reality that Christ's blood paid an incomprehensible cost guard us against both cheapening God's grace and believing we are beyond forgiveness?
10. The sermon concludes that individual salvation and corporate unity are inseparable supernatural gifts. How should this truth shape the way we view and engage with other believers who differ from us?

Dinner Conversation Starters

Ephesians 2:11-18

Separated Unto Death, United Unto Life

1. Unity in Diversity

The sermon discusses how Gentiles and Jews, once separated, were united through Christ. How can we apply this idea of unity in diversity to our family and community today?

2. The Concept of Peace

According to the sermon, peace is not just an absence of conflict but a state of well-being and harmony through Christ. How do you find peace in your daily life, and how can we as a family create a more peaceful environment?

3. God's Transforming Power

The sermon highlights how God's power transforms individuals and communities. Can you think of a time when you experienced or witnessed transformational change, either personally or in someone else?

4. Understanding Reconciliation

The message talks about reconciliation both with God and among people. What are some ways we can practice reconciliation in our relationships with each other?

5. The Meaning of Hope

Before knowing Christ, the Gentiles were described as having "NO HOPE." What does hope mean to you, and how can we encourage each other to maintain hope even through challenging times?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

Ephesians 2:11-18

Separated Unto Death, United Unto Life

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Learning to Share:** Teach children how sharing toys and space with friends reflects God's desire for welcoming people into His family.

Discussion Questions: When you share your toys with a friend, how do you think it makes them feel? How do you feel when someone shares with you?

2. **Understanding Differences:** Help kids appreciate the beautiful diversity in their friends and encourage them to include everyone in play.

Discussion Questions: What is something special about one of your friends that makes them different from you? Why is it important to play with everyone, even if they are different?

3. **Simple Acts of Kindness:** Encourage acts of kindness, like helping a friend or saying kind words, as a way to show God's love.

Discussion Questions: Can you think of a time when you helped a friend? How did that make them feel? How did it make you feel?

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Building Friendships:** Discuss how including others and resolving conflicts can reflect the unity God desires for us.

Discussion Questions: Have you ever settled an argument with a friend? What did you do, and how did it improve your friendship?

2. **Respecting Diversity:** Encourage kids to respect their peers regardless of their background, understanding that everyone needs the love of Jesus.

Discussion Questions: Do you have any classmates who have a different cultural or religious background than you? How can you share the truth about Jesus with them through your actions and words?

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Handling Peer Pressure:** Equip teens with strategies to stand up for inclusivity and kindness when they see others being excluded

Discussion Questions: Can you share a time when you or someone else was left out? How did you handle it, and what would you do differently now?

2. **Embracing Reconciliation:** Discuss the importance of forgiveness and making amends in friendships and other relationships.

Discussion Questions: What are some steps you can take to reconcile with someone after a disagreement? How does forgiveness play a role in healing relationships?

3. **Navigating Online Spaces:** Encourage discussions on how to responsibly and compassionately engage in social media, standing for Christian unity and rejecting falsehood and combative division.

Discussion Questions: What are some positive ways you can use social media to bring people together rather than divide them? How can you be a force for Jesus online?

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

Ephesians 2:11-18

Separated Unto Death, United Unto Life

1. Promoting Christians Unity

Biblical Application: Ephesians 2:14 - "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility." In school or community groups, actively work to eliminate cliques and barriers by inviting others to join conversations or activities, creating a more Christ-like environment.

Scenario: When you notice someone sitting alone at lunch or during a group activity, invite them to join you and your friends, expressing God's unity by bridging social divides.

Discussion Question: How can small acts of welcoming kindness change the dynamic of your group and reflect God's desire for unity among His people?

2. Mending Relationships Through Forgiveness

Biblical Application: 2 Corinthians 5:18 - "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." Practice forgiveness and reconciliation with friends and family to restore relationships and model Christ's forgiveness.

Scenario: After a misunderstanding with a friend online, reach out to resolve the issue by apologizing or discussing the disagreement openly, prioritizing reconciliation over resentment.

Discussion Question: What steps can you take to forgive someone who has wronged you, and why is it important to pursue peace in relationships?

3. Cultivating a Healthy Online Presence

Biblical Application: Colossians 4:6 - "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." Use your digital platforms to spread positivity and encouragement, showcasing God's love and grace in every interaction.

Scenario: Share uplifting messages or scriptures on social media that inspire and encourage your friends, especially when you see negative or divisive posts dominating the feed.

Discussion Question: How can sharing positive content online influence your circle of friends and potentially change the tone of online interactions?

4. Demonstrating Christ-Like Love and Peace

Biblical Application: John 13:35 - "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Let your love and peace be evident in how you treat others, demonstrating deep care and support in all your interactions.

Scenario: When a friend is going through a tough time, offer support by listening, praying for them, and reminding them of God's peace and presence in their life.

Discussion Question: In what ways can you be a beacon of Christ's love and peace in your social circles, and how does this reflect on your relationship with Him?

5. Living Out Reconciliation in Team Activities

Biblical Application: Romans 12:18 - "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Strive for peaceful and cooperative interactions in team sports or group projects, focusing on teamwork and collective success.

Scenario: If tension arises in a sports team or a group project, initiate a team conversation to address concerns and work towards harmonizing efforts for common goals.

Discussion Question: How can being a peacemaker in team settings improve not only the group's success but also your witness as a follower of Christ?