

Small Group Guide

THE CHURCH: A DEMONSTRATION OF GOD'S POWER

The Church at Brook Hills

Jonathan B.

November 27, 2011

Ephesians 3:14–21

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)

The Church: A Demonstration of God's Power

Ephesians 3:14-21

Prayer for the Church to be Strengthened In Power.

- Based on the position we have before God the Father...
 - We stand with confident access.
 - We bow with a humble attitude.
- Based on the power we have by the Holy Spirit...
 - We are empowered in our inner being.
 - We are indwelled by Christ through faith.
- Based on the love we have in Christ...
 - We comprehend the vast extent of that love.
 - We are filled with the fullness of God.

“Paul says God's love for his people is as long as eternity past, so wide as to include all nations, so high as to ring praises from angels in heaven, and so deep as to cancel the claims of hell on our soul.” Bryan Chapell

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Praise to God for His Power Demonstrated through the Church.

- God is able to do abundantly more than we ask or think.
- By his power the Church is enabled to bring him glory.
- That leads to his eternal praise.

Grounded in the confidence of God's love for us in Christ we are empowered by the Spirit to demonstrate the glory to the Father, forever and ever. Amen.

Message Summary

Jonathan B. examined Paul's prayer found in Ephesians 3:14–21. Paul prayed for the church to be strengthened in power so that the body would glorify God for the sake of His eternal praise among all nations. We come before God confidently and humbly as His children. His Spirit transforms our inner being and His vast love calls us to be filled His power so we can reflect His Presence in us. In light of these truths, and in light of the fact God can do more than we ask or think, the church is enabled to demonstrate God's power to the nations, which brings Him glory forever and ever.

Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- Read Ephesians 1:3–6 and Ephesians 3:14–15. From what relational position do we approach God in prayer? How does understanding our relationship to God as Father help us to approach Him both humbly and confidently? What are some unbiblical ways in which we might sometimes approach God? (out of pride or ungodly fear)
- Do you think physical posture is important in prayer? Why or why not?
- Read 2 Corinthians 4:16–18. Think about the content of your recent prayers. Are you concentrating more on outside circumstances or transformation of your inner being? Why? Is it biblical to pray about external circumstances? Can you think of some examples of biblical prayer focused on circumstances and some focused on the inner being?
- Read Ephesians 3:16–17. Does heart change (sanctification) come from without or within? How and by who are we transformed and empowered?
- Read Ephesians 3:18–19. Can we, in our own power, comprehend the love of God in Christ? In what ways do we come to know Christ's love? How should a deeper understanding of Christ's love affect the way we pray?
- Do we sometimes measure God's love by our own experiences or circumstances? Why is this a bad idea for us? How should we measure the love of God? What is the ultimate display of God's love for us?
- Does transformation come by trying to be different and do better or by understanding Christ's love for us? How does comprehending the love of God help empower us to overcome sin, love our neighbors, and love the nations?
- Read John 14:15. What does love lead us to do? How does our love for God lead us to the lost, whether in Birmingham or in another part of the world? Why does love for God result in holy thoughts and behavior?
- What do you think it means to "be filled with all the fullness of God"? For what purposes are we filled?
- Read Ephesians 3:20–21. Whose power is at work in us? Why? What are the limits on His power? How can knowing the extent of God's power encourage you this week?
- What do we seek to glorify in our normal week? What do we praise/worship? Why? How long will these things last? How long will God be worthy of praise? How can you make time to praise God this week?
- How is the church a demonstration of God's power?

Respond . . .

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Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today's study. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church..

Weekly Prayer Focus ...

- **Lives and Church:** *Pray that God might bring us to a greater realization and experience of his great love for us, and that this realization might cause us to be filled to all the fullness of God.*
- **Local:** *This week we are praying for Grace House, a residential ministry in Fairfield, which helps abandoned, abused, or neglected girls find the love of Christ in a safe environment. We are also praying for Oak Mountain Presbyterian, Bob Flayhart, pastor.*
- **Global:** *This week we are praying for Ken and Jonja J., Brook Hills partners, serving among unreached peoples in South East Asia.*