

SAMPLE LESSON
NOT FOR RESALE

Who Am I in Christ?

A THISTLEBEND DISCIPLESHIP STUDY



Focus Scripture

EPHESIANS 1–2

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The Thistlebend Team





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Who Am I in Christ?

Focus Scripture: Ephesians 1-2

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A Thistlebend Discipleship Study

Who Am I in Christ?

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Thistlebend Cottage Press
2212 Lakeland Road
Louisville, Kentucky 40223

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Printed in the United States of America.

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Thistlebend Ministries is a 501c3 non-profit organization.
This study and its corresponding resources are made possible through
the generous contributions of the Friends of Thistlebend and people like you.



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An Important Note:

Information about our lecture audios and videos,
including their online passwords, can be found on the
last page of this workbook.



Welcome to a Thistlebend Discipleship Study

*What is more important than our
relationship with the Lord?*

Thistlebend studies are designed for women who want to know Jesus more fully, love Him more deeply, and follow Him more closely. Dr. Thomas R. Schreiner commends, “*The whole aim of Thistlebend: to assist women to love Christ in the practical, nitty-gritty of everyday life.*” Therefore, the nature of the approach and the type of questions we ask may differ from other Bible studies on the same subject. Nevertheless, women participating in Thistlebend studies often share that they experience authentic growth and spiritual intimacy.

Real and lasting heart transformation takes place by God’s grace. We integrate biblical disciplines into every Thistlebend lesson where we ask women to “Take the Truth to Heart” and “Bring the Truth to Life.” These practices train women to *believe* God’s Word in their hearts, *apply it* in their thinking, and *live it out* in their lives. Our deepest desire is to see women cultivate hearts of righteousness, grow in their love for God and others, be equipped to overcome sin, walk by grace, live in the joy of the Lord, and glorify Him.

Many blessings in Christ,

Laurie and the Thistlebend Team



Day One

Paul to the Saints

LESSON ONE: EPHESIANS 1:1-2

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the summer of 1967, at the age of ten, I flew by myself from Chicago to Minneapolis. From that point, I traveled an additional three hours north on a chartered bus to Camp Lake Hubert for Girls. On the way, I somehow lost the key to my footlocker. When I arrived, I was unable to open my footlocker and, therefore, had none of my own clothes to wear. Several days passed, and still, no one could unlock my footlocker. I was feeling extremely sad, lonely, and far from home. I seemed to be the only one suffering from homesickness; everyone else was fine and having fun. Finally, the camp called for a locksmith. When he arrived, it took him hours to open the lock. Thankfully, that evening relief came—I had my own clothes and pajamas! But even more comforting than my own belongings was the letter from my mother that was hidden inside. It was just the first. She wrote and mailed a letter to me every day while I was at camp. Following each lunch period, I would check my mailbox, and a letter would be waiting for me. My mother’s familiar cursive and stories of home warmed my heart and reminded me of her love. The homesickness was cured, and the summer became a terrific experience.

As a believer in Christ, one whose desire is to live for Him, the epistle to the Ephesians brings good news to you. It is not a letter from your mother, but from God, your heavenly Father, through the Apostle Paul. It is a loving, prayerful, and Christ exalting message of God’s amazing grace and everlasting peace. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says Ephesians is “the sublimest and the most majestic expression” of the gospel.¹ Other theologians call it the “crown of St. Paul’s writings,”² “the divinest composition of man,”³ and the “Queen of the epistles.”⁴ One of my favorite descriptions is that of Ruth Paxson, a missionary to China in the early 1900s. She referred to it as “the Grand Canyon of Scripture ... breathtakingly beautiful and apparently inexhaustible to the one who wants

to take it in.”⁵ Charles Hodge writes, “The epistle reveals itself as the work of the Holy Ghost as clearly as the stars declare their maker to be God.”⁶

Ephesians is a heavenly, priceless treasure that stirs in our hearts the call of God, the effectual, irresistible call of God that raised us from the dead, compelling us to live lives set apart to Christ because we are *in* Christ. Paul’s worship inspires us to treasure and employ every heavenly spiritual gift our Father has given us through His beloved Son who bore our sins, suffered the wrath we deserved, and died in our place that we might live holy lives in intimate fellowship with Him in this world through the Holy Spirit.

We need this loving letter of divine encouragement from our heavenly home because we are immersed within a world that is ruled by the prince of darkness. His subjects stand in abject rebellion to their Creator and bow in worship to many other gods. Our situation is not new. Our experience is not unique. Paul wrote his letter over two thousand years ago to God’s adopted children at Ephesus and throughout Asia. The newly born church was surrounded by rampant idolatry. Much of life revolved around the daily service, devotion, and sacrifice to false gods. The city of Ephesus, the capital of Asia Minor, a Roman Province (modern day Turkey), was the largest, most important and influential city in the ancient Mediterranean world due to its strategic location, banking, and commerce.⁷ Situated near the coast of the Aegean Sea at the mouth of the Cayster River, a primary waterway and at the crossroads of several major long distance Roman highways connecting all the significant cities, it is considered by many to have been the “Gateway to Asia.” Considering the location of Ephesus we can imagine how this letter could have been easily circulated amongst the churches! The book of Revelation speaks of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. These seven cities were arranged around the urban hub of the province with Ephesus in a strategic point. If Ephesians was a letter intended for all the churches in the area, it may have followed a circular route around these cities.⁸

Ephesus was the center of pagan worship to the Greek goddess Artemis, the most highly venerated of all ancient Greek deities. In fact, “Ephesus may have acquired its name from the mother goddess known as Artemis Ephesia, whose followers believed her to be a fertile mythological woman from around 7000 B.C. and the mother of everything. . . . Her fame and influence spread to Mesopotamia, Egypt, Arabia, Greece, Rome, and even Scandinavia.”⁹ It is impossible to overstate her influence. The temple constructed in her honor was so grandiose, so costly to build, and so ornately adorned, it became one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Antipater of Sidon, an ancient Greek poet, wrote this of the temple, “I have seen the walls and Hanging Gardens of ancient Babylon, the statue of Olympian Zeus, the Colossus of Rhodes, the mighty work of the high Pyramids and the tomb of Mausolus. But when I saw the temple at Ephesus rising to the clouds, all these other wonders were put in the shade.”¹⁰ The Ephesians were filled with enormous pride because this great wonder was

in their city. It meant more to them than Fenway to Boston, Disney World to Orlando, or Wall Street to New York City. In fact, the most highly regarded position in the city was the servant of this goddess. The challenge of Christianity to this religion created enormous controversy.¹¹ The temple was destroyed twice and each time rebuilt at the people's expense. The most lucrative business was the sale of miniatures of the temple cast in silver. Paul spent several years in Ephesus and witnessed the impact this idol worship had on its culture. One specific observation is recorded in the book of Acts. The following is an excerpt:

About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. 24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. 25 These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. 26 And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. 27 And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship." 28 When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (Acts 19:23-28)

Observing first-century Ephesus encourages us to look at twenty-first-century America with a fresh eyes. Today's idol may not be the great goddess Artemis or some other golden statue, but our culture is consumed by idolatry. The prince of this dark world constantly entices, seeking to deceive, and demanding worship. Furthermore, the sinful flesh is always resisting, rising against the Spirit, seeking to place itself at the center of all. Immersed in our culture, we can be blind to its power and influence. We need night vision goggles—the Spirit of truth and light of God's Word—to see in the darkness as we live behind enemy lines.

As we reflect upon all we have been endowed with by our Creator and Redeemer, we understand that we are called to live in response to the blessings and privileges of our position in Christ, as a part of God's household. We do not want to bow down or serve another! When we, by God's grace, believed the gospel of salvation, we were born anew and received the Holy Spirit. Additionally, we were given every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places and an eternal inheritance. We are no longer strangers outside the family of God; we are now an integral part of the body of Christ, citizens of the kingdom of heaven, and members of the household of God!

As new creations in Christ and members of God's eternal family, we want to see, think, live, and love from a heavenly perspective. We want to comprehend who we are in Christ and, by God's grace, believe it, embrace it, and live it for His glory, the progress of the gospel, and our inexpressible joy! Each of us, as a unique individual created by God in His image, has been given unique DNA,

personality, family background, cultural influences, intellectual ability, emotional makeup, and physical characteristics. Yet, we are an integral part of the body of Christ. God has given us a new life in Him and brought us into a new family. And, even though we are still residents of planet earth, we already are in heaven because we are in Christ. These, and other profound truths, are crucial for us to understand and apply. What if we were to receive, believe, and cherish all the blessings we have in Christ? What if we lived according to what Paul shares with us in his letter? What impact would it have upon us and those around us? Charles Dickens' novel *David Copperfield* opens with this declaration, "Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show."¹¹ What about you? At the end of your days, what will the pages show? Were you the hero of your life, or was Jesus?

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is about our identity in Christ. Each of us must ask ourselves, "Who do I serve? Where do I find my identity? Am I the goddess I worship?" Look honestly and courageously in the mirror and ask the Lord to reveal His rival in your heart. Pause and think about who or what you worship. Pause and consider if you will allow Jesus to be the hero of your life and receive all the glory, honor, and praise.

A Moment of Prayer Before Beginning this Study

In this study, we focus on the first two chapters of Ephesians as Paul lays before us in praise and prayer the magnificent new life we have in Christ. We want to understand who we are in Christ. Let us guard against getting sidetracked on an introspective, self-centered, self-serving journey and fix our eyes upon Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ dominates Paul's heart and mind and fills his vision. May Jesus Christ dominate our hearts and minds and fill our vision! May his prayers be our prayers. Let us lift our praise, thank Him for His abundant mercy and grace, confess our need, and ask Him for help! May we know and understand the extraordinary spiritual blessing of who we are in Christ and glorify Him and enjoy Him forever!

GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, I PRAISE AND THANK YOU FOR WHO YOU ARE AND ALL YOU HAVE GIVEN TO US IN CHRIST!

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world . . . (Eph. 1:1-4)

FATHER, I LOVE YOU. PLEASE WORK REPENTANCE IN ME.

Write your prayer of confession and repentance.

ABBA FATHER, MAKE ME MORE LIKE YOUR SON, OUR SAVIOR, JESUS.

Pray the following prayer adapted from Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:16-23

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give us the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of our hearts enlightened, that we may know what is the hope to which he has called us, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.



Day Two

By the Will of God

READ EPHESIANS 1:1-2.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

AN APOSTLE Paul opens this letter by identifying himself as an apostle. Paul is not claiming his apostleship to boast about his status but to explain his calling and authority. He has been given this authority by God and the subsequent responsibility to proclaim and protect the gospel.¹³ The official title of apostle was given to a select few chosen by God and appointed by Christ Jesus, men specially appointed by Christ to be official witnesses of His life, death, and resurrection (Mk. 3:13-19; Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 9:1-2). Take a moment to consider how Paul refers to himself. It will help us better understand the content of his letter.

Paul, an _____ of _____ by _____

BY THE WILL OF GOD. In his younger years Paul was known as Saul, a zealous and violent persecutor of Christians until the day when Jesus apprehended him. In Paul's letter to the Ephesians and several of his other letters, he describes himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus who was chosen by the will of God. Even though he was not among the original twelve apostles, he was not self appointed; he was appointed by Christ Himself. Although Christ had ascended to His throne, He had uniquely called Paul to be His chosen instrument to the Gentiles.

A TENDER, LOVING SHEPHERD. Paul writes to those the Lord placed into his care. Our loving, heavenly Father preserved Paul's letter to the saints in Ephesus and to those who were faithful in Christ for their benefit and the benefit of every believer. If we are in Christ, we may take these words to heart—and we must. We want to see ourselves through the eyes of Christ, not our own eyes, nor the world's eyes.

Consider Paul's call and his commission to be God's messenger to the Ephesians and to us. Carefully read the following passage. Note your observations and answer the questions that follow.

Acts 9:1-31

How does Saul come to know Jesus?

What does Jesus say to him?

What happens?

BEFORE HIS CONVERSION. Paul was instructed in the Scriptures as a Jew, in his formal training as a Pharisee, and as a devout follower of the Law. After coming to Christ, he gained a new Christ-centered perspective of the Scriptures, which he already knew very well, and the Holy Spirit brought great revelation and understanding to him. In addition, he probably learned much from Peter and James and the traditions about Jesus' life that they passed on to him. Read the following passages and write any insights you glean about Paul and his call.

Acts 13:44-47

1 Corinthians 15:3-11

Galatians 1:10-2:10

LATER ON IN PAUL’S LIFE. Before his imprisonment for the gospel, King Agrippa gave Paul an opportunity to present his defense. As Paul speaks, we learn a bit more about Paul’s call and his mission. Read the following passage. Note what happens and what you observe about Paul’s conversion. There is additional space to write on the following page.

Acts 26:12-23

TAKE THE TRUTH TO HEART

Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of your faith (Heb. 12:2), and choose one Scripture from today that the Lord is using to *renew* your mind and *transform* your heart (Rom. 12:2).

How is God using this Scripture to teach, instruct, reprove, correct, encourage, or train you (2 Tm. 3:16-17)?

Remember God’s love in the gospel, your death with Christ, and His life in you. Walk in love and take God’s Word to heart. Submit to it and humbly live it out.

Take a moment to work on your weekly memory verse.



Day Three

Saints

READ EPHESIANS 1:1-2.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fill in the missing words from Ephesians 1:1 below.

Paul, an _____ of _____ by _____ ,
To _____ , and are faithful _____

SAINTS. HOLY ONES. A HOLY NATION. What comes into your mind when you read the word saint? Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus, to the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus. In the Old Testament, those who were a part of the nation of Israel from the time of the Exodus were called *saints*, *holy ones*, or *set apart* ones, because they were separate from the surrounding nations. The Israelites alone were God's people in a unique covenant with Him, distinct from all other nations. In these passages, God explains Israel's identity as His people, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.

Exodus 19:5-6

Deuteronomy 4:32-39

A PEOPLE FOR HIS OWN POSSESSION. Peter, in his New Testament letter, uses the language previously and solely applied to the nation of Israel, and now applies it to the Gentiles. Read the passage below and write the key phrases.

1 Peter 2:9-10

BORN OF GOD. Although in the Old Testament God's people were called saints in a general sense, the true saints were not merely those who were ethnically Israelites, but they were also those who had placed their faith in God and in the Messiah, the coming Savior, whom He had promised. They were God's people, set apart because of their faith and born of God. The New Testament reveals that God's salvation is always through Jesus Christ: "*But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God*" (Jn. 1:12-13).

Such men and women who believe in the Savior are considered true saints because of the finished work of Christ on the cross—the Old Testament saints through their faith in a coming Savior, and the New Testament saints through their faith in the Savior, Jesus who came, lived, died, and rose again.

SAINTS BECAUSE OF CHRIST. Saints are all who have put their faith in Jesus Christ and have been born again by the Spirit of God. Sainthood is not an exclusive, special category of holy people who perform a certain number of miracles, live extraordinary lives, and are incredibly good. Anyone, and everyone, who is in Christ is a saint because of Him! He is the only one who is good, perfect, and holy. When we are in Christ and He is in us, then we are holy. This holy sainthood was purchased for us by a mighty salvation that we could not earn, deserve, purchase, find, manipulate, inherit, craft, or manufacture. Our salvation was planned and provided by God our Father, procured by His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, and applied to us by the Holy Spirit. We are holy because Jesus is holy. Therefore, we are saints—set apart, holy ones!

So, when Paul addresses the saints who are in Ephesus, he is specifically addressing people who have been set apart to God by their faith in Jesus Christ. Paul is writing to those who have been declared righteous by faith and marked as God's own, and those who have been cleansed by the precious blood of their Savior and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, cleansed outwardly and inwardly from the guilt and pollution of sin. This does not mean that the Saint no longer sins, but sin no longer defines them.

THE FAITHFUL IN CHRIST JESUS. Paul also describes believers as the faithful, those who trust God and His promises and live according to that trust. "In Christ Jesus" defines their identity and their new community. In Christ, we are a new creation, part of a living and eternal fellowship, a sharp contrast to what we previously knew as members of the old creation in Adam, which was a life bound to sin and death, separated from God and from one another. Bible scholar F.F. Bruce said "Because Christ Himself is now exalted in the heavenly realm, those who are in Him belong to that heavenly realm too in the mind of God."³

The faithful in Christ Jesus are those who no longer are living for themselves but for another, as citizens of the kingdom of God, and members of the body of Christ.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

When you read the word saint now has your perspective changed?

Are you a saint according to what you have read today?

Do you think of yourself as a saint?

How does reflecting on the reality that you are a saint, a new creation in Christ Jesus, affect the way you think?

What adjustments might you want to make as you consider what you have studied today?

TAKE THE TRUTH TO HEART

Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of your faith (Heb. 12:2), and choose one Scripture from today that the Lord is using to *renew* your mind and *transform* your heart (Rom. 12:2).

How is God using this Scripture to teach, instruct, reprove, correct, encourage, or train you (2 Tm. 3:16-17)?

Remember God's love in the gospel, your death with Christ, and His life in you. Walk in love and take God's Word to heart. Submit to it and humbly live it out.

Take a moment to work on your weekly memory verse.



Day Four

Grace

READ EPHESIANS 1:1-2.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Write out verse 2. Contemplate these words as you write.

PRAYERFUL REMINDER. Paul's salutation is an expression of his brotherly love and care, but it is much more than this. He includes this greeting in each and every epistle, so it may appear rote and superficial. Even though these words sound simple, they are a profound and prayerful reminder to all the saints of God's great provision and their daily need. Many theologians warn against casually passing over these words.

God has given us abundant grace and peace, purchased by our Lord Jesus Christ. "These truths were very real and present in Paul's mind, and he was very intentional in his use of them. All we know of our new lives in Christ are contained in these two words. The regular Greek greeting of the day was 'Rejoice!' (*chaire*) and the regular Jewish greeting was 'Peace!' (*shalom*). Paul thoughtfully combines these two regular greetings, but replaces *chaire* with the very similarly sounding word *charis* meaning 'Grace!' If anyone understood the need for grace and peace it would be Paul. It was because of these amazing, indescribable, and extravagant blessings of grace and peace that Paul was able to accomplish God's will and work. They are also ours in Christ."⁴ We all are in the same need for grace and peace as Paul!

GRACE TO YOU. What is grace? Grace is the fountain, the spring, ... the ultimate origin, source, and fount of everything in the Christian life. Grace . . . condescending love, love coming down, stooping down. Grace is unearned and unmerited favor, the lovingkindness, goodness, and compassionate benevolence God shows to us. He chooses to give grace to us, not by our doing. It is the "merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps,

strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues.”⁵

John 1:16-17 says, “*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*” And 2 Corinthians 8:9 helps us understand the depth of grace further: “*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*” Ponder God’s abundant grace to you. Write a prayer of reflection below.

GRACE, GOD’S MERCIFUL LOVINGKINDNESS. But what does this mean? Grace is God’s merciful, lovingkindness to those who deserve His wrath and punishment. If the invitation to receive Jesus into our hearts depended on us, no one would ever ask. Grace initiates it all. Jesus took every penalty and punishment we deserved and gave us boundless blessings instead. By grace, Jesus chose to do for us what we were unable to do and would refuse to do even if we could. Jesus lovingly seeks, rescues, and revives prisoners who are captive to eternal death and darkness, redeeming them to everlasting light and life. Grace is God’s love to those who are unloveable and unloving. Grace is not dependent upon us, our gifts, our talents, our abilities, our works, or our choices; it has nothing to do with us but everything to do with God. Grace means we are loved, pursued, and found by God, not because of any good we did, prayers we prayed, or steps we took, but exclusively because of His mercy.

Grace opens the eyes of our hearts to see that we are dead in our sin, separated from God, and deserving of His wrath. Grace is when the truth penetrates our hearts and draws us to Him in humble repentance. It unlocks our ears to hear His voice summoning us to follow Him.

God’s grace takes the initiative not only to call, but also to strengthen and equip us to follow. Pastor and author David Platt said, “. . . every single moment of the Christian life—from normal spiritual discipline to radical biblical devotion—is fueled by God’s grace who not only pursued us by grace in the past but also empowers us by grace in the present and emboldens us with an unshakeable guarantee of grace in the future.”⁶

Grace is all we need. Because of grace we will never thirst, never be left alone, never be condemned, never die, and never be judged by God’s wrath. Grace took every penalty and punishment we deserved and gave us every spiritual blessing instead; it is the foundation of everything we stand upon in Christ—from beginning to end.

We do not want to receive the grace of God in vain (2 Cor. 6:1). Let us take a moment and praise God for His amazing grace. Use the space on the following page to write your prayer of praise.

TAKE THE TRUTH TO HEART

Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of your faith (Heb. 12:2), and choose one Scripture from today that the Lord is using to *renew* your mind and *transform* your heart (Rom. 12:2).

How is God using this Scripture to teach, instruct, reprove, correct, encourage, or train you (2 Tm. 3:16-17)?

Remember God's love in the gospel, your death with Christ, and His life in you. Walk in love and take God's Word to heart. Submit to it and humbly live it out.

Take a moment to work on your weekly memory verse.



Day Five

Peace

READ EPHESIANS 1:1-2.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

PEACE FROM GOD AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Some people view peace as merely the opposite of war or the absence of conflict or stress. The peace of God is ours, founded upon our reconciliation and union with God. Because of Him, we can rest secure, be filled with joy, and have a sense of total well-being that is not dependent upon circumstances. We receive this peace from God when we receive the Holy Spirit. We then have peace with God and peace within because of God.

Look up the Scriptures under the following headings and write the key phrases.

Before Christ, we did not have peace. We were enemies of God, hostile to the truth.

Romans 5:10

Colossians 1:21

Now, because of God's grace, we have peace with God.

Colossians 1:19-20

Christ is our peace.

Isaiah 9:6-7

Micah 5:4-5

Christ is the grace of God.

Titus 2:11

John 20:19-31

Because of Christ, we have grace and peace. He gives us His peace.

John 14:27

John 16:33

When we are in Christ we are at peace with God, yet our battle against sin will continue until we are with the Lord in heaven. Based upon what you have read, describe the peace that God has given to us in Christ?

CLOSE IN PRAYER. “Father, you have rescued me from the dominion of death and darkness and brought me into the kingdom of life and light. Your lovingkindness has knit my heart to yours. For ages, I was bound to a hard and cruel master who was unforgiving and relentless in his destruction. I have been raised from the dead and freed from prison. The penalty I owed for my rebellion was laid upon Christ. In exchange, He gave me His holiness and righteousness. My life is no longer my own; I am yours, and you are mine. You are my Lord, master, and beloved. I stand in your grace and peace and under your fountain of goodness. Your love flows over, in, through, and from my soul. Lord, grant me the grace to fully receive, comprehend, and enter into the grace and peace I have been given in Christ. I have been given amazing grace that I did not deserve and peace with you that I did not earn. What a humbling realization that you, Father, have revealed yourself to me, not because of anything I have done, but because of your mercy, your grace, and your purpose. May I humbly live each day with this in mind. Please grant me the grace to study your word with all diligence and true devotion. I want to know you and love you more. Open my eyes, soften my heart, lift the veil, and transform me from the inside out. Help me live as the person you called and created me to be in Christ. In Jesus’ name, I pray, Amen.” Add any additional prayers you may have below.

TAKE THE TRUTH TO HEART

Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of your faith (Heb. 12:2), and choose one Scripture from today that the Lord is using to *renew* your mind and *transform* your heart (Rom. 12:2).

How is God using this Scripture to teach, instruct, reprove, correct, encourage, or train you (2 Tm. 3:16-17)?

Remember God’s love in the gospel, your death with Christ, and His life in you. Walk in love and take God’s Word to heart. Submit to it and humbly live it out.

Take a moment to work on your weekly memory verse.



Day Six

Bring the Truth to Life

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

2 Peter 3:18

PERSONAL REFLECTION: Looking Back

In what areas has the Lord given you wisdom, grace, repentance, or encouragement this week?

STEP ONE: Take the Truth to Heart

Review the Take the Truth to Heart sections from each day. Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of your faith (Heb. 12:2), and choose one Scripture from the week that the Lord is using to *renew* your mind and *transform* your heart (Rom. 12:2).

How is God using this Scripture to teach, instruct, reprove, correct, or train you (2 Tm. 3:16-17)?

STEP TWO: Put the Flesh to Death

What sin (wrong thinking or ungodly thought, belief, attitude, action, or inaction) is being addressed by the Scripture you wrote? Confess this in writing. Also, include an example of where you saw the evidence of this sin in your life this week. Ask for the Lord's forgiveness. Receive His mercy and grace (1 Jn. 1:9-10).

What do you need to "put off" from your old self or adjust in your thinking, beliefs, attitude, or behavior to submit to God? Apply His truth to your mind and heart (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:5-9).

STEP THREE: Bring the Truth to Life

Walking forward in repentance and faith by God's grace, what will you "put on" (Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10, 12, 14)? How are you going to do this? Be specific in your plan of action and be encouraged by what the Lord is going to do.

Remember God's love in the gospel. You have died, and Christ now lives in you. Walk in love. Take God's Word to heart. Submit to it, and humbly live it out.

Take a moment to practice your weekly memory verse. Write it below.

Bring the Truth to Life Chart

This chart is to be filled out on class day.



Step One

*Take the Truth
to Heart*

Step Two

*Put the Flesh
to Death*

Step Three

*Bring the Truth
to Life*

NAME	SCRIPTURE	SIN	ACTION



Who Am I in Christ?

A THISTLEBEND DISCIPLESHIP STUDY

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

Where do women find their identity? Many Christian women struggle to understand and even believe who they are in Christ. This intensive discipleship study in Ephesians will help women discover and embrace that they are uniquely made in Christ and will teach them how to think and live accordingly to glorify Him. They will gain a greater understanding that the Lord has called them and set them apart for Him and His purposes—to live the life He has prepared for them. A treasure chest of understanding will be opened regarding the inheritance and spiritual blessings they have been given in Christ. Eight lessons (nine weeks with Introduction).

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*Much more than a Bible
study. It's life-altering. It's
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Taking the Gospel to Heart
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Taking the Gospel to Heart and Bringing It to Life