

PRAYER

- Thank God for His love for you displayed through Jesus Christ. Pray that you will not take for granted your identity as His child.
- Pray for the people God has placed in your life. Pray that you will be an encouragement to one another as you all grow in Christ.
- Pray that as you grow, your family and friends will see your life as a testimony of God's goodness. Pray that this will open doors for you to preach the gospel to them.

NOTES

THE GREAT EXCHANGE

WEEK 4

From Alienation to Belonging

WARM-UP

- Share with us a story of how you make friends.
- Are/were you a part of an organization in school? Why did you join the organization?
- Tell us about one of your closest friends. How did you meet him/her and become friends?

WORD

*¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. **EPHESIANS 2:19-22***

(Read also **EPHESIANS 2:11-18.**)

Jesus was sacrificed on the cross as part of God's plan to save mankind from the spiritual death and separation from God that our sin caused. Christ's sacrifice made a way for us to no longer be alienated from God, have a relationship with Him, and draw closer to Him. Today we will look at what Christ has done that has brought us near to Him and how it makes us part of God's family.



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1 We were separated from God.

... remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. **EPHESIANS 2:12**

Because of sin, *we were separated from Christ. We were alienated, strangers to the covenant promise, without hope, and without God.* God cannot tolerate or stand any sin, no matter how small or big we think our sin may be. He is holy and there is *no unrighteousness in Him* (Psalm 92:15). The truth is, we cannot do anything about our hopeless situation, but God can, and He did. Who is the only way to the Father (John 14:6)?

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2 We have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. **EPHESIANS 2:13**

Jesus' perfect sacrifice caused us, who were alienated from God, to be brought near to Him. When we couldn't do anything about our situation and couldn't communicate with God, it was through Jesus that we have a way for us to call on Him. Through Jesus, *we have access in one Spirit to the Father.* According to Romans 8:38,39, is there anything that could separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus?

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3 We are now members of God's family.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God . . . **EPHESIANS 2:19**

Jesus Christ did not only save us from sin, He gave us the right to become a part of God's family. In this new life that God called us to, He did not want us to walk alone. When we were reconciled to God, we were also reconciled to others, because in Christ, we are *being built together into a dwelling place of God*—His Church. Recall how you became a part of God's family. Who helped you grow in your relationship with God and the church?

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APPLICATION

- Do you believe that you have been brought near to God and have become a member of His family as His child? How will Christ's sacrifice help you understand and accept your identity as a child of God?
- Now that you are a part of God's family, who are you walking with? How can your appreciation of your church community grow, knowing that it is Christ who has built us together?
- Do you have a family member or friend that needs to know that God is willing to draw near to him/her and accept him/her as His child? How can you share God's love and grace today?