



LC STUDY GUIDE
“Your Place In God’s World”
 The Passage: Ephesians 4:1-6
 January 8-21

How to use the LC Study Guide

Hello Leader, thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture that leads to life transformation in Christ and strives to serve “the other.”

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method (not necessarily on the themes of that particular sermon). In summary, this method stresses “Observation” (what the reader can see from the text), “Interpretation” (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and “Application” (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).
2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour or two of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group.
3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It’s the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,
 Pastor Tim, on behalf of the LC Team

Introduction

Welcome back – we’ve hit 2018 running!

For context, the sermon series at Grace is focusing on calling and vocation and is called, “Your Place in God’s World.” Our first week looks at Ephesians 4:1-6 and examines the essential pursuit of our calling to the gospel narrative of Christ and the church’s calling to pursue unity.

Ephesians 4:1-6

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

O – Reread this short passage a few times and consider what words and phrases jump off the page for you. What is repeated, what is emphasized, what challenges, and what inspires? (You don't have to answer each phrase; just share what comes off the top of your heart upon observing.)

O – Count the number of times the word “one” is used and identify the nouns of what each modifies.

I – We can read elsewhere in the New Testament on personal calling and gifting (like the context surrounding Romans 12:6 and I Cor. 12). However, in this passage, Paul is using the word “calling” not as our individual separate callings according to gifting and personality but as all Christ-followers are called according to the gospel.

As theologian N.T. Wright says, "A key part of this calling is the Christian hope, which works like this: Because King Jesus has conquered death itself, all who give him their faithful allegiance are assured that the same victory will be theirs as well. This is the 'calling' to which they must 'live up'. At every moment, in every decision, with every word and action, they are to be aware that the call to follow Jesus the **Messiah**, and give him their complete loyalty, takes precedence over everything else."¹

In light of this, why do you think Paul is stressing both this form of calling and Christian unity? What problems arise when both are not valued? What hope is found when both are pursued?

A – How would embracing your God-given gospel-proclaiming calling and growing in these virtues have an effect on those nearest to you? What practical effects might this have as you share your light in this dark world?

A – Yet we have each been given a separate calling and vocation by God manifested in our gifting, personality and experience. Thinking practically, how can our personal callings and vocation inform and shape our mission to serve others in God's Kingdom?

¹ Wright, T. (2004). [*Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*](#) (p. 43). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
- b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?)
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
- e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.