



## LC STUDY GUIDE

### “True Belonging: Home Edition”

The Passage: Ephesians 5:21-6:4

February 4 – February 17

#### How to use the LC Study Guide

Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture—study 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

---

We continue in our sermon series, “True Belonging: Home Edition,” and we hope to discuss what home, family, and belonging can look like for all of us—across the spectrum of age, marital status, and different seasons of life.

We will be looking at the passage of Scripture that was preached on January 27. This text, Ephesians 5:21-6:4, was written to be a form of a household code to the New Testament church. Your group may not be able to cover it all, but do your best to have a helpful and personal conversation that invites each of you to take something away to apply.

<sup>21</sup> Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— <sup>30</sup> for we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup> This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

**6** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— <sup>3</sup> “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

<sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Ephesians 5:21-6:4

---

**O** – Those around church circles will be familiar with these words as most parents and Sunday School teachers love quoting Ephesians 6:1-3. As you re-read this section now, what words and phrases jump off the page to you?

Theologian N.T. Wright gives us some cultural and theological context:

*In this climate of thought, for Paul to tell wives to be subject to husbands looks to many like an unfortunate social or cultural gaffe. People who cheerfully ignore traditional morality, and believe in freedom of expression, suddenly become heavily moralistic and say that passages like this are wicked and shouldn't even be read out aloud. But—as so often when reading the Bible—there's a lot to be said for checking our natural, and (let's admit it) sometimes aggressive attitude to passages that strike us as objectionable, and for thinking through why we react like this, and whether we have really understood the passage or not.*

*The fascinating thing here is that Paul has a quite different way of going about addressing the problem of gender roles. He insists that the husband should take as his role model, not the typical bossy or bullying male of the modern, or indeed the ancient, stereotype, but Jesus himself. But, you say, Jesus wasn't married. No; but throughout this letter Paul has spoken of the church as the body of the **Messiah**, and now he produces a new twist from within this theme. The church is the bride of the Messiah, the wife of the king.<sup>1</sup>*

**I** – The idea of mutual submission was a new concept in an ancient, patriarchal society. With Jesus as our example, what do you think Paul is trying to emphasize? What has been your experience with mutual submission?

**A** – Why do you think living in mutual submission is so challenging? What can we do to incorporate it more into our lives?

**I** – Why do you think Paul quotes the familiar words of Genesis 2:24 in this section? Hint: It connects to Jesus (verse 32). How could this change today's understanding of marriage?

*(Jesus has left his Father and his home in search of pursuing and loving his bride, the Church. This is how we are to love one another. Further, loving our spouses like this would make a profound distinction in our homes. This type of love focuses on the other—it sacrifices, it is forgiving, and it's enduring to death do us part.)*

**I** – This past Sunday's sermon focused on singleness, and we are reminded that Jesus (and Paul) was a single man. 1 Corinthians 7:7 is a similar passage—here it is in The Message translation. What can we learn about love and life as we read Paul's words to the Corinthian church?

*Sometimes I wish everyone were single like me—a simpler life in many ways! But celibacy is not for everyone any more than marriage is. God gives the gift of the single life to some, the gift of the married life to others.*

Further, what can married friends learn from our single friends? How can we as a church help everyone to belong (across different marital statuses and seasons of life)?

**A** – Finally, in Ephesians 6:4, Paul includes a warning to fathers to not exasperate their children. How can fathers apply that? How can we each not only avoid exasperating one another but also live to edify each other?

---

<sup>1</sup> Wright, T. (2004). [\*Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon\*](#) (pp. 66–67). 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.