

Ephesians – Week 7 – One New Man – Bible Study Helps

Title: One New Man

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores Ephesians 2:14-22, revealing how Jesus Christ has broken down the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles to create one unified body—the church. Through His death on the cross, Christ abolished the hostility and divisions created by Old Testament law, reconciling both groups to God and to each other. The message emphasizes that believers are no longer strangers but fellow citizens in God's household, built together as a holy temple where God Himself dwells. This represents a dramatic shift from God's temporary dwelling in the tabernacle and localized presence in the temple to His permanent inhabitation within His redeemed people. The sermon challenges Christians to live unified lives, removing divisions and recognizing their collective identity as the body of Christ.

Key Points:

- Jesus Christ is our peace who has made Jews and Gentiles one by breaking down the middle wall of partition
- The ceremonial laws and ordinances that created division between Jews and Gentiles have been abolished in Christ's flesh
- Christ has not improved two separate groups but created an entirely new identity—one new man
- Through the cross, both Jews and Gentiles are reconciled to God in one body, with the enmity being slain
- All believers now have equal access to God the Father through one Spirit
- The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ as the chief cornerstone
- Believers are no longer strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens and members of God's household
- God now dwells inside His people rather than in physical structures like the tabernacle or temple
- Christians must remove divisions among themselves since Christ has already torn them down
- Getting close to God naturally brings believers closer to each other

Scripture Reference:

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- Ephesians 2:1-22 (primary focus on verses 14-22)
- Isaiah 56:5-7 (prophecy of Gentiles coming to God's house)
- Matthew 21 (Jesus cleansing the temple in the court of the Gentiles)
- 2 Corinthians 5 (new creature in Christ)
- Matthew 27:51 (veil torn in two)
- Hebrews 9:8 and 10:19 (access to the holiest place through Christ's blood)
- Romans 5:2 (access by faith into grace)

Stories:

- Historical context of the temple warning sign discovered by archaeologists that threatened death to any Gentile who entered beyond the outer court
- The account of Jesus overturning the money changers' tables in the court of the Gentiles, referencing Isaiah's prophecy that God's house should be a house of prayer for all people
- The illustration of Peter's vision of the blanket with unclean animals before meeting Cornelius, demonstrating Jewish dietary restrictions creating division
- The riot in Ephesus over the temple of Diana (Artemis), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, contrasted with believers now being God's true temple
- The analogy of scaffolding used during construction that is removed once the building is complete, representing how the Old Testament law served its purpose leading to Christ
- The triangle illustration showing how two people reconciled to God at the top are naturally reconciled to each other
- The marriage counseling principle that spouses who both draw close to God must necessarily draw closer to each other

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Discipleship Questions

How does understanding that Christ removed the divisions between Jews and Gentiles challenge us to examine the walls we might be rebuilding in our own Christian communities today?

In what ways does viewing yourself as part of God's holy temple rather than an individual believer change your perspective on daily Christian living and your relationship with other believers?

The sermon describes how Jesus Christ created 'one new man' rather than improving two separate groups. What does this mean for your personal identity and the things you held onto before salvation?

How does the truth that believers have constant access to God through Christ, compared to the Old Testament's once-a-year access, impact the way you approach prayer and worship?

The passage states that when gospel preachers speak, it is Christ's voice being heard. How does this reality affect your understanding of evangelism and your responsibility to share the gospel?

If closeness to God naturally results in closeness to other believers, what does ongoing conflict with other Christians reveal about our individual walks with the Lord?

The sermon mentions that anything creating division among redeemed sinners has already been judged at Calvary. What divisions or distinctions are you tempted to maintain that Christ has already torn down?

How does understanding that you are a specific stone in God's holy temple, carefully placed by Him, change your view of your importance and purpose in the body of Christ?

The Jews had to give up their God-given laws and identity to embrace Christ as their new identity. What things in your life, even good things, might God be calling you to lay down to fully embrace your identity in Christ?

In light of God dwelling inside believers rather than in a physical temple, how should this truth transform the way we present ourselves to the world and live out our faith daily?

Small Group Guide: One New Man

Ephesians 2:14-22

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together asking God to open hearts and minds to understand the incredible unity He has created through Jesus Christ.

Ice Breaker

Share about a time when you felt like an "outsider" who became an "insider" in a group, community, or organization. How did that transition feel?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. The Division Removed

Jesus Christ has broken down the barriers that separated Jews and Gentiles—and all people from God and each other.

2. One New Man Created

Christ didn't improve two groups; He created an entirely new identity. The church is something completely new—not Gentiles becoming Jews or vice versa.

3. A New Building

God no longer dwells in temporary structures or local temples. He now inhabits His redeemed people—we are His holy temple.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

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1. **Read Ephesians 2:14-22 together.** What stands out to you most from this passage? What surprises you?
2. The sermon mentioned a literal wall in the temple that restricted Gentiles. How does understanding this historical context help you appreciate what Christ has done?
3. What does it mean that Christ "abolished in His flesh the enmity" (v. 15)? What specific barriers did He remove?

Personal Reflection

4. **The Triangle Illustration:** The sermon explained that when both Jews and Gentiles draw closer to God, they naturally draw closer to each other. How have you experienced this principle in your relationships with other believers?
5. Are there any "walls" or divisions you've been tempted to rebuild in your Christian life? (Examples: social status, race, religious preferences, education level, political views)
6. The sermon stated: "It's impossible for believers to be close to God and then not close to other believers." Do you agree? How does this challenge you personally?

Application to Church Life

7. How should understanding that we are "one new man" and "one body" change the way we:
 - Treat other believers?
 - Handle conflicts in the church?
 - Welcome newcomers?
 - View Christians from different backgrounds?
 8. The sermon emphasized that God's plan is not for "individual, isolated Christian life" but for unified body life. What are some practical ways you can move from isolation to genuine community?
 9. **Access to God:** In the Old Testament, only the high priest could enter God's presence once a year. Now we all have constant access through Christ. How often do you take advantage of this incredible privilege? What might change if you truly grasped this reality?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose **one or two** of the following to practice this week:

For Personal Growth:

- Spend time each day thanking God that you are no longer a "stranger and foreigner" but a "fellow citizen" in His household

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- Identify any division or enmity you have with another believer and take steps toward reconciliation
- Examine your life: Are you living as part of the body, or in isolation? What needs to change?

For Relationships:

- Reach out to a believer who is different from you (different background, age, culture) and intentionally build a bridge
- If you've been in conflict with another Christian, get close to God first through prayer and Bible reading, then reach out to reconcile
- Invite someone who seems isolated to join you in fellowship or service

For Your Church:

- Pray specifically for unity in your local church body
- Look for ways to serve that help "build up" the temple (encourage, support, or equip other believers)
- Share the gospel with someone this week, remembering that when you speak, Christ speaks through you (v. 17)

Reflection Questions for Deeper Growth

1. **Identity Check:** What defines you most? Your ethnicity, job, political views, or your identity in Christ? How would others answer this about you based on your life?
2. **The Temple Reality:** You are part of God's holy temple. Does your life reflect that you are a dwelling place for God? What might need to change?
3. **Gospel Clarity:** Can you clearly explain to someone how Christ has made peace between us and God? Practice sharing this with the group.

Memory Verse

Ephesians 2:19-20 *"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone."*

Closing Application

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The Triangle Exercise: Draw a triangle with God at the top and two people at the bottom corners.

- Discuss: How does your closeness to God directly affect your closeness to other believers?
 - Personal commitment: What is one specific way you will draw closer to God this week, knowing it will also draw you closer to others?
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Prayer Time

Pray together for:

- Gratitude for the access we have to God through Christ
- Unity in your local church body
- Removal of any divisions or walls we've rebuilt
- Boldness to share the gospel, knowing Christ speaks through us
- Hearts that reflect we are "one new man" in Christ

Personal sharing: Ask if anyone has a specific relationship that needs reconciliation or a division they need God's help to overcome. Pray specifically for these situations.

Before Next Week

- Read Ephesians 3:1-13 in preparation for next week's study
 - Journal about one way you experienced unity with another believer this week
 - Share one truth from this study with someone outside your small group
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Leader's Notes

- **Time allocation:** Plan for 60-90 minutes
- **Emphasis:** Focus on the practical reality that Christ has removed all barriers, and we shouldn't rebuild them
- **Sensitive topic:** Discussions about division may surface real hurts or conflicts. Be prepared to handle these with grace and possibly follow up individually
- **Action-oriented:** Don't let this be merely intellectual. Push for specific, practical commitments to unity and reconciliation

5-Day Devotional: One New Man in Christ

Day 1: From Division to Unity

Reading: Ephesians 2:11-14

Devotional: Before Christ, humanity was divided—Jews separated from Gentiles by laws, customs, and centuries of hostility. But God's plan was never permanent division. Through the cross, Jesus removed the barriers that separated us from God and from each other. The "middle wall of partition" has been broken down. Today, reflect on the divisions you've allowed in your own heart. Are there believers you've distanced yourself from because of differences in background, culture, or preference? Christ didn't improve two groups; He created something entirely new. When you trusted Christ, you became part of one body—unified, reconciled, and equal before God. Let this truth reshape how you view and treat fellow believers.

Day 2: Peace Through the Cross

Reading: Ephesians 2:14-17; Colossians 1:19-22

Devotional: Jesus Christ is our peace—not merely a peacemaker, but peace personified. On the cross, He didn't just negotiate a truce; He has "slain the enmity," violently destroying the hostility between us and God, and between us and others. This peace cost Him everything. Without the cross, there is no reconciliation. Consider this: if you draw close to God, and another believer draws close to God, you must draw closer to each other. It's impossible to be near the Father while remaining distant from His children. Is there unresolved conflict in your relationships with other Christians? The path to reconciliation runs through Calvary. Get close to God today, and watch how He restores broken fellowship.

Day 3: Access to the Father

Reading: Hebrews 10:19-22; Matthew 27:50-51

Devotional: When Jesus cried, "It is finished," the temple veil tore from top to bottom—an 18-inch-thick barrier ripped open by God's own hand. What once restricted access to one man, one day per year, now stands open to all who come through Christ. You have bold access to the holiest place through Jesus' blood. This isn't a privilege for spiritual elites; it's the inheritance of every believer. The Gentiles who had no hope, who were strangers and foreigners, now have the same access as the most devout Jew. Don't take this for granted. You can approach God's throne with confidence today—not because of your worthiness, but because of His. Will you enter in?

Day 4: Living Stones in God's Temple

Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-10; Ephesians 2:19-22

Devotional: God no longer dwells in buildings made with hands. His temple today is you—living stones carefully placed by the Master Builder. In ancient Ephesus, the temple of Diana was a wonder of the world, but Paul declared something greater: the church is God's true temple. Every believer is essential to this structure. You're not invisible or insignificant; you're fitly framed into God's holy dwelling place. The foundation—apostles and prophets—is laid. Christ is the cornerstone. And you? You're being built together with other believers as God's habitation through the Spirit. This means your life matters. Your obedience matters. Your fellowship with other believers matters. Are you living as a stone that glorifies the Builder?

Day 5: One Body, One Mission

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:1-6

Devotional: You are part of one new man—the body of Christ. This isn't about individual Christianity; it's about corporate identity. When you trusted Christ, you didn't just get saved; you joined a family, enlisted in an army, became part of a building. God's plan has always been unity in diversity—Jews and Gentiles, slave and free, all distinctions dissolved in Christ. This body has a mission: to preach peace to those far off, to make disciples, to display God's glory. An isolated Christian life misses God's purpose. You need the body, and the body needs you. Today, consider: are you actively participating in the fellowship of believers? Are you using your gifts to build up others? The world is watching a temple under construction. Let them see Christ.