



# HANDOUT

## Lesson 1: Ephesians 1:1–14

THE BOOK OF

# EPHESIANS

### DISCUSS

**What were the last three things J.D. mentioned—three things we can take away from this text?**

**According to Ephesians 1:3–10, what has God done, what is He doing, or what will He do?**

**According to 1:3-10, what do we “have”? What blessings has He blessed us with?**

**What does adoption mean when God is doing it?**

**How would you define grace?**

**What “riches” has God lavished on us?**

**What’s mysterious about God’s will?**

**According verse 10, what is the mystery?**

**According to Ephesians 1:11–14, who are we?**

**What does our identity as Christians mean to you? How can we bring Him praise?**

**If you began to see bringing Him praise as your purpose in life, how would that change things?**

**How are you doing with bringing Him praise?**

### LIVE IT OUT

**Prayer:** At least four days in the coming week, thank God that He has included you in His great plan.

**Encouragement:** If you know a fellow Christian who is going through tough times, offer a word of hope. God has plans for us.

**Conversation:** Talk with somebody who isn’t a Christian (as far as you know). Ask them about their beliefs. If they ask about yours, be ready to tell them God’s story.

**Journaling:** Write out the text of Ephesians 1:1–14, a few verses at a time, jotting down your questions and reactions.

**Worship:** If you exist “for the praise of His glory,” then throw yourself into worship. Take time on your own to sing and dance and pray and shout, but also join with the church or youth group in a gathering of praise.



# HANDOUT

## Lesson 2: Ephesians 1:15–23

THE BOOK OF

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### DISCUSS

**He summarized Paul's prayer in four parts. What four things did Paul want the Ephesians to see?**

**What specific actions have happened, or are happening—just in Ephesians 1:15–16? Can you put them in order?**

**How does viewing Paul's prayer as a story change the way you look at it? How could prayer-as-story affect the way you pray?**

**What does Paul mean in Ephesians 1:17? How do we "know God"?**

**How does God's Spirit make us know God?**

**How would you define hope?**

**How is "the hope to which He has called you" different from hoping that your team wins the big game or hoping you get a raise?**

**What's the best thing you can do for someone else to help them have this kind of hope?**

**Are there times when you feel that you aren't loved by God? Why or why not? Do you think other people feel that way, too? Why or why not?**

**How can verse 18 change your mind about hope?**

**In verses 19–20, we find the next main point of Paul's prayer. What is it?**

**How does Paul describe God's power?**

**Think of that part of your life that needs a touch of God's power. Your attitude? Your health? Your struggle with temptation? Your relationships? How could God use His resurrection power to transform that?**

**Is there one phrase that stands out for you in verses 20-23? What does that mean to you?**

### LIVE IT OUT

**Prayer:** At least four days in the coming week, pray for other Christians you know, using Paul's prayer as a model.

**Encouragement:** Do you know someone who is losing hope? What could you say to them, inspired by this passage, to open their eyes to God's love and power? Find a way to say that this week.

**Resolve:** Is there a struggle in your life where you need to rely on God's power? Temptation? Attitude? A thorny relationship? Is there some difficult thing you need to do—saying "no," saying "yes," or saying "sorry"? Review Paul's prayer, ask for God's guidance, and act in God's power.

**Memorize:** Commit verses Ephesians 1:17–23 to memory (so you can use it as a model for your own prayers forever). Alternatively, write out 5-7 "bullet points" from the prayer and memorize those. Check yourself by reading through the whole prayer each day. (And you might just find that you've learned the whole thing anyway.)

**Gather:** Talk with a few friends about getting together this week for a prayer time, based on this passage, in which you specifically pray for the spiritual vitality of your church or your community.



# HANDOUT

## Lesson 3: Ephesians 2:1-10

THE BOOK OF

# EPHESIANS

### DISCUSS

**In what ways does our culture propagate the ideas J.D. mentioned? Do you know people who hold those beliefs?**

**In verse 1, we read, "You were dead in transgressions and sins." What does that mean? How does that make you feel?**

**What's "wrath"? Why would we be "deserving of wrath"?**

**There's a distinction in verses 1–3 between "us" and "them." Do you see it? What's the difference?**

**What changed when we moved from death to life? What do verses 4–5 tell us? What are things God has done for us?**

**What is mercy? Is that different from grace?**

**According to verses 8–10, what has happened in the past, what's going on now, and what can we expect to happen in the future?**

**Why is the timing of each thing Paul described in 8–10 important? Why do we need to know that our good works come after our salvation and not before it?**

**How does that make you feel—that your new life through Jesus is God's divine creation?**

### LIVE IT OUT

**Prayer:** Take some serious time to go through the truth of Ephesians 2 with God. If you've been trying to pay your own way—trying to be good enough for God—talk with Him about it. Trust in His goodness rather than your own. Thank Him for His grace. Commit yourself to be that masterpiece He created you to be.

**Memorize:** Ephesians 2:8–10 is an essential expression of the Christian faith. Learn it.

**Make some art:** God is the Creator, and He made us to be creative, too. What kind of *poiema* could you create to reflect your relationship with God? It doesn't have to be just art—even caring for God's creation (how you mow your lawn) or working with your resources (the way you do your job) reflects the creator-nature God gave to each of us. The possibilities to glorify Him are endless.

**Analyze:** In your life, you've probably encountered and studied a great poem at some point in time—even if only in grade school English class. If you're God's divine creation, then maybe you can analyze yourself in the same way. What strengths has God given you? What resources? How have your past struggles prepared you to do good works in the future? How do you help others make the most of their abilities?

**Share the truth:** If you know someone who's trying hard to earn God's grace, what can you say—in a gentle, loving way—to present the truth of Ephesians 2 to him or her?



# HANDOUT

## Lesson 4: Ephesians 2:11-3:13

THE BOOK OF

# EPHESIANS

### DISCUSS

**Who is Paul addressing in Ephesians 2:11–13?**

**Why does he specifically address the Gentiles in 11–13?**

**Do we have any divisions in our society that are anything like the division between Jews and Gentiles?**

**Do you agree or disagree with J.D. about there being only one category of people—sinners? How would you describe the human tendency to divide ourselves into groups?**

**What is Jesus called in Ephesians 2:14? In what way is that true?**

**What do verses 14–18, say that Jesus has done, or is doing?**

**What specifically has He “put to death” (v. 16), and how did He do it?**

**How do you feel about our new humanity? Does J.D.’s explanation make sense to you? Do you agree?**

**What is the architecture of the new temple in 2:19–22? What is it made of? What is it built on?**

**When Paul says, “You are no longer foreigners,” or “You too are being built together,” whom is he talking to?**

### LIVE IT OUT

**Prayer:** Ask God to show you how you can reach out to someone on the other side of a social “wall.” Begin praying specifically for individuals in your life who might not share your culture, circumstances, or beliefs.

**Invite:** All too often we assume that people know they can come to any church service they like. Maybe they don’t know this. And maybe they’re waiting for an invitation.

**Listen:** Have a conversation with someone of another religion, or no religion at all. Ask them what they think about God, or faith, or forgiveness, or death, or morality. And listen. Do not use this as a trick to tell them what you think. If they ask, be ready. And feel free to ask follow-up questions, but the main point here is to listen to them.

**Connect:** Talk with your church leaders about setting up a joint worship service or Bible study with another church—preferably a church with people of another culture.

**Draw:** Re-read Ephesians 2:14–18 from a visual perspective. How would you draw the picture described in the verses? Be as literal or symbolic as you like, as you sketch out this powerful text.



# HANDOUT

## Lesson 5: Ephesians 3:14-4:16

THE BOOK OF

# EPHESIANS

### DISCUSS

**What comments or stories struck you from this video? Did anything shine a new light on the biblical material?**

**How can we “live a life worthy of our calling” as Paul mentions in the beginning of chapter four? How does he describe that worthy life?**

**J.D. made a big deal about growing up. How do the qualities we mentioned display a mature faith?**

**Take another look at verses 4–6. Why do you think Paul emphasizes “oneness” so much?**

**In light of contention in the church, how does a conversation about the gifts of the Spirit promote unity? Would people brag about their own gifts? Why or why not?**

**According to 4:7–13, Who gives spiritual gifts? Who gets spiritual gifts? What are some of the spiritual gifts? What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?**

### LIVE IT OUT

#### *Setup*

In your small groups, you'll have several questions to answer about yourself, your background, your abilities, and what you care about. Each person should answer each group of questions before the next person responds. Then go around the circle again with the second and third groups of questions. Feel free to ask follow-up questions as you go and affirm responses. But be careful not to contradict what someone is saying. If anyone feels uncomfortable answering, they may pass.

#### *The Questions*

##### **Group 1**

**A. What is something you do—in your work, at home, or at church—that you seem to be pretty good at?**

**B. When did you first notice that you had that ability?**

**C. Have you gotten better at that area of expertise through the years?**

##### **Group 2**

**A. What is something you're really passionate about?**

**B. When did you recognize that passion for the first time?**

**C. Has the passion grown stronger, or changed in some way?**

##### **Group 3**

**A. Think about a time when someone thanked you for something you did or mentioned that you were helpful to them. What action were they talking about?**

**B. When did this happen? Has it happened often?**

**C. Is there a way you could do that type of action (the thing someone appreciated) on a regular basis, or even more intentionally than you do now?**

**According to Ephesians 4:12–13, why has God given us these abilities and responsibilities? What is their purpose?**

**Now as you think about the questions you've been considering about yourself—those abilities and passions God has given you—how can you use your gifts for the purposes mentioned in 4:12–13?**



THE BOOK OF  
**EPHESIANS**

## LIVE IT OUT

**Prayer:** Talk with God about the gifts He has given you. Ask Him to confirm your thinking, or to adjust it as necessary. Ask Him for opportunities to use your gifts in His service. In these prayers, spend more time listening than talking.

**Conversation:** Talk with other close friends about your gifts. Ask them to confirm the abilities you think God has given you, and they may even suggest ways to use them. You need some cheerleaders around for support, but also talk with someone who can challenge you—“speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15).

**Volunteer:** Look for a new way to use the abilities God has given you. Volunteer for an appropriate ministry in the church.

**Peacemaking:** Unity is a strong emphasis in this part of Ephesians. Even though we have different strengths, we have a common Lord. Take some time to think through your relationships—especially those with other believers. Are there any broken, tense, competitive, or difficult relationships? How could you promote a Christ-centered unity with these people?

**Calligraphy:** Write out the prayer of Ephesians 3:14–21 and post it where you will see it often. (But ask permission before spray-painting it on a church wall.)



# HANDOUT

## Lesson 6: Ephesians 4:17-5:7

THE BOOK OF

# EPHESIANS

### DISCUSS

How have you heard the idea that all religions are the same expressed? Why do you think people say that?

What's similar about different religions? Do you think people who believe all religions are the same have a good understanding of Christianity?

What sets our faith apart? How are we different?

Why is Paul talking poorly of the Gentiles in Ephesians 4:17–19 when, earlier, he was talking about their inclusion in the church? How does he describe the "Gentile" way of life?

Take a look at verses 20–22. What "way of life" have we learned from Christ?

Look for the words "old" and "new" in these verses. What do you find?

So if you are "being made new" or "renewed" in your attitude, who is doing the renewing?

In verse 24, who has "created" the "new self" to be "like God"? Who puts off the old self? Who puts on the new self?

Stepping back to look at verses 17–24, how does this "way of Christ" compare with the way of "the Gentiles"—that is, those who don't know God?

What four areas of behavior do you see in verses 25–29?

What should we do instead of speaking falsehood and why?

How does being "one body" affect the way we should treat each other?

The verse on anger might be paraphrased as, "Anger will happen, but don't let it lead you into sinful outbursts." But what else does it tell us about anger?

What are we supposed to do instead of stealing?

What are we supposed to use instead of "unwholesome language"?

What do you think it means to "grieve" the Holy Spirit?

What does it mean to be "sealed for the day of redemption"?



THE BOOK OF  
**EPHESIANS**

## LIVE IT OUT

**Confession:** This passage mentions various behaviors we should examine in ourselves. Where have we strayed from the way of Jesus, especially in the areas of truth-telling, angry outbursts, stealing, and destructive language? But don't just feel guilty about these things—confess them and carry a new commitment to live God's way.

**Communication Review:** Take some time to evaluate your patterns of communication: at home, in the church, and at work. Are you telling the whole truth, or just avoiding technical lies? Are you building others up? Consider healthier habits you could work on.

**Anger Cleanse:** Every night before bed, get rid of your anger. Apologize, confess, make peace with those who may be the cause of your anger, and commit to sorting things out in the morning, if need be. You won't solve every problem, but it can mean stronger relationships and better sleep.

**Peacemaking:** The biblical discussion of stealing raises an interesting idea. *How much are you taking and how much are you giving?* We're not talking about theft, but about love. Is your work all about gathering resources for yourself? Or are you "doing something useful with your hands" in order to "share with those in need"?

**Accountability:** Invite a trusted Christian friend to check up on you as you find new ways to put on the "new self" and learn the way of Christ.