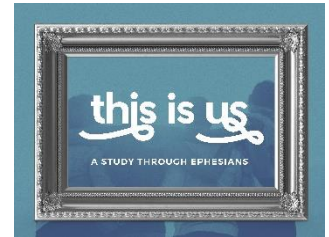


Main Street Church - Life Group Guide

Series: *THIS IS US – A Study Through Ephesians*

Message: Part 2 – *Count Your Blessings*

February 16, 2020. Speaker: Shawn Vandop – Lead Pastor



Connect (15min) – share refreshments.

1. **This Is Us...** *What is one thing we don't know about you or your family yet?

2. **February Focus:** Split into groups of 3-4 (or men/women)

a. Share a *highlight from your Devotions* (reading/prayer) this past week:

- An encouragement, challenge, insight of focus...

- Did anyone read or listen to the Book of Ephesians this past week? What is one thing that impacted you?

b. Pray for One Another (in smaller groups) – Take 2min of quiet reflection to consider & pray about the following:

Your Faith, Family/Friends & Focus

i. What is one way that we can pray for your faith & relationship with God this week?

ii. What is one way that we can pray for your family/friends this week?

iii. What is one way that we can pray for your focus this week? (your work, school, ministry...)

*Share with your smaller group **and pray** for these three areas for the person on your right.

Sunday Message Discussion (35-40min)

1. **You Are Loved!** What is one way that you experienced or received Love from someone this past week?

Share your Top 2 [Love Languages](#) if you know them. (ref. p.3 of this guide)

> *Words of Affirmation – Physical Touch – Receiving Gifts – Quality Time – Acts of Service*

2. Read [Ephesians 1:1-14](#) and consider these two questions as you read the passage.

a. What does this passage of Scripture teach you about who God is?

b. What does this passage of Scripture teach you about who you are?

3. Read [Ephesians 1:3](#).

a. How would you define a *Blessing*?

b. Is there any difference between a *temporal blessing* and a *spiritual blessing*? Describe & discuss the difference.

c. What does Paul (the author) mean when he says that we are “*blessed with every spiritual blessing*?”

They are the key benefits of a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The word *blessing* in [Ephesians 1:3](#) is a translation of the Greek word *eulogy*, and it means “to speak well of.” Since God is the one acting in this verse, we can say that God has spoken good things about us, or pronounced good things for our benefit. The good things that God has decreed for us are probably beyond our ability to number, but Paul outlines a few in [Ephesians 1:4–13](#), following his statement in verse 3.

d. Do you think that we are blessed by God because we praise Him, or, do we praise Him because we are blessed? What's the difference? Have you ever tried to *manipulate* God into blessing you?

“Have you ever done something for someone or given something to them *just to bless them*...meaning they didn't earn it, and you weren't paying them back? This is how God blesses us. We did not ask for it, nor did we earn it. Quite the contrary, actually, yet He has blessed us and continues to bless us. He does so because He loves us. Unfortunately, we have a predisposition toward a works-based theology. All that means is that we prefer to earn love rather than receive it for free. This is why so many wrestle with the Gospel. It cannot be won, but the more we know God, the better this news becomes as we realize we could never earn God's love through our tainted works. We must therefore rely on His love and grace. And while it can be difficult to relinquish our grip on working for God's approval, once we do, it is the most freeing moment in our lives. Instead of working so hard to appease God or manipulate Him into blessing us, we can spend our time praising Him for His grace in our lives. As we understand how much we have been blessed by God, we begin to appreciate His love in new ways and are drawn to worship Him with our lives.” – Mark Driscoll.

4. IN CHRIST

- a. What does it mean to live our lives IN Christ? Discuss.
- b. How does an Identity in Christ free Christians from trying to manipulate God?

5. Four Spiritual Blessings

Shawn explained that a person who is IN Christ experience four blessings. Do you remember what they were?

You are **CHOSEN, VALUABLE, LOVED & FORGIVEN.*

- a. We are a blessed people! What do our *blessings* reveal about the character of God?
- b. Why does God bless us? How does being *blessed by God* affect how we bless others?
- c. Which of those four blessings impacts you the most today...?

6. Making Decisions - Read [Ephesians 1:4-5](#)

- a. How does this verse impact you?
- b. How do you tend to process and make decisions?
Do you evaluate and weigh your options over time or do you tend to decide in the moment?

7. Read [Ephesians 1:7-8](#)

- a. How does it make you feel to know that when we are IN Christ, God looks at us as Holy and without fault?
- b. How can this truth impact and influence the way we see ourselves & others, and live our lives?

Application & Prayer (15min)

1. READ or LISTEN to [Ephesians 1](#) every day this week and let the truth of who God says you are sink in.

In Christ, you are chosen. That's who you are. You are not what others think, not your past, not your failures. God has chosen you, values you, loves you, and has forgiven you.

What is one thing you can do this week to begin to live with a greater awareness of this truth in your life? Discuss.

>> Use your group responses as a focus for prayer.

2. GROUP PRAYER

- a. **Thank God** for the generosity He has shown us in the way He blesses us.
God, thank you for blessing me with/by...
- b. **Pray** that we will see opportunities to bless others, including praying for them...
Lord, help me...to seek out opportunities to bless & pray for people around me.

3. BLESS OTHERS! Intentionally bless a friend/family member and a stranger this week.

4. COMMIT TO MEMORY: Ephesians 1:4

Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes.

Resources:






***Commentary:** <https://www.gotquestions.org/spiritual-blessings.html> <https://tonyevans.org/identity-in-christ>

***Book:** [Who Do You Think You Are? Finding Your True Identity in Christ](#), Mark Driscoll. (Based on Ephesians)

***YouTube Videos:**

- [Overview: Ephesians. \(The Bible Project\)](#) - [What is the Purpose of the Book of Ephesians? \(Bible Study Tools Videos\)](#)
- [Background to the Book of Ephesians. \(The Beat by Allen Parr\)](#) - [The 7 Churches of Revelation \(Ephesus\) – It's Background](#)

THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES

WHICH LOVE LANGUAGE?	HOW TO COMMUNICATE	ACTIONS TO TAKE	THINGS TO AVOID
 WORDS OF AFFIRMATION	Encourage, affirm, appreciate, empathize. Listen actively.	Send an unexpected note, text, or card. Encourage genuinely and often.	Non-constructive criticism, not recognizing or appreciating effort.
 PHYSICAL TOUCH	Non-verbal - use body language and touch to emphasize love.	Hug, kiss, hold hands, show physical affection regularly. Make intimacy a thoughtful priority.	Physical neglect, long stints without intimacy, receiving affection coldly.
 RECEIVING GIFTS	Thoughtfulness, make your spouse a priority, speak purposefully.	Give thoughtful gifts and gestures. Small things matter in a big way. Express gratitude when receiving a gift.	Forgetting special occasions, unenthusiastic gift receiving.
 QUALITY TIME	Uninterrupted and focused conversations. One-on-one time is critical.	Create special moments together, take walks and do small things with your spouse. Weekend getaways are huge.	Distractions when spending time together. Long stints without one-on-one time.
 ACTS OF SERVICE	Use action phrases like "I'll help...". They want to know you're with them, partnered with them.	Do chores together or make them breakfast in bed. Go out of your way to help alleviate their daily workload.	Making the requests of others a higher priority, lacking follow-through on tasks big and small.

GRAPHIC BY **FIERCEMARRIAGE.COM**

BASED ON "THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES", A BOOK BY DR. GARY CHAPMAN

Announcements

*Our NEXT LIFE GROUP MEETING: DATE / TIME / LOCATION. SNACK DUTY: _____.

>> Plan to share Communion as a Life Group in one of your meetings in February.

MAIN STREET WOMEN: Winter Study - Faithful

*Wednesdays. February 19-March 18. 9am-10:30am. Chapel.

Explore crucial moments in the lives of five Old Testament figures—Queen Esther, Gideon, Hosea, Malachi, and Nehemiah.

Strengthen your faith as you walk alongside these larger-than-life figures who all chose to obey God no matter the circumstances.

Cost: \$25 – includes study journal & refreshments. Childcare provided.

*Please pre-register: www.mainstreetchurch.ca/women

PRAYER SUMMIT

*Sun. February 23rd. 5pm-FREE Family Dinner. 6pm-Worship, Prayer & Communion.

BAPTISM SUNDAY

*Sun. March 1st. Morning Services. Info & Registration – www.mainstreetchurch.ca/baptism.

PARTNERSHIP CLASS

*Sun. March 1st. 6pm-8pm. Chapel. Coffee/Tea, Dessert & Childcare Provided.

If you have attended our Next Steps class and would like to learn more about partnering with us at Main Street Church please join us. *Partnership is required for those in leadership positions.*

Info & Registration – www.mainstreetchurch.ca/partnership

Special Life Group Leaders Huddle [More Info & Invitation Coming Soon!] – [Please Mark Your Calendars!](#)

*Dave Enns – from [North Coast Church](#) in San Diego – will be our guest speaker. North Coast Church has an amazing Small Group Culture, with over 5000 adult group participants (90% of the church adults). Dave Enns has been a key staff member of NCC since 1990.

Two of the books we recommend for Life Groups Leaders – [Sticky Church](#) & [Lead Like A Shepherd](#) – come from NCC Lead Pastor, Larry Osborne.

*This event is for current and potential Life Group Leaders. If you are interested in leading a Life Group please join us.

*Wed. March 11. 6pm-8pm. Main Street Chapel. Dinner & Childcare provided. Please RSVP to Pastor Eryn.

Weekly Announcements Email

Consider the [Weekly Announcement Email](#) from Main Street Church. Contact our Office to be added to the mailing list. It's another great way to stay informed and engaged in the life of our church.