



# **Sermon Study Guide**

## **May 2021**

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All Bible references are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.



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# HOW TO APPROACH THESE STUDIES

How can you approach these studies to help you engage God's Word more eagerly and disciple each other more effectively?

1. **Pray before you partake.** Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to understand His Word (see 1 Corinthians 2:6-16). As you engage the Word of the Lord, engage the Lord of the Word.
2. **Read the readings.** At the beginning of each day, we give Scriptures for you to read. Read them. Engage with the Word. They are not extensive. While there is value in reading through Bible reading plans, value also exists in studying specific passages to glean all the possible information to bring about application and transformation.
3. **Buy a notebook (whether a cheap Composition Notebook or a more expensive Moleskine notebook—or all types in-between) to journal your answers.** I would even recommend sketching out the questions to refer to these interactions should you happen to lose the paper.
4. **Go through this with others.** This study aims to aid our discipleship to fulfill our mission: be, make, multiply, and send hopeful, joyful disciples who make much of Jesus. With our 3+3+3+1 strategy,<sup>1</sup>We hope to provide tools and resources to expedite this discipleship process in fulfillment of the Great Commission. We need each other to progress in our walk with Christ and His church.

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<sup>1</sup>That is, write three people per week, call three people per week, get up with three of the same people each week or two, and share the gospel with one person per week. These studies could help with meeting with your three people as a type of D-Group.



# SERMON NOTES FOR MAY 3-8, 2021

On May 2, we heard a sermon from Ephesians 4:7-16. Paul reminded the Ephesian church that God gifts His people and gives equippers to help His people exercise those gifts for the glory of God and the good of those around them. Let's dig deeper.

**Monday, May 3: Ephesians 4:7-10; 2:1-10; Psalm 68; Romans 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6**

- Christ gives us grace in the measure he ordains. Read Ephesians 2:1-10 and remind yourself of the nature of grace (especially 2:8-10).
- In verse 8, Paul quotes from Psalm 68:18. This passage is a psalm of triumph where the Israelites brought the ark of God back to Jerusalem. Christ on the cross triumphed by bringing God's presence into reality. Read Psalm 68. What joy do you see in this Psalm? What does that Psalm show you about who God is, what He has done, and what He aims to do through you?
- Christ is the dispenser of gifts. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 and Romans 12:4-6. How does Christ dispensing these gifts to believers change your thinking about your value and use in the Kingdom of God?

**Tuesday, May 4: Ephesians 4:11-12**

- God outlines the gifts God gives to the church. The first listed are the "apostles and prophets." Apostles are those commissioned by Christ Himself and were witnesses of His three-year ministry as well as his crucifixion and resurrection. We see prophets in Acts as ones giving revelation, functioning in this capacity while the New Testament was being completed. All New Testament books are written either by an apostle or a close associate of an apostle. How do the giftings of these offices bring you comfort and provide trustworthiness in reading through the Scriptures?
- Evangelists are those with a God-given ability to communicate the gospel. Even so, while God does call evangelists, Christians are called to be evangelistic, having those evangelists equip the saints to share the faith. Have you ever put off sharing the gospel with someone because you told yourself you did not have the gift? How does knowing your responsibility to be evangelistic change your perspective? Will you seek out someone who is evangelistic to help you in sharing the Good News?
- Pastors and Teachers. God calls pastors to give spiritual oversight to their churches as shepherds of the flock (Acts 20:17-38; Hebrews 13:20-21; 1 Peter 5:1-4). God calls teachers to teach the context and application of Scripture. In fact, in the Greek, pastors and teachers are one office of pastor-teachers. Do you pray for your pastors as they seek to not only teach the Word but lead by the Word?

- God calls each of these offices to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. In one older and popular version, the translators inserted a comma, making it read: "to equip the saints, for the work of the ministry." How does this change the meaning? Why would Robby Gallaty note that this comma led to a "discipleship coma?"<sup>2</sup> How can a proper understanding help pastors and laity in their work?

### Wednesday, May 5: Ephesians 4:12b-13

- The gifts that God's people possess and the equippers God gives are in place for the "building up the body of Christ." God gives those who occupy these roles to do so to what end? Read Hebrews 5:11-14. How are we to be built up? What can happen if we choose to stay where we are spiritually? What main tool does the writer of Hebrews tell us to use in building up?
- Once again, Paul addresses the need for unity in the church (see Ephesians 4:1-6). How does one attain mature manhood? When Paul notes the "knowledge of the Son of God," is this merely knowing *about him*? (Paul helps us out in Philippians 3:7-11.)
- Paul repeatedly calls the Ephesians to the fullness of Christ (see Ephesians 1:12; 3:13). Here in 4:13, Paul tells them that they are driving toward "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Read back over Ephesians 1:12 and 3:13 (and around those verses. What can we learn about obtaining the fullness of Christ?

### Thursday, May 6: Ephesians 4:14-16

- Verse 14 tells us that our growth in Christ helps us stay steady in our doctrines. Read James 1:5-8 and Hebrews 13:7-9. What steps has God taken to keep us steady? What can we do to find that anchor?
- In reading verse 15, what two components do we need when we speak to each other? How can your pastor-teachers equip you in this? How does this knowledge of the Son of God (4:13) utilize these two components?
- In reading verse 16, in what ways is the body held together (see 4:15). What substitutes do we have that we believe are the head of the church? Since Christ is the head, to what end is the body built up? How do we know where to define this?

Friday, May 7: Read through Acts 16:11-15 to prepare for the following Sunday.

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<sup>2</sup><https://drmattperry.com/2017/12/01/how-a-comma-brought-about-a-discipleship-coma/>

# SERMON NOTES FOR MAY 10-15, 2021

On May 9 (Mother's Day), we heard a sermon from Acts 16:11-15 to talk about an influential woman of God, Lydia.

## Monday, May 10: Acts 16:6-10

- Paul received his direction from the Holy Spirit to course correct from going to Bithynia and heading to Macedonia. Has God ever changed the course you were going in your life? By what means did He do so? How did you respond?
- Look at a New Testament map (you usually have one in the back of your Bible, but Google works, too). Why was going into Macedonia such a challenge? What does this tell us about God's plan for reaching all the world?
- When Paul heard this "Macedonia Call," he immediately responded. When God puts something on your heart for you to do, do you immediately follow? If not, what are your obstacles? Are you only wanting to move ahead when you have all the information or are you content moving forward knowing He has all you need?

## Tuesday, May 11: Acts 16:11-13

- In verse 12, Paul arrives in Macedonia and stays "some days." God did not make it immediately evident what Paul's ministry would be. Read Exodus 24:15-17. Moses waited on Mount Sinai six days for God to reveal himself. Do you find yourself waiting for God to tell you what is next? What do you do in the meantime?
- Read verse 13. What was Paul looking for in the waiting period? What are things you do to keep your relationship with Christ strong? What steps do you need to take to develop some needed spiritual disciplines to strengthen your walk with Christ?
- Paul spoke with the women who have engaged in prayer already. How encouraging it is to find partners in the gospel. In what ways are you partnering with your church and other organizations for support and encouragement?

## Wednesday, May 12: Acts 16:14

- Acts 16:14 shows that Lydia was a "seller of purple goods." Lydia worked as an entrepreneur. Read Proverbs 31:10-31. What aspects of this woman described in Proverbs 31 shows her entrepreneurial spirit and activity? Why did she engage in such activities? Does this change your perspective on stereotypes you may have believed regarding women in the Old Testament? How has your thinking changed?
- Lydia was Paul's first convert in the European continent. Though from Thyatira, God brought her to Macedonia providentially to hear the gospel. Women have played many "firsts" in the Scriptures, not the least of which was how they were the first to see the empty tomb (Luke 24:1-12). The Scripture describes Lydia as a "worshiper of

God<sup>3</sup> but then God opened her heart to Paul's gospel message and she believed (16:15). Have you opened your heart to the saving message of the gospel, or are you simply identifying with a group of spiritual people? What happened with Lydia that changed her heart to go wholeheartedly into being a follower of Jesus?

**Thursday, May 13: Acts 16:15**

- After receiving the gospel message, Lydia responded in believer's baptism. Read Romans 6:1-4. What does this symbol of baptism tell the watching world?<sup>4</sup> Have you followed through in believer's baptism? Remember, baptism is the first step of obedience to and discipleship of Christ, not the last step of salvation.
- Lydia readily opened her home not only for hospitality to Paul. Her home served as a seed for a new church plant. For Lydia, Christ changed her heart. She wanted to see other hearts changed for Christ. How did Christ change your heart when you came to Christ? How has your hunger for the Word increased in your Christian walk? If your hunger for His Word and work is stagnant, prayerfully ask Him to show you what obstacles are in the way to keep you hungry for all He is and all He would have you do.

**Friday, May 14: Read Ephesians 4:17-24 to prepare for the following Sunday.**

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<sup>3</sup>A "worshiper of God" meant that she was not a full Jewish proselyte but did worship with them as a Gentile.

<sup>4</sup>Lydia's entire household was baptized as well. In every instance of baptism, we see a confession and profession of faith in Christ on the part of the one being baptized. Whenever we see entire households baptized, they participated not based on the leader of the household but the basis of their faith.

# SERMON NOTES FOR MAY 17-22, 2021

The key passage for this week is Ephesians 4:17-24. Paul continues from Ephesians 4:1 to remind the Ephesians what a walk should entail. Now, Paul shows them what their Christian walk should avoid.

## **Monday, May 17: Ephesians 4:17-18; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 12:33-37; Romans 1:18-32**

- Paul describes the Gentiles as walking in “the futility of their minds,” due to their alienation from God. What descriptors does Paul use to describe this futility?
- What is the “heart” of a person, biblically speaking? (See Jeremiah 17:9 and Matthew 12:33-37 for help). How does this hardness of heart affect understanding? How does this alienation from God connect to their hardness of heart (read Romans 1:18-32)?

## **Tuesday, May 18: Ephesians 4:19; Romans 8:1-11**

- How does their hardness/callousness of heart affect their character and behavior? Read Romans 8:1-11 to show what role the heart plays in the actions and thinking of someone. Have you ever lived a chapter of your life where you believed that running from God and His way was true freedom? Do you still believe this? In what way is this wrong thinking? How did God bring you back to Himself? How could you help someone else?
- What comes to mind when you see that they "gave themselves up" to these sinful activities? Yesterday, you read from Romans 1:18-32, where three times Paul notes that "God gave them up" to increased degrees of darkness. How does the giving of oneself up to sin connect with God giving them up? Giving up yourself to self and its desires is another way of saying you've given up on God.

## **Wednesday, May 19: Ephesians 4:20-21; Colossians 2:6-15**

- The walk of the Gentiles is not the way of Christ. Paul assumed they have heard about and were taught in Christ. Do you recall the first time you heard about Christ? Write this down in a notebook or journal for later reference. Do you recall the first time you were taught and disciplined in Christ? What was their name? Were you in church or elsewhere?
- “All the truth is in Jesus.” Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life—no one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Read Colossians 2:6-15. Paul warns the Colossian church not to be caught up and be “captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ” (2:8). The world believes that Christianity is elemental/elementary, while their worldviews are more modern and, therefore, more intellectual. What do Christianity's solutions provide that the world's do not? More to the point, what did Jesus' life, death, and resurrection solve that the world cannot?

**Thursday, May 20: Ephesians 4:22-24**

- Paul continues the argument he lays down that exhorts the Ephesian church to put off the "old self," described much in the preceding verses. According to v. 22, where does our old self belong? Are you ever tempted to put back on the old self? Why? What makes the desires of the old self so deceitful? How have those desires lied to you? How are they tempting you and lying to you now?
- Paul calls for renewal. Where does this renewal happen? What steps will you take to fill your mind with the right things? Where should you start? What needs to change in your personal habits that will fill your mind with godly things?
- We are to put off the old self, and put on the new self. In verse 24, where does Paul say the new self is created after? Meditate on this truth and consider the implications, especially when you consider your condition when you were in your old self. Take time to praise and thank God for not only rescuing you from sin and self but rescuing you *to* His likeness and fullness. What are the attributes of this new self? Read Romans 3:21-31 and 1 Peter 1:13-21 to begin your quest in understanding God's righteousness and holiness.

**Friday, May 21: Read Ephesians 4:25-32 to prepare for the following Sunday.**

# SERMON NOTES FOR MAY 24-29, 2021

We base these sermon notes on the sermon from Sunday, May 23 on Ephesians 4:25-32. Paul continues to show what the Christian walk must entail. Ephesians 4:17-24 spoke of the relationship between Christ and the Christian. Ephesians 4:25-32 outlines the relationship between the Christian and their neighbor.

**Monday, May 24: Ephesians 4:25-26; Luke 10:25-37; Ephesians 4:13-16; Matthew 5:21-26; Matthew 21:12-13**

- Truth marks the Christian since, as Ephesians 4:21 notes, "the truth is in Jesus." Why is this so important in our interactions with our neighbors? Read again Luke 10:25-37 to remind yourself who your neighbor is. What can happen to your witness if your Christian walk is not marked by truth? Why do we struggle with putting away or justifying our falsehood?
- Paul gives the reason for being truthful to our neighbor: "for we are members with one another" (v. 26). That means we belong to each other in Christ and are to build one another up. Read again Ephesians 4:13-16. How are we to speak the truth to one another? To what end? (You may want to review the week of May 3-8 for reminders.)
- Warren Wiersbe notes, "Anger is an emotional arousal cause by something that displeases us." Read Matthew 5:21-26 to see the problematic aspects of anger. Now read Matthew 21:12-13 to see the righteous aspects of anger. What are the differences? How does what is most important to us spark a wave of anger in us? What does Matthew 5:21-26 tell us about settling disputes quickly?

**Tuesday, May 25: Ephesians 4:27-28; Exodus 20:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12; Matthew 6:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9)**

- Continuing from verse 26, Paul tells the Ephesian church that the wrong anger could give the devil an opportunity. How so? (Again, read Matthew 5:21-26.)
- Paul then addresses the sin of thievery, mentioned in one of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:15). Paul here continues God's desire for one to respect the property of others. In the Ephesian culture, thievery was rampant. What should thieves do instead of steal?
- What reason does Paul give to work? What reasons do we often work (eat, pay for recreational activities, college, retirement)? Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12. List the reason why idleness and the need to work is so important, especially for Christians. Then, referring back to Ephesians 4:28, how can what we earn be used to bless others (see Matthew 6:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9)?

### **Wednesday, May 26: Ephesians 4:29-30**

- In Ephesians 4:29, what kind of talk should come out of the Christian's mouth? Read Colossians 4:2-6 and list the types of conversations in which Christians must engage. What role does grace play in the Christian's conversation?
- Considering what we've read in Ephesians 4, how could we grieve the Holy Spirit? Read John 16:4-15. What are some ways that the Holy Spirit works to keep us in God's will? What does the Holy Spirit do to make us aware of when we are outside of His will? Why do you believe Paul uses the word "grieve" to describe the Holy Spirit's reaction to when we sin?
- Paul reminds the Ephesians that the Spirit sealed them "for the day of redemption." Read again Ephesians 1:11-14 to see Paul's first mention of our Spirit's sealing. What does that passage tell you about the Spirit's person and nature? How does our being sealed for the day of redemption connect with our avoidance of grieving the Spirit?

### **Thursday, May 27: Ephesians 4:31-32**

- In verse 31, Paul tells the Ephesians to put off other sinful attributes and actions. Read Galatians 5:16-22. How would you classify and categorize the lists found here and in Galatians 5? What troubling attributes do we see in our present culture that need addressing and putting off? Are they the same as what Paul mentioned in Ephesians 4 and Galatians 5 or are they different?
- In verse 32, Paul goes positive by sharing what the Ephesians Christians *must* do. How does verse 32 connect with each of the points Paul gives from verses 25-31? How does the gospel fuel what Paul is saying in verse 32?

**Friday, May 28: Read Ephesians 5:1-14 to prepare for the following Sunday.**

# SERMON NOTES FOR MAY 31-JUNE 4, 2021

In Ephesians 5:1-14, Paul touches on a practice in the Roman world that must not mark the life of a Christian: sexual immorality. From the very beginning, God gives His design on the nature and boundaries of sexual relationships. Sexual immorality is so grievous to God that Christians must never *speak* about these matters. Now, many in our culture place their entire identity on their SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity). Yet, freedom is found in the boundaries of God's design.

**Monday, May 31: Ephesians 5:1-3; Hebrews 9-10; Genesis 1:26-31; Matthew 5:27-32; Matthew 19:4-6**

- Paul exhorts the Ephesian church to walk in love. On what basis? In what way did Christ demonstrate this love? Read Hebrews 9-10 to see how Christ served as a "fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."
- In verse 3, Paul warns the Ephesian church to stay away from sexual immorality. This admonition comes after Paul spoke about walking in love. How has our present culture (much the same as in the Roman culture) redefined love to include an activity which God calls sexual immorality? When we hear the mantra, "Love is love," what does that phrase communicate to our culture today? Is that true? Why isn't love, love?
- Read Genesis 1:26-31, Matthew 5:27-32, and Matthew 19:4-6. Not all sexual relationships are immoral. What boundaries has God placed on sexual outlets? What makes sexual immorality immoral? In the Matthew 5:27-32 passage, how does Jesus define the nature of lust and adultery? How were these different from the cultural norms of Rome and even the Pharisaical model?

**Tuesday, June 1: Ephesians 5:4-6; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 6:16-20; Matthew 6:5-8**

- Not only should Christians avoid the activity of sexual immorality, but they should also not talk or crudely joke about this. According to 5:4, what type of talk should replace this inappropriate topic? Why this specific topic? How does this change our language? Would this change the types of websites we visit or the type of TV shows we watch?
- In verse 5, what does Paul say will be the ultimate end of those who continually practice sexual immorality? Read 1 Corinthians 6:16-20 to show why sexual immortality is a distinctive and destructive type of sin? Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-13—why did Paul exercise discipline for such behavior?

- In verse 6, we see a connection with verse 4. How can these types of empty words deceive us? Words matter. Read Matthew 6:5-8. How do we speak empty words even in our prayers? What must we do to make sure our words have substance?

**Wednesday, June 2: Ephesians 5:7-10; Philippians 1:3-11**

- In verse 7, Paul reminds the Ephesians not to partner with them (see Ephesians 5:1-6 for a reminder). In his letters, Paul continually reminds the churches will join and partner with something. Read Philippians 1:3-11. In verse 5, Paul praises God because of the Philippians because of their partnership. On what basis is this partnership. Make a list of what this partnership entails. In what way can you stoke that type of partnership with those around you?
- As Christians walk in the light, Paul shows them the role of discernment in their walk. Again, refer to Philippians 1:3-11. What role does their partnership in the gospel play in aiding their discernment? How can our discernment of what is godly and ungodly be utilized today?

**Thursday, June 3: Ephesians 5:11-14; James 5:16**

- In verse 11, Paul calls on the Ephesian Christians to expose the unfruitful works of darkness rather than hide them or ignore them. In reading 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (a passage you referred to earlier in these study notes) and Matthew 18:15-20, Paul calls for exposing these practices in the church. Why? Why do we resist bring our sins to light? Read James 5:16. What *should* we do with these sins? Why are we so reluctant to do so?
- In verses 13-14, exposing sins to the light makes them visible. While this may be humiliating, to what end (refer to 1 Corinthians 5:5)?

**Friday, June 4: Read Psalm 21 as we begin a new series, Summer in the Psalms (Psalms 21-30). Read up on Psalm 21 to prepare for the following Sunday.**