

Small Group Guide: Ephesians 1:15-2:7

"Living in Christ: Understanding Your Spiritual Power and Position"

Sermon Summary (5 minutes)

Have someone briefly summarize the main points:

- Paul prays for believers to have spiritual wisdom and revelation
- We have access to the same resurrection power that raised Christ from the dead
- Before Christ, we were spiritually dead in our sins
- God's great love made us alive and seated us with Christ in heavenly places
- We shouldn't live like we're eating "peanut butter and jelly" when God has provided a "sumptuous buffet" of spiritual blessings

Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

Understanding Our Spiritual Blessings

1. **The Cruise Ship Illustration:** The pastor shared about a man who ate peanut butter and jelly in his room, not realizing all meals were included. In what ways do Christians sometimes live below their spiritual privileges? What "spiritual blessings in heavenly places" might we be missing out on?
2. **Head Knowledge vs. Heart Knowledge:** The message distinguished between knowing *about* God and knowing God *personally* (like knowing facts about Michael Jordan vs. actually knowing him). How would you describe the difference? Where are you on this spectrum?
3. **Paul's Prayer (Ephesians 1:17-18):** Paul prays for "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." Why can't we truly know God through intellectual pursuit alone? What role does the Holy Spirit play in our understanding?

The Power Available to Us

4. **Resurrection Power:** According to Ephesians 1:19-20 and Romans 8:11, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to believers. How does this truth change the way we should approach:
 - Persistent sin struggles?
 - Difficult circumstances?
 - Our daily walk with Christ?
5. **Programs vs. Power:** The sermon stated, "No program can ever replace the power of God active in the believer." Why do we often try to rely on our own strength or human programs instead of God's power? What would it look like practically to depend on the Holy Spirit's power this week?

Our Position in Christ

6. **Christ's Authority:** Ephesians 1:20-23 describes Jesus as "far above all principality and power and might and dominion." How does knowing Christ's supreme authority affect your perspective on:
 - Spiritual warfare?
 - Current world events?
 - Your personal challenges?
7. **Seated with Christ:** Ephesians 2:6 says we are "seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." What does this mean practically? How should this truth affect our daily mindset?

From Death to Life

8. **Dead in Trespasses:** Ephesians 2:1-3 paints a dark picture of our condition before Christ—spiritually dead, following Satan, deserving wrath. Why is it important to remember what we were saved *from*, not just what we were saved *for*?
9. **But God...** (Ephesians 2:4): These two words mark a dramatic shift in the passage. Share your "but God" story—how did God intervene in your life when you were dead in sin?
10. **Living in Christ:** The sermon emphasized being "persistent and faithful" rather than "hit and miss" in our faith. What are some practical indicators that someone is truly "living in Christ" versus just having made a past commitment?

Key Takeaways (10 minutes)

Have different group members read these aloud:

1. **We have access to incredible spiritual blessings** - God wants us to experience the full buffet of His provision, not settle for spiritual poverty.
2. **The Holy Spirit provides resurrection power** - The same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in every believer and enables us to live victoriously.
3. **Christ is far above all powers** - Jesus has supreme authority over every earthly and spiritual power, and we share in His victory.
4. **We were dead, but God made us alive** - Understanding the depth of our former condition helps us appreciate the magnitude of God's grace.
5. **Living in Christ requires active, persistent faith** - It's not enough to have made a past commitment; we must daily choose to live for Christ and rely on His power.

Practical Application (15 minutes)

Personal Reflection

Take 2-3 minutes of silence for each person to consider:

- Am I living in the fullness of what God has provided, or am I settling for less?
- What area of my life needs the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit this week?
- Am I being persistent and faithful, or "hit and miss" in my walk with Christ?

This Week's Challenge

Choose one or more of the following:

Daily Practice:

- Read Ephesians 1 every day this week, asking God to reveal what blessings you may be missing

- Each morning, consciously "set your mind on things above" (Colossians 3:1-2) before checking your phone or starting your day
- Pray Paul's prayer (Ephesians 1:17-19) for yourself and one other person daily

Specific Action:

- Identify one area where you've been trying to succeed in your own strength. Surrender it to God and ask for Holy Spirit power instead
- If you've been "hit and miss" in your faith, confess this to God and one trusted person, then create a specific plan to be more consistent
- Share your testimony of how God made you alive (your "but God" moment) with at least one person this week

Prayer Time (10-15 minutes)

Break into groups of 2-4 and pray specifically for:

1. **Wisdom and revelation** - That God would give each person deeper knowledge of Him (Ephesians 1:17)
2. **Enlightened hearts** - That we would truly understand the hope of our calling, our inheritance, and the power available to us (Ephesians 1:18-19)
3. **Victory over specific struggles** - Share one area where you need resurrection power to overcome
4. **Gratitude** - Thank God for making us alive when we were dead in sin
5. **Consistency** - Pray for persistent, faithful walks with Christ rather than "hit and miss" commitment

Closing Thought

"God sees us as a pearl of untold value. He reached down from heaven into the depths of our depravity and lifted us up to be seated with Him at the Father's right hand. Don't live like you're eating peanut butter and jelly when God has prepared a feast for you."