



**Life Group Study Notes**  
**"We Are Family: Connected"**  
**Ps. James Lowe - August 20, 2017**

**Warm Up (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.**

- What is your favorite family gathering? Why?
- What's the largest family gathering you've ever attended?
- How many close friends do you have?

**Word (10-15 minutes)**

**Sermons can be heard online at [www.bethelworld.org](http://www.bethelworld.org)**

*Ephesians 2:11-22 ESV Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

**Christ**

- Without God, we are without ultimate hope or purpose in life. We were created for relationship with God; nothing else will satisfy. Until we surrender to God, we will never have internal peace.
- God sent his Son into this world to live as a human. This Jesus lived 2000 years ago and demonstrated a life of perfect devotion and obedience to God. God's purpose was for Jesus to offer his life as a sacrifice, taking upon himself the punishment for all of our sins. Jesus did this by allowing himself to be unjustly tortured and crucified.

- But death could not hold him. God raised him from the dead, declaring that his payment for our sins was fully accepted by God. Jesus now offers us forgiveness and reconciliation with God. All we have to do is surrender our hearts and lives to him. Everyone who does trust in him is credited with God's righteousness. We are given free access to God, so that he hears our prayers. He adopts us into his family and guarantees our destiny with him after we die. He gives us promises and hope and purpose.

### **Church**

- It's not enough to become connected to Christ. God intends to connect us close to other believers from every kind of background and ethnicity. Together we have access to God through Jesus by the Spirit of God. Together we share in God's promises. We share a common destiny. Together we will participate in God's transforming work of resurrection and renewal of the earth. We are called to walk together and display God's grace and reconciling power. In Christ there is neither male nor female, old or young, rich or poor, Asian or African or European or Persian or Indian or Latin American or any other ethnicity; we all share equally in God's salvation and inheritance.
- It's not enough to simply believe this and to agree with these truths and values. Real growth and real change comes when we deliberately build relationships with people who are different than us: different in ethnicity and in background. One great way to do this is to meet regularly with others around our shared hope in Christ. We are called to reach out and build the kingdom of God with diversity.

### **Community**

- When we are connected to Christ and to the church, we can best engage our communities. Our communities have many needs and great challenges. We are called by God to tell others in our communities about Christ and to serve our communities in ways that express the values of the kingdom to God. We are called to be a blessing to our communities, spiritually and holistically. God cares about the whole human condition.
- God wants us to grow in our relationship with him and with our spiritual brothers and sisters, and then to take what we've learned and put it to good use for the benefit of those among whom we live and work and study. We are called to be agents of peace and help and kindness and wisdom. God wants to bless the nations through us.

### **Discussion (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose one of the points below, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.**

- What is one benefit you enjoy from participating in a Christian small group?
- What is one thing you'd like your Life Group to do either as a one time activity or as a regular part of your gatherings?
- How could your Life Group reach out to more people?

### **Prayer (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- Thank God for the blessings he's brought into your life through other people.
- Ask God to take your small group deeper in relationship with God and one another.
- Ask God for open doors to reach out to other people with the love and truth of the Gospel.