



WEEK Oct 31 – Nov 6

MAIN IDEA

Followers of Christ should help, not hurt, people's ability to find God.

CHECK IN (HIGHS & LOWS) 15 min

A great, quick way to catch the highlights of what is happening in the lives of the people in your group is to take turns quickly sharing the "highs & lows" of your week. High: What was the highlight of your week? Low: What was the low point of your week?

SETTLE IN (ICE BREAKER) 10 min

1. Talk about 1-2 things that tend to make you mad. How do you handle those issues when they come up?

DIG IN (UNDERSTANDING) 15 min

2. Talk about a thought, phrase, or moment from this weekend's message that stuck with you. Give a brief reason for why these things stuck with you.
3. Read Ephesians 2:11-18. Read slowly and out loud, if possible. Make a note of any words or phrases that stand out to you. The letter to the Ephesians is referred to as one of the Prison Epistles (included with Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon). It is likely that the letter was written by Paul during his first imprisonment in Rome, around AD 60-62.

4. Paul begins by talking about "circumcision" (which I don't think we have to explain here!) and how it showed a difference between Jews & Gentiles. Talk about something that you have seen "religious people" use to distinguish those who are IN with God and those who are OUT. How do you think Jesus would feel about that distinction?
5. Paul says that those who were far have now been brought near by Jesus (2:13). Talk about a time when you felt far off from God; what was it that brought you back? How does this verse help you understand Jesus' frustration with religious people who stood in the way of people coming to God?
6. In 2:14-15, Paul uses two images that are important. The first is a "wall" which could refer to the actual wall in the temple that divided Gentiles from the inner, holier places. The second is the image of God "creating" a single "new humanity" out of two. Talk about what God is bringing to your mind through those two images. What could a "new humanity" in Jesus look like if everyone knew they had this access to God?
7. To summarize 2:17-18, you could say "There is no US versus THEM. There is only US." Talk about how that mentality would solve some of the challenges we see in the church today. What would have to change about your own attitude and approach for the line between US and THEM to dissolve?
8. Jesus came to tear down the boundaries and give everyone an all-access pass to God. You may have already taken that invitation, and yet God continues to invite you (and those around you) to move closer and closer to him. Talk about two areas of your life where you still feel there are boundaries between you and God. How is Jesus tearing those boundaries down or inviting you to take another step towards him?

GEAR UP (APPLICATION) 20 min

9. What is something practical you could do to help remove a barrier for someone to connect with God?

STEP UP (HOMEWORK) 5 min

10. Spend some time in the Bible and allow it to convict you. Spend some time each day giving those convictions to God and begin walking as you feel called in that area (this is called repentance). Here is the "What Made Jesus Mad" Bible reading plan. <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/15452-what-made-jesus-mad>.