



A Good Word Week 3 – ADOPTED Spiritual Formation & Discussion Guide

We hope you'll use this guide to take the teaching from Sunday's service and reflect on it with a few friends or a group. If you have questions or want to talk more about how to take your next spiritual step, contact us at info@wschurch.org.

Scripture:

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. ⁴Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. ⁵God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. ⁶So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. Ephesians 1:3-6

For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. Ephesians 6:15

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:2

Reflection Questions:

- When you meet someone for the first time, how do you introduce yourself? What are some of the key things about yourself that you share?
- What stood out to you from Sunday's service? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through the songs, the message, and being with others as part of the church? (The message's main points and scripture are listed below if it helps you think back.)
- Read through Ephesians 1:3-6 and write down all of the verbs (action words) that are describing God's activity. (Michael highlighted several in the message, but try to find all of the ones in these verses.) What do you learn about God from this?
- Michael highlighted several things from these verses:
 - God's plan all along was to bring you into the family

- God's plan all along was for this to be an invitation to EVERYONE
- God is delighted that you are in the family

Which of these stands out to you today? Why?

- Read Ephesians 6:15. The gospel (“good news”) is one that brings peace. How have you experienced this?
- Michael also shared, “**We find true peace when we realize our truest identity.**” He offered a practical tool of replacing negative messages that we think with the truth of our identity as a loved, chosen child of God. How would this affect how you see yourself?
- Read Romans 12:2. How can you allow God to renew your mind and change the way you think? Get practical – what’s one thing you can do this week?
- Take a moment to sit with this question: **At the core of your being, do you believe God loves you?** After a moment, write out your response as honestly as you can.
- Read this quote from Brennan Manning: “**Do you believe that the God of Jesus loves you beyond worthiness and unworthiness, beyond fidelity and infidelity—that he loves you in the morning sun and in the evening rain—that he loves you when your intellect denies it, your emotions refuse it, your whole being rejects it. Do you believe that God loves without condition or reservation and loves you this moment as you are and not as you should be.**” How do you react to that?
- Is there anything else from this teaching that you want to explore more?
- Take time to pray as you close your time of reflection or discussion. Try to spend some time quietly, without words, receiving God’s love for you. Can you imagine his face as you are with him?

Want some resources and ideas for how to grow spiritually?

We are spotlighting our resource, “**How to Pray and Read the Bible,**” which you can get at our Next Steps Area or access online at https://www.wschurch.org/content/pdf/How2PrayBible_Digital.pdf.

Visit www.wschurch.org/resources to see additional tools and resources.

Message Main Points and Scripture:

- Ephesians 1:4-5 — “Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.”
- God *loved us* and *chose us*.
- God *adopted* us into his family.
- God was *delighted*.
- **Huiotesia**
- Romans 8:23 — “And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our *full rights as his adopted children*, including the new bodies he has promised us.”
- Galatians 4:5 — “God sent him to buy freedom for us, who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his *very own children*.”
- Ephesians 1:4 — “Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.”
- Romans 5:8 — “But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”

- And yes, God chose us. It wasn't a last minute thing because he felt sorry for us and no one else would have us, like a stray mutt at the dog pound, or an orphan whom nobody adopted. He chose us "before the foundation of the world." We are in on the action, long before we have any idea that we are in on the action. We are cosmic. - Eugene Peterson
- Ephesians 1:12-13 — "God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago."
- Ephesians 2:11-14 — "Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us."
- Ephesians 3:6 — "And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus."
- Ephesians 1:5 — "God decided in advance to *adopt* us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure."
- **We find true peace when we realize our truest identity.**
- Romans 12:2 — "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."
- **"Do you believe that the God of Jesus loves you beyond worthiness and unworthiness, beyond fidelity and infidelity—that he loves you in the morning sun and in the evening rain—that he loves you when your intellect denies it, your emotions refuse it, your whole being rejects it. Do you believe that God loves without condition or reservation and loves you this moment as you are and not as you should be." – Brennan Manning**
- Ephesians 2:10 — "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."