

Get a Life!

Ephesians

No Longer Strangers

Lesson Twelve

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Ephesians

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Ephesians 4:1

No Longer Strangers

Lesson Goal: To help students to understand that Jesus' sacrificial death brings us all together.

Scripture: Ephesians 2:14-22; 4:24; II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 3:28; I Peter 2:4-10;

Our Scripture lesson today tells us that Jesus, by His death on the cross, changed forever how humans relate to one another and to God. There was a barrier between the people of Israel, to whom God had given the law, and other people. This caused really bad feelings between what the New Testament calls the Jews (Hebrews) and the Greeks. The people of Israel (Hebrews) seemed to believe that God had picked them out to be His only friends. They believed that if they kept all the law, they would have a permanent place as God's friends. To them, others were not the friends of God and thus were to be looked down on by the Hebrews.

Ephesians tells us that this was never God's intent. God never intended that the Hebrews would be the only ones who could come to Him under the law. God's free grace changed the situation. Jesus lived a perfect life, keeping all the law. He died as a perfect sacrifice for all our sins, which meant that the law was no longer a threat to humans. Since Jesus died for us, the law now has no power over humans. This doesn't mean that we no longer have to obey the law, it means that we are no longer obligated to keep all the law, live a perfect life, so that we can have a permanent relationship with God.

Since the law is no longer the way to God, there is no barrier between humans. Galatians 3:28 says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." So all those who considered themselves the "in crowd," and those who seemed to be strangers, outside the love of God, are no longer strangers. Certainly none of us must be on the outside, looking in.

Ephesians 2:19 says it very succinctly, "...you're no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household..." No longer strangers. What good news!

Bethany and Max were on vacation with their parents in a foreign country. Somehow they got lost. They began to ask for help, but no one understood their language. They were frightened and didn't know what to do. Finally, a gentleman who understood their language, began to talk to them and also to the other people. He broke down the barrier that had separated them from all the others. Soon they were having a good time, visiting with the people that they had been afraid of just a few minutes before. They were no longer strangers. After a while, those folks had found their parents, and the family was reunited. Max and Bethany introduced their parents to their new friends and all of them celebrated the reunion of their family.

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Ephesians goes on to compare our new relationships as Christians to a building. The prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament are the foundation and Jesus is the cornerstone of a very special building...a house of God. I Peter 2:4 tells us that Jesus is the precious stone chosen by God to be the stone around which we become the living stones that make up a spiritual house of God. The first and strongest stone is Jesus. Then, all of us who believe in Him, become part of this magnificent temple, built to honor God. I Peter 2:10 says, “Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

It is by the mercy, the grace, of God that we are no longer strangers. We were people separated by barriers of questions and unbelief. We are now called “fellow citizens.” We had been like aliens in a foreign country, and now we are just like everyone else. We had been outside looking in and now we are part of God’s family.

The most wonderful of all the pictures in the book of Ephesians, is the final one in the second chapter. We are told that the apostles, the prophets, Jesus and all of us who accept His grace become a beautiful temple and God chooses to live there. God’s Holy Spirit lives in us, giving us eternal life, and is the mortar that holds all the stones of the temple together.

There is a thread through these verses tying them together. That is the idea of coming together; thus our theme, no longer strangers. However, there is another theme. That is the provision of peace. Our Scripture lesson begins with the statement that Jesus is our peace. He is the one who tears down walls that divide. He is the one who draws people together. He is the one who brings forth a new human creation that is not divided. He is the one who brings us together with God and peace now exists between humans and God.

Finally, in verse 18, we are told that we have access to God. That doesn’t just mean that we can talk to God anytime, it also means that Jesus Himself introduces us to God. What an introduction!

Memory Verse: “You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.” Ephesians 2:19

*Underlined sentences in the Teacher’s Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher’s Guide.

Student Worksheet

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Memory Verse: “You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.” Ephesians 2:19

>Our Scripture lesson today tells us that _____, by His death on the cross, _____ forever how humans relate to one another and to _____.

>Since Jesus died for us, the law now has no _____ over humans. This doesn’t mean that we no longer have to _____ the law, it means that we are no longer obligated to _____ all the _____ to have a permanent relationship with _____.

>So all those who considered themselves the “_____,” and those who seemed to be strangers, outside the _____ of God, are no longer _____.

>The _____ of the Old Testament and the _____ of the New Testament are the foundation and Jesus is the _____ of a very special building...a _____ of God.

>It is by the _____, the _____, of God that we are no longer _____.

>Jesus is the one who brings us together with _____ and _____ now exists between humans and God.

>Access to God means we can talk to God _____, and that Jesus Himself introduces us to _____.

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that there is a God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus’ name. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.

Fifth, believe that He has answered your prayer and be ready to live for him all the rest of your life.