



SMALL GROUP



CATCHING UP

- Has anything new or exciting happened in your life since the last time we gathered?
- What was one blessing you experienced this week?
- What was one trial you experienced this week?

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 3: 14-21

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family^[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

STORY BEHIND THE HYMN

Anna Warner was writer of novels, nonfiction works and hymns, many of whom she collaborated with her sister, Susan. She came from a prosperous family and lived in New York City where their father, Henry Whiting Warner, a successful lawyer. However, the Panic of 1837 affected their family's finances and they were forced to move to Constitution Island, in a dilapidated Revolutionary War-era home,

which was right across the Military Academy at West Point. She and her sister felt the need to help with the family income and began to write stories and poems for publication. *Say and Seal*, a novel was one of their most successful joint projects. In one portion of the story, the main character, John Linden, a Sunday school teacher comforts Johnny Fox, a boy at the brink of death, by making up a little song, 'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Incidentally, William Bradbury, a famous hymn writer read this novel and was inspired to write a simple, pentatonic tune that can go along with the words.

DIVING DEEP

- Do you have a favorite nursery rhyme?
- How does this hymn make you feel: Happy? Childish? Secure?
- Paul wrote this prayer to encourage those in the church at Ephesus. What words encourage you?
- What is Paul asking God to do?
- When have you felt overwhelmed by the love of God?
- Did you know this song came from a small part in a book?
- What are your favorite verses about the love of God since the hymn states "The Bible tells me so"?

CONCLUSION

- What are some things we can be doing for each other in this upcoming week - prayer requests or actual things?