

Our **Virtual**

# PowerGroup

FROM DEATH TO LIFE

Week 4 Study

## Icebreaker

Can you think of a time in your life when you felt like an outsider? How would you describe that experience?

## Passage 1 Ephesians 2:11-12

Paul describes how things were for Gentiles (unless you're Jewish, you're a Gentile) as they related to those who were Jewish. Becoming part of the Jewish community was very difficult. Words like 'separate,' 'excluded from citizenship', and 'without hope' within verses 11-12 would leave anyone without much hope.

**Reflection** How does Paul describe their life prior to Christ in verse 12?

In your opinion, which of the five phrases seems most severe?

What was the purpose of circumcision in the Old Testament?

## Passage 2 Ephesians 2:13-18

Jesus is our peace! And he brought these separate groups of Jews and Gentiles together into one by removing barriers and walls, long thought to be an impossible task. If you think about our own lives, you can see what's been done. We have things dividing us, perhaps causing a sense of unrest and a lack of peace. Jesus has torn down these divisions, removing that unrest, bringing diverse people into one community. In Jesus, we find the ability to live together in peace! His peace is showered on us all, and we're given direct access to God the Father, all brought through Jesus.

**Reflection** What changed starting in verse 13? Who brought about the change?

Look up Hebrews 9:22, 10:3-4, and 10:10. How does this relate to the blood of Christ in v.13?

What are some ways, according to verses 14-16, that Christ brought peace?

What does this tell us about the relationship we should have with others in the church?

### Passage 3 Ephesians 2:19-22

In this section Paul tells the Ephesian church that the Gentiles are no longer separated from the promises of God. Paul tells both the Jews and the Gentiles that they are both part of one big family. He informs them that it is through Christ that we are being reconciled together. The same way Jesus died for our sins to show love to us is the same way we should accept and love one another.

**Reflection** What does it mean to be a citizen or member of something?

What are some of the images that God uses to describe this new entity encompassing Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians?

People from hundreds of different cultures comprise the household of God. What are a few things that we all have in common?

What are a few implications of this passage for how Christians of different races relate?

### Application

In this passage Paul is saying that the same way in which Jesus died for those who were His enemies at one time in order to reconcile us with the father, we should be willing to die to our ourselves in order to love those who we do not like very much. Prejudice is not a new issue, but it is an issue that should be eliminated within the church. There are many things that separate, but Jesus brings unity!

**As a member of God's household, you have lots of brothers and sisters. What would a church (a community of Christians) look like that was truly living out the vision of this passage? What is one step you can take in order to bring unity to the church?**