



GROUNDED & SENT

BEING GROUNDED ISN'T SETTLING IN.
IT'S PREPARING TO MOVE.

A 7-Session Small Group Study through Ephesians

Themes: Transformation • Mission • Calling

A 7-Session Small Group Study Through Ephesians

Series Overview

Ephesians is one of the most discipleship-dense letters in the New Testament. Written by Paul during his imprisonment, it holds together two inseparable realities: who God says you are in Christ, and how that identity reshapes every dimension of your life. This is not a letter about trying harder. It is a letter about becoming who you already are.

The series title **Grounded & Sent** draws from Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:17 — that believers would be “rooted and grounded in love” — and from the missional thrust of chapters 4–6. Transformation happens as we become grounded in who Christ has made us. Mission and calling flow from being sent.

This framework also quietly echoes Brazos Pointe's mission to guide people to discover, develop, and deploy faith in Jesus. “Grounded and Sent” is about “developing” to “deploy.”

The Three-Movement Arc + Rhythms and Practices

Movement 1 — Grounded (Sessions 1–3)

Who God says you are before you do anything. Identity precedes activity. Transformation begins here, not in effort or performance, but in grasping what has already been done and declared over you in Christ.

Movement 2 — Grown (Sessions 4–5)

How identity shapes community, calling, and character. This is the bridge between being and doing. Calling is explored first as communal before it becomes individual, and transformation is framed as a daily, practiced decision rather than a one-time event. Session 4 also introduces the Group Mission Statement process that culminates in Session 7.

Movement 3 — Going (Sessions 6–7)

How grounded people live differently — in their closest relationships, in their neighborhoods, and in spiritual resistance. Mission begins at home, not overseas, and calling requires the courage that comes from knowing who you are. Session 7 also brings the series to a close with a group mission statement — a short, owned commitment to where this specific group is being sent — followed by a personal mission commitment from each group member.

Rhythms and Practices:

Confession: A stand-alone session using texts regarding sins of the tongue.

Serve the Community: Each group will arrange a service project to do sometime this quarter.

Session-by-Session Framework

Session	Movement	Passage	Session Title	Central Theme	Mission Statement Elements
1	Grounded	Eph 1:1–14	Chosen Before You Knew It	Transformation begins with identity, not effort	
2	Grounded	Eph 1:15–2:10	Dead, Alive, and Made for This	Grace as the only foundation for change	
3	Grounded	Eph 2:11–3:21	Closer Than You Think	The mystery of belonging — mission flows from union	
4	Grown	Eph 4:1–16	One Body, Many Callings	Calling is communal before it is individual	Plant mission statement idea in “Say It” section
5	Grown	Eph 4:17–5:21	Taking Off, Putting On	Transformation as a daily, practiced decision	Mission statement Q: Who are we being sent to? (Say It)
6	Going	Eph 5:22–6:9	Sent Into Your Closest Relationships	Mission starts at home, not overseas	Mission statement Q: What has God been doing in us? (Say It)
7	Going	Eph 6:10–24	Stand	Calling requires courage — you were built for this	Mission statement finalization + personal mission commitment (replaces Do It)

“Chosen Before You Knew It”

Session 1: Ephesians 1:1-14



Movement: Grounded

Theme: Transformation begins with identity, not effort.

Leader's Notes:

Remember our goal is 100% participation – everyone talks.

Prioritize ★ questions. These make up the central theological themes. In time constraints unstarred questions can be skipped. A great conversation on two or three questions is better than a rushed one on five.

This session sets the foundation for the entire series. Before Paul tells the Ephesians how to live, he spends fourteen verses telling them who they are: chosen, adopted, redeemed, and sealed by the Spirit. That order matters. Everything in Grounded & Sent assumes this starting point: transformation doesn't begin with effort. It begins with identity.

Your group doesn't need to walk away from tonight understanding predestination or adoption theology. They need to walk away asking an honest question: Am I living like someone who is fully loved, or am I still trying to earn what God has already given me? That tension... between performing and resting... is the heartbeat of this conversation. Don't be afraid of silence after the harder questions. This session works best when people feel safe enough to be honest about where they actually stand with God, not where they think they're supposed to stand.

SESSION 1 ONLY: Queue up The Bible Project's Ephesians overview video before your group arrives: youtube.com/watch?v=Y71r-T98E2Q. It runs ~8-9 minutes and sets up the whole letter. Play it before the icebreaker. If tech fails, skip it and add 2 minutes to Open It.

OPEN IT | Icebreaker • ~6 minutes

Leader note: One question, two or three responses, keep it light. The goal is warmth and a little laughter coming off the video. Don't push for depth here. That's what the rest of the session is for.

1. When you were growing up, was there a label or reputation that followed you around? Ex: the funny one, the responsible one, the troublemaker, the quiet one, etc. Did it fit? Did you choose it?

Let this be fun. People often have great stories about nicknames or family roles that stuck. The point isn't to go deep. It's to surface the idea that other people's words shape how we see ourselves. That idea becomes important the moment you open the Bible text.

READ IT | Scripture • ~6 minutes

Leaders Note: Read the passage in two parts. Read verses 1–2 yourself as a brief setup. Then ask a volunteer to read verses 3–14. After the reading, resist the urge to explain, and instead move straight into Question 2. Let the text land before anyone interprets it.

- Ephesians 1:1-2

Leaders Note: Paul is writing from prison (probably Rome, around AD 60-62). He's addressing a church in one of the most powerful, religiously charged cities in the Roman Empire. Ephesus had wealth, status, competing gods, and constant pressure to perform and belong. Sound familiar? Paul's letter enters that world with a radically different message about where identity comes from. You don't need to say all of this. The video covered it. Just keep it in mind.

- Ephesians 1:3-14

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~28 minutes

2. Paul writes this entire passage (this explosion of praise) from a prison cell. He's not writing from a good season. What do you observe about Paul's attitude while in prison?

Let people feel the context before they analyze the content. Paul's circumstances should bother us a little... or at least make us curious. Some people will respond with admiration, some with skepticism, some with quiet conviction about their own complaints. All of those responses are worth a brief moment. Don't stay

here long. This is a door-opener, not the main conversation. One or two responses, then move on.

Sticky phrase: (Use these to help your group remember what they learn) **“What you do in the hard places reveals what you actually believe in the easy ones.”**

★ 3. Think about how you actually talk to God on a normal day... not how you're supposed to, but how you actually do. Is it more like approaching a generous Father, or like you're trying to stay in good standing with a demanding boss? Where did that posture come from?

This is the relational core of the session. Paul opens by declaring that God has already blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ... not some blessings, not the blessings we've earned, every blessing. But most Christ followers don't live from that reality. They live in a subtle deficit posture... trying to earn, maintain, or recover standing with God. This question surfaces that honestly. Let people answer from real experience. You'll likely find most of your group somewhere between the two options, and that's the honest starting point for the whole series.

Sticky phrase: **“You can't live like someone who is fully loved if you're still trying to become someone worth loving.”**

★ 4. Paul says God chose us before the world began... before we existed, before we had a single thing to offer. If someone chooses you before you've done anything, what does that tell you about why they chose you?

*Warning – Don't let this turn into a predestination debate. Redirect by saying something like: “That's a real conversation that scholars have debated for centuries, and it's worth having, but notice that Paul's concern here is not how we are chosen, but simply “that” we are chosen.

This is a deceptively simple question that does a lot of theological work quietly. If someone chooses you before you've done anything, the only possible explanation is that the choice says something about the chooser and not the chosen. That's Paul's entire point. God's choice of us isn't a response to what he saw in us. It's a revelation of who he is. Let the group reason their way there without rushing them. Some people will land on “it means they really love you.” Some will say “it means you didn't earn it.” Both are right and worth affirming.

What you're listening for is the moment someone realizes that this kind of choice can't be un-done by performance/sin either. It was never based on performance in the first place. That's the turn. If the group doesn't get there on their own, a simple follow-up gets you there: "And if that's why he chose you, what could ever change that?"

If the group struggles to answer this, ask if anyone has experienced being chosen before they had anything to offer, and then then bridge from there: 'What made that feel different from being chosen for a reason? Now multiply that by infinity.'

Sticky phrase: **"God's choice of you says everything about who He is and nothing about what you've done."**

5. Is there an area of your life right now where you're still performing... trying to earn approval, prove your worth, or stay in someone's good graces? What would it look like to bring that same energy into your relationship with God?

This is the application pivot. It takes the theological reality of the passage and asks where it intersects with real life. Performance and approval-seeking aren't just spiritual problems, they show up in relationships, work, parenting, and friendships. Let people answer from wherever feels most alive for them. The connection back to the passage is this: if God has already given us every spiritual blessing, chosen us, adopted us, and sealed us with his Spirit... then performing for his approval isn't humility. It's amnesia. We've forgotten what we already have.

Sticky phrase: **"Striving for what you already possess isn't faithfulness. It's forgetting."**

★6. Verse 5 says God adopted every Christ follower as a full heir... chosen, redeemed, sealed. The person next to you carries that identity. So does the difficult person at work, the family member who frustrates you, the stranger in line at the grocery store. If you saw every one of them that way, how would you interact with them differently? Think of someone specific. Who is it, and what would it look like to treat them according to who they actually are in Christ?

This question does two things at once. It takes the personal identity work of the earlier questions and pushes it outward into relationships, and it asks for enough specificity that people can't stay abstract. "Someone at work" is easy to say and easy to forget. A name (even one kept private) creates accountability. Don't force

anyone to share who they're thinking of, but encourage people to name it to themselves if not to the group. You may find that some people immediately think of someone difficult... a relationship with real friction. That's exactly right. The point isn't that this is easy. It's that the identity Paul describes makes a demand on how we treat people whether we feel like it or not. If the room gets quiet after this question, let it. Quiet usually means someone is thinking of a real person, and that's the whole point. This question also sets up the "Speak Identity Over Someone" Do It option directly. If someone names a person here, nudge them toward that application choice before you close.

Sticky phrase: **"You can't fully receive an identity you're unwilling to extend to someone else."**

SAY IT | Leader Teaching • ~3 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Read the following aloud or put it in your own words. This is a brief bridge between the discussion and the application... not a sermon. Two minutes is plenty.

Here's what's easy to miss about this passage: Paul doesn't start by telling us what to do. He starts by telling us who we are. The whole second half of Ephesians, the practical stuff about relationships, community, and how to stand firm is built entirely on this foundation. You can't live differently until you see yourself differently, and Paul's picture of who we are is not modest. Chosen before the world began. Adopted as full heirs. Redeemed at great cost. Sealed by the Spirit of God as a guarantee of what's coming. That's not a list of goals. That's a description of who you already are in Christ... right now, today, whatever your week looked like. So, as we move into this series together, here's the question underneath everything: What would change about the way you live if you actually believed that? Not just knew it, but believed it... staked your week on it. That's what Grounded & Sent is trying to find out.

DO IT | Application • ~8 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Don't skip this or rush it. Ask everyone to pick one option and say it out loud before you close. That small act of commitment makes follow-through significantly more likely. Open next week's session by checking in: "Did anyone try their thing? How did it go?" Keep it light. This isn't a performance review, it's a conversation.

Choose one of the following this week:

- **The Two Lists.** Write down five words you'd use to honestly describe yourself right now... not the Sunday morning version, the real one. Then, open Ephesians 1:3–14 and write five words Paul uses to describe who you are in Christ. Sit with the gap between those two lists. Bring it to God.
- **Say It Out Loud.** Every morning this week, before you check your phone, say this out loud: "I am chosen, adopted, redeemed, and sealed. I don't need to earn what I already have." Say it even if you don't fully feel it yet. Especially then.
- **Speak Identity Over Someone.** Find one person this week... a family member, a friend, someone at Brazos Pointe... and tell them something true about who they are. Not what they did. Who they are. Practice speaking identity over someone the way Paul does in this passage.
- **Reflect On It.** Read Ephesians 1:3–14 slowly, one verse at a time. After each verse, complete this sentence: "Because of this, I am ____." Let the text name you for a few minutes and see what it surfaces.

PRAY IT | *Closing Prayer • ~3 minutes*

LEADER NOTE: Read this prayer over your group, or use it as a guide after open prayer. It's written in the language of the passage to reinforce what was discussed. If your group tends to spend a long time on prayer requests, plan to use this as a gentle closing after a shorter time of open prayer.

Father, thank you that before we did anything... before we chose you, before we got it right, before we even knew your name, you had already chosen us. We confess that we spend more energy performing for your approval than resting in what you've already declared over us. Today we heard it again: we are chosen, adopted, redeemed, and sealed. We are yours... not because we earned it, but because you willed it. Would you let that truth travel from our heads to the places in us that still don't quite believe it? This week, may we live like people who have nothing left to prove. In Jesus' name, Amen

“Dead, Alive, and Made for This”

Session 2: Ephesians 1:15-2:10



Movement: Grounded

Theme: Grace is the only foundation for real transformation.

Leader's Notes:

Goal: 100% participation – everyone talks.

Prioritize ★ questions. These make up the central theological themes. In time constraints unstarred questions can be skipped. A great conversation on two or three questions is better than a rushed one on five.

Session 1 established who you are in Christ. Session 2 asks the harder question: if that's true, why is change so difficult? Paul's answer is as honest as it is uncomfortable. Before we were chosen, adopted, and sealed, we were dead. Not struggling. Not searching. Dead. And the miracle of Ephesians 2 isn't that we found our way to God. It's that God found his way to us . . . while we had nothing to offer and no way to ask.

This session covers some of the richest theological territory in the New Testament, but your group doesn't need to leave with a theology degree. They need to leave with one settled conviction: transformation isn't something they produce. It's something God does in people he already loves. And it always begins with grace, not effort. That's the foundation Grounded & Sent is built on. Session 2 is where that foundation gets poured.

Check-In | DO IT follow-up from Session 1 • ~3 minutes

Leader note: Keep this light and brief. You're not conducting a performance review. You're building a culture where following through matters and where honesty is welcome. One or two people sharing is enough. If no one tried their DO IT option, that's worth a brief, non-shaming acknowledgment: "Life happens. Let's keep trying."

1. Last week you chose a Do It option. Did anyone try theirs? What happened . . . or what got in the way?

OPEN IT | Icebreaker • ~6 minutes

Leader note: This icebreaker sets up the before/after arc of the passage without telegraphing where you're going. Keep it fun and brief. Two or three responses is plenty.

2. What's the most dramatic "before and after" transformation you've ever witnessed . . . a home renovation, a person's physical transformation, a car restoration, anything? What made it feel significant?

Let people enjoy this question. The stories will range from funny to genuinely moving. Don't steer toward the spiritual yet. The passage will do that work. What you're listening for is what makes a transformation feel real and significant to people . . . that instinct becomes important when Paul describes the most dramatic before/after in human history.

READ IT | Scripture • ~3 minutes

Leaders Note: Before reading this passage, give your group one orienting sentence:

SAY IT:

This passage has two movements. First, Paul prays for what God wants to do in us. Then he shows us what God already did for us. We'll read them in two parts.

Ask a volunteer to read this first section of Scripture. After the reading, move straight to Question 3 before any discussion spirals.

- Ephesians 1:15-23

3. Paul is praying that his readers would know God better . . . not just know more about him, but actually know him. He specifically prays they would grasp "his incomparably great power for us who believe." What's the difference between knowing about someone's power and actually trusting it?

This is a bridge question . . . don't let it run long. Its job is to help people feel the gap between intellectual knowledge and lived trust before the dead/alive passage arrives and makes that gap personal. One or two responses, then move into the next part of the passage.

Sticky phrase: (Use these to help your group remember what they learn) **“Knowing about God’s power and actually trusting it are two completely different places to live.”**

READ IT | Scripture • ~3 minutes

Leaders Note: Ask a different volunteer to read this 2nd passage.

- Ephesians 2:1-10

Leaders Context Note: Verse 2 references “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” . . . a first-century way of describing the spiritual forces that animate a life oriented away from God. Paul isn’t describing people who were obviously wicked. He’s describing people who were simply living for themselves, following the current of the culture around them. That’s a description most of your group will recognize. Don’t dwell here but have it ready if someone asks.

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~22 minutes

★ 4. Paul says we were “dead in transgressions and sins.” Not sick. Not lost. Dead. Dead people can’t fix themselves, negotiate their way out, or try harder. What does it do to your understanding of salvation when you take that word seriously?

This is the theological hinge of the session. Most people think of their pre-Christ life as a period of struggle or searching, which preserves the idea that they were moving toward God. Paul says something harder: they were dead. Not drifting. Not confused. Dead. That means the initiative was entirely God’s. There was no moment where we turned a corner and found him. He found us while we had nothing to offer and no ability to ask.

Let people wrestle with that. Some will find it deeply freeing. Some will quietly resist it because it removes all credit from their own decision. Both reactions are worth naming.

Sticky phrase: **“Dead people don’t find their way to God. God finds his way to dead people.”**

★ 5. Verses 4 and 5 are one of the most dramatic pivots in all of Scripture: **“But God . . .”** Two words that change everything. What was true before those two words? What became true after them?

Help the group feel the weight of the pivot.

Before: dead, following the ruler of the air, gratifying cravings, deserving wrath.

After: made alive, raised up, seated with Christ in the heavenly realms.

Paul isn’t describing gradual improvement. He’s describing resurrection. If you have a group member who came to faith later in life, this might be a natural moment to invite them to share what their “But God” moment felt like, if they’re comfortable. Don’t engineer it, but don’t miss it if it’s there. This is the kind of story that grounds the theology in real life and reminds the group that Brazos Pointe exists precisely for the person who doesn’t yet know their “But God” moment is coming.

Sticky phrase: **“Two words changed your entire story. ‘But God.’ Everything before them and everything after them is different.”**

★ 6. Verse 8 says salvation is “by grace . . . through faith . . . not by works.” But verse 10 says we were “created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Same passage, ten verses apart. How do you hold those two things together . . . that works have absolutely nothing to do with how you got here, and everything to do with why you’re here?

This is the theological pivot the whole session has been building toward, and it’s worth taking time here. The tension between verse 8 and verse 10 is intentional on Paul’s part. He removes works as a means of salvation entirely, then immediately reintroduces them as the natural outcome of salvation. The distinction is motive and direction. Works-as-currency flow upward toward God, trying to earn or maintain standing. Works-as-

response flow outward from God, expressing gratitude for standing that was already given. One is a transaction. The other is a transformation. Help the group feel that difference. A good follow-up if the conversation stalls: “If you knew beyond any doubt that your standing with God was completely secure . . . would that make you want to do more or less? Why?” Most people will say more . . . and that’s Paul’s point exactly. Grace doesn’t produce passivity. It produces people who are finally free to give without keeping score.

Sticky phrase: **“You weren’t saved by works. You were saved for them. Those are two completely different sentences.”**

7. Verse 10 says we are God’s “handiwork” . . . some translations say masterpiece or workmanship. The Greek word is *poiema*, which is where we get the word poem. God didn’t mass-produce you. He authored you. And he did it with a purpose in mind: “good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” What does it do to your sense of calling to know that the works you’re meant to do were written into your story before you showed up?

This question is the natural landing point of the session and a direct bridge to the “Going” movement later in the series. It’s also one of the clearest connections to Brazos Pointe’s mission . . . guiding people to discover, develop, and deploy faith in Jesus. The “deploy” part isn’t something people manufacture. It’s something God wrote into them before they were born. That’s not pressure. That’s an invitation. Let the group sit with what it means to be a poem God is still composing . . . not a project they have to finish on their own.

Sticky phrase: **“You’re not a self-improvement project. You’re a poem God is still writing.”**

SAY IT | Leader Teaching • ~3 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Read the following aloud or put it in your own words. Keep it brief. If you’re running short on time, skip this section and move directly to DO IT.

SAY IT:

Here’s the thing about transformation: we tend to think of it as something we produce. We try harder, commit more, show up better. And when it doesn’t stick, we assume the problem is effort. Paul says the problem is the starting point. You can’t transform yourself from the inside out. You were dead. Dead things don’t improve themselves.

But God.

Those two words are the hinge everything swings on. Not “but you tried harder.” Not “but you finally got serious.” But God, who is rich in mercy, made you alive. That’s not a self-improvement story. That’s a resurrection story.

And here’s what resurrection means for how you live: you’re not trying to become something. You’re learning to live as what you already are. Grounded & Sent isn’t a small group study for getting better. It’s an invitation to discover what God already did . . . and let that change everything.

DO IT | Application • ~6 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Ask everyone to pick one option and say it out loud before you close. Check in at the start of Session 3.

Choose one of the following this week:

- **But God.** Think back to the moment . . . or the season . . . when your story turned. Write it down in three parts: what was true before, how did it turn, and what became true after. Around Brazos Pointe, we call this your “Three-Word Story.” If you’re not sure you’ve had that moment yet, write about what you wish were different and bring that honestly to God.
- **The Poiema Exercise.** Read Ephesians 2:10 slowly. You are God’s handiwork . . . his poem . . . created for good works he prepared in advance. Spend ten minutes writing or thinking about this: What do you think those works might be? What has God wired into you that keeps showing up? Bring what you find to God as a prayer.
- **Grace Audit.** For one day this week, pay attention to every moment you feel the need to compensate, perform, or earn standing with God or with other people. Just notice it. Don’t fix it yet. At the end of the day, bring the list to God and read Ephesians 2:8-9 over it.

- **Giving Grace.** Not the dinner table kind. Since God made you alive and you don't have to earn His grace, extend to someone else the grace you have received. Have a conversation, send a text, or remind someone else of God's grace toward them.

PRAY IT | *Closing Prayer* • ~3 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Read this prayer over your group, or use it as a closing after open prayer. If your group tends to linger in prayer requests, use this as a gentle anchor to bring the session home.

Father, we were dead . . . and you made us alive. We had nothing to offer . . . and you gave us everything anyway. We confess that we still reach for effort when grace has already done the work. Remind us tonight that transformation isn't something we produce. It's something you do in people you already love. You authored us with purpose and planted good works in our path before we ever showed up to walk them. This week, would you help us live from that reality rather than toward it . . . not as people trying to earn your favor, but as people who can't believe they already have it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

“Closer Than You Think”

Session 3: Ephesians 2:11-3:21

Movement: Grounded

Theme: Belonging to God means belonging to each other
— and that changes everything about how we live.



Leader's Notes:

Goal: 100% participation – everyone talks.

Prioritize ★ questions. These make up the central theological themes. In time constraints unstarred questions can be skipped. A great conversation on two or three questions is better than a rushed one on five.

Sessions 1 and 2 were personal. You are chosen. You were dead and God made you alive. You are his poem. All of that is true, and it's the foundation everything else is built on. Session 3 is where the story gets bigger. Paul now turns from what God did for you individually to what God is doing through all of you together. The wall that kept people apart — Jews and Gentiles, insiders and outsiders, people who belonged and people who didn't — has been demolished. Christ didn't just save individuals. He created a new kind of community that the world had never seen before.

This session also contains the theological heartbeat of the entire series. Ephesians 3:17 is where Paul prays that Christ would dwell in his readers' hearts so they would be "*rooted and grounded in love*." That phrase is the source of everything we've been calling **Grounded & Sent**. Your group needs to know that. Being grounded isn't about personal spiritual comfort. It's about being so deeply rooted in God's love that you become someone the world around you can't ignore.

This is a long passage. Don't feel pressure to cover every verse. The two anchor texts are 2:11-22 (the wall comes down) and 3:14-21 (Paul's prayer). The middle section (3:1-13) gives necessary context for Paul's calling and is handled in a leader context note rather than a full discussion block.

Check-In | *DO IT follow-up from Session 2* • ~3 minutes

Leader note: Keep this brief. One or two people sharing is enough. If your group chose the “But God” or “Poima” options, this is a natural moment for someone to share something they discovered about themselves. Receive it warmly and move on.

1. Last week you chose a Do It option. Did anyone try theirs? What happened . . . or what got in the way?

OPEN IT | *Icebreaker* • ~5 minutes

Leader note: This question sets up the “outsider becoming insider” arc of the passage without tipping your hand. It tends to generate warm, personal stories. Keep it to two or three responses and move on.

2. Think of a time you were the outsider . . . a new school, a new job, a new city, a room full of people who all seemed to know each other. What did it feel like? And what changed the moment you actually belonged?

Let people enjoy this question — the stories are often funny and relatable. What you’re listening for is the emotional texture of the outsider experience and the relief of belonging. Both feelings become important the moment Paul starts talking about what Christ did to the wall between insiders and outsiders. Don’t make the connection yet. Just let the feelings surface.

READ IT | *Scripture* • ~4 minutes

Leaders Note: Before reading this passage, give your group one orienting sentence:

SAY IT:

Paul is about to describe the most dramatic social barrier of the first-century world — and what Christ did to it.

Then ask a volunteer to read.

Context Note: The division between Jews and Gentiles in the first century wasn’t just cultural preference — it was theological, legal, and social. Gentiles were considered

outside the covenant, excluded from the promises of God, and literally separated from Jewish worshippers by a physical wall in the Jerusalem temple. Archaeologists have found inscriptions from that wall warning Gentiles that crossing it meant death. When Paul says Christ “destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall,” his first-century readers felt the full weight of that image in a way we easily miss. This isn’t just a metaphor. It’s a revolution.

- Ephesians 2:11-22

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~14 minutes

3. Paul says the Gentiles were once “separated from Christ, excluded from citizenship . . . foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.” That’s a brutal description. Have you ever felt spiritually homeless . . . like you were on the outside of something everyone else seemed to have? What did that feel like?

This question connects the icebreaker directly to the text. Most people in your group can name a season of spiritual homelessness — before they stepped over the line of faith, or during a period of doubt or distance. Some may still feel it. Let people be honest. The point isn’t to wallow in the feeling but to make Paul’s next move — “*but now in Christ Jesus*” — land with the relief it deserves. If someone shares something vulnerable here, receive it and move on gently. Don’t let this question carry the whole session.

Sticky phrase: (Use these to help your group remember what they learn) **“You were outside. Christ didn’t lower the barrier. He demolished it.”**

★ 4. Verse 14 says Christ “*himself is our peace*” . . . and that he made the two groups “one.” He didn’t broker a truce between people who were different. He created something entirely new: one body, one Spirit, one humanity. Who in your life represents the kind of person you’d least expect to be in deep community with? What would it take for that to actually happen?

This is the missional edge of the passage and the question most likely to create productive tension. Paul isn’t describing a world where everyone gets along because they’ve decided to be nice. He’s describing a miracle — Christ making one new humanity out of people who had every reason to stay divided. Your group will think of real people when they hear this question. Political opposites. Different backgrounds. People they’ve written off or who’ve written them off. Don’t let the conversation stay abstract. The

question asks “who” specifically — gently hold people to that. If the conversation goes to societal division rather than personal relationships, redirect: “What about in your own life . . . your neighborhood, your workplace, your family?”

Sticky phrase: **“Christ didn’t just save you from something. He saved you into a community you didn’t choose — and couldn’t have built yourself.”**

5. Verses 19-22 describe the church as a building . . . a temple being constructed with Christ as the cornerstone and every believer as a living stone fitted together. You’re not just a member of a group. You’re a structural piece of something God is building. What part of that image is most challenging to you personally?

This question shifts from the social miracle of verses 14-18 to the structural image of verses 19-22. It’s worth noting that in Paul’s image, a stone that isn’t fitted into the building isn’t fulfilling its purpose no matter how beautiful it is. Isolation isn’t humility. It’s a stone sitting in the yard. Some people will find it challenging that they’re dependent on others. Some will find it challenging that others are dependent on them. Both reactions are worth naming. This is also a natural connection to Brazos Pointe’s small group culture — this isn’t just a Bible study. You play a role in strengthening and supporting the church as we work to build Christ’s body in our community.

Sticky phrase: **“You’re not just attending a community. You’re a necessary part of a mission.”**

READ IT | Scripture • ~3 minutes

Leaders Note: Before the reading, briefly explain what you’re skipping:

SAY IT:

In 3:1-13, Paul describes his own calling to bring this message to the Gentiles — people who were never supposed to hear it. He calls it ‘the mystery’: that Jews and Gentiles would become one body together. He says he’s the least deserving person to carry this message, and yet that’s exactly who God chose. That’s worth sitting with. Then in verse 14, Paul drops to his knees and prays. That’s where we’ll pick up.

Ask a volunteer to read 3:14-21 slowly. This is one of the most beautiful prayers in all of Scripture — it deserves to be read that way.

- Ephesians 3:14-21

Series Connection Note: Verse 17 contains the phrase *“rooted and grounded in love.”* This is the direct source of the series title **Grounded & Sent**. Paul is praying that Christ would dwell so deeply in his readers that they would become grounded — not settled and comfortable, but stable enough to be sent. Being grounded isn’t the destination. It’s the preparation. Make this connection explicit for your group. It’s the moment the series title becomes more than a name.

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~14 minutes

6. Paul prays that his readers would grasp *“how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ”* . . . and then immediately says it *“surpasses knowledge.”* He’s praying they would know something that can’t be fully known. What do you think he means? And has there been a moment in your life when you felt the edges of that love — when it was bigger than you could explain?

This question moves the group from theology into testimony. Paul’s prayer is that experiential knowledge would go beyond intellectual knowledge — the same gap the bridge question in Session 2 opened up. The four dimensions (wide, long, high, deep) were likely intentional on Paul’s part — he’s saying the love of Christ extends in every direction beyond what you can measure. Some people will have a story about a moment when God’s love felt undeniable and inexplicable. Make space for those stories. They’re not tangents — they’re exactly what Paul is praying for.

Sticky phrase: ***“Paul prays you would know something too big to fully know. That’s not a contradiction. That’s an invitation.”***

★ **7. Verse 17 says Paul prays that we would be *“rooted and grounded in love”* — and that phrase is where the title *Grounded & Sent* comes from. Being grounded in this series doesn’t mean staying put. It means being stable enough to move. Where in your life right now do you feel most ungrounded . . . most easily shaken? What would it look like to let Christ’s love be the thing that steadies you there?**

This is the emotional and theological center of the whole session — and arguably of the whole series. Take your time here. When Paul prays *“rooted and grounded,”* he’s using two images: roots going deep into soil, and a foundation being laid for a building. Both images are about stability that enables something else. A tree with deep roots doesn’t

just survive storms — it bears fruit. A building on a solid foundation doesn't just stand — it houses people. Groundedness in Christ isn't about retreating from the world. It's about being stable enough to engage it. The question asks people to locate where they feel most shaken right now — and then to imagine what it would mean to let Christ's love be their footing there.

Sticky phrase: **"Being grounded isn't settling in. It's preparing to move."**

★ 8. Paul closes his prayer with one of the most audacious statements in Scripture: God *"is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine."* He's not just saying God is powerful. He's saying our imagination is the limiting factor, not God's ability. What are you currently not asking God for because you've already decided it's too much?

This is the session's landing question and it has some bite to it. Most people have quietly shrunk their prayers to a size they consider realistic. They've stopped asking for the marriage to be restored, the prodigal to come home, the relationship to be healed, the calling to be real. Paul ends chapter 3 with a direct challenge to that kind of resigned faith. The question is personal and a little uncomfortable — which is exactly right. Give people a moment to sit with it before anyone answers. Some of the best responses to this question won't be spoken out loud. That's fine. The question is doing its work whether or not people verbalize the answer. If your group is comfortable with it, this is also a natural question to close with a moment of silent prayer before the leader reads the Pray It.

Sticky phrase: **"Your prayers aren't too big for God. They're probably not big enough."**

SAY IT | Leader Teaching • ~3 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Read the following aloud or put it in your own words. Keep it brief. If you're running short on time, skip this section and move directly to DO IT.

Here's what Paul is doing across these two chapters: he's showing us that the gospel isn't just personal. It's cosmic. Christ didn't just save individuals. He created a new kind of community — one where the dividing walls that make perfect sense in every human culture have been demolished. Not lowered. Not made optional. Demolished.

And then he prays. Not for programs or strategies or better small groups. He prays that Christ would take up residence in His people so deeply that they become **rooted and grounded** in love. Stable. Immovable. Not because the world around them is stable — it isn't — but because the love underneath them is.

That's the whole series in two chapters. **Grounded & Sent**. You can't be meaningfully sent if you're not genuinely grounded. And the thing that grounds you isn't a discipline or a doctrine. It's a Person. Christ dwelling in you. Love going down like roots. And then — only then — are you ready to move.

DO IT | Application • ~6 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Ask everyone to pick one option and say it out loud before you close. Check in at the start of Session 4 next week.

Choose one of the following this week:

- **Pray the Prayer.** Read **Ephesians 3:14-21** slowly, once a day for the next seven days. Don't just read it — pray it. Let Paul's words become your words. Pay attention to what shifts in you by day seven.
- **Take Down a Wall.** Think about the person from Question 4 — the one you'd least expect to be in deep community with. Do one thing this week to move toward them. It doesn't have to be dramatic. A conversation. A text. Showing up somewhere you normally wouldn't. Just one move toward the wall Christ already demolished.
- **Ask the Bigger Thing.** Write down the prayer you've stopped praying because it felt too big or too unlikely. Say it out loud to God this week. Then read **Ephesians 3:20** over it: *"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine."*
- **Find Your Stone.** **Ephesians 2:22** says you are being *"built together"* with other believers. This week, identify one person in your group or at Brazos Pointe whose faith has steadied yours. Tell them. Specifically. Don't just think it — say it. (or text it)
- **Reflect On It.** Write "Rooted and grounded in love" at the top of a page. Below it, answer honestly: What does my root system actually look like right now? What am I drawing stability from? Is it Christ's love . . . or something else?

PRAY IT | Closing Prayer • ~3 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Paul's own prayer in 3:14-21 is one of the most complete prayers in Scripture — consider reading it again as your closing prayer instead of the one below, or use the one below as a simpler option. Either way, close with something that sends people home with the image of being rooted.

Father,
We were far off, and you brought us near.
We were strangers, and you made us family.
We were divided, and Christ became our peace.
Tonight we heard that you want to dwell in us so deeply
that we become **ROOTED AND GROUNDED** in love . . .
stable enough to withstand whatever comes,
and secure enough to move toward whatever you're doing in the world around us.
We confess that we often draw our stability from things that can't hold us.
Tonight we ask for the real thing.
Root us in your love.
Ground us in your presence.
And when you're ready to send us . . . may we be ready to go.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

“One Body, Many Callings”

Session 4: Ephesians 4:1–16

Movement: Grown

Theme: Calling is communal before it is individual — and you can’t fully become who God made you to be alone.



Leader's Notes:

Goal: 100% participation – everyone talks.

Prioritize ★ questions. These make up the central theological themes. In time constraints unstarred questions can be skipped. A great conversation on two or three questions is better than a rushed one on five.

Sessions 1–3 built the foundation: who you are in Christ, what God did to make you alive, and how belonging to God means belonging to each other. Session 4 is the hinge between the Grounded and Going movements. Paul has established identity. Now he turns to calling — but notice that he doesn’t start with individual purpose or personal gifts. He starts with unity. Before he says a single word about what you are called to do, he tells you what you are called to be: humble, gentle, patient, and bearing with one another in love. Calling in Ephesians is never a solo project.

This session is also where the Brazos Pointe mission language lands most naturally. Discover, develop, deploy. Ephesians 4:11-12 is the biblical backbone of that framework — leaders equipping people for works of service so that the body grows. Your group members are sitting in the “develop” phase of that right now. This session is a chance to help them see why development is never just for their own benefit. It’s always for the body.

LOOKING AHEAD — Group Mission Statement:

Over the coming weeks, your group will be asked to develop a short group mission statement together — a sentence or two that captures who you are, what God has been doing among you, and where you sense He is sending you as a community. You don’t need to do anything with this tonight. Just plant the seed using the “Say It” section right before the “Do It” section. That’s it. No assignment. No worksheet. Just an open question left in the room. Groups who begin noticing what they exist for will arrive at Session 7 with something real to say.

Check-In | *DO IT follow-up from Session 3 • ~3 minutes*

Leader note: Keep this brief. If anyone chose “Pray the Prayer” last week, this is a natural moment to ask what shifted for them over seven days of praying Ephesians 3:14-21. If anyone chose “Take Down a Wall,” a sentence or two about what they did is worth hearing. Receive it and move on.

1. Last week you chose a Do It option. Did anyone try theirs? What happened . . . or what got in the way?

OPEN IT | *Icebreaker • ~5 minutes*

Leader note: This question is light and often funny — people love talking about teams they’ve been part of where everyone’s role was different but necessary. Keep it to two or three responses. What you’re listening for is the instinct that different contributions make something stronger, not weaker. That instinct becomes the key idea of the session.

2. What’s the best team you’ve ever been part of — a work team, a sports team, a family pulling together in a crisis, even a really good group of friends? What made it work? Was everyone doing the same thing?

Let two or three people share. The answers will almost always include something about different people contributing different things. Nobody will say “we all did the same thing and that’s what made it great.” That intuition is the setup for Paul’s argument about the body in 4:7-16. Don’t make the connection yet — just let it surface.

READ IT | *Scripture • ~4 minutes*

Say it:

We’ve been grounded in who we are.

Now Paul tells us how to walk. And before he talks about what we do, he talks about how we do it.

Leaders Note: Ask a volunteer to read 4:1-6. This is the beginning of the second half of Ephesians — the hinge between identity & action. Note the word “therefore” in verse 1. Paul’s whole ethical argument flows from what he’s already established in chapters 1–3.

Context Note: Paul opens chapter 4 with “I urge you . . . as a prisoner.” He’s not giving advice from a position of comfort or authority. He’s writing from chains — and he’s urging people to walk worthy of a calling that cost him everything. The humility, gentleness, and patience he describes in verses 2–3 aren’t soft virtues. They’re the disciplines of people who have genuinely been grounded in something bigger than themselves.

- Ephesians 4:1-6

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~10 minutes

★3. Paul lists five qualities in verses 2–3 that maintain the unity of the Spirit: humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love, and making every effort for peace. Which of these is hardest for you personally . . . and which one do you think would fill a need in your group, your family, or your workplace right now?

This question works on two levels simultaneously: personal honesty and communal awareness. Let people answer both parts if they can. What you’re listening for is the gap between the qualities Paul describes and the qualities people actually experience in community — including this small group. That gap isn’t an indictment. It’s the very reason Paul is writing. These aren’t qualities you produce by trying harder. They’re the fruit of people who have been genuinely grounded in the identity established in chapters 1–3. If time allows, a gentle follow-up: “Which of these do you think the people around you would say you bring most naturally?”

Sticky phrase: (Use these to help your group remember what they learn) “**How you walk together matters as much as where you’re going.**”

4. Paul tells believers to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit” (v.3), not to create it. Then he reminds them of seven things they already share in Christ (vv.4–6). Why do you think Paul starts there? How might remembering those shared realities change the way you respond when relationships become difficult?

This is a theology question with immediate practical application. Most people approach church unity as something fragile that has to be carefully maintained by avoiding conflict or keeping everyone happy. Paul says something different: the unity already exists in the Spirit. The calling is to “make every effort” not to create it, but to keep it. That’s a completely different orientation. It means conflict doesn’t threaten the unity — the refusal to bear with one another does. This can be a relieving idea for people who feel exhausted by the pressure to keep the peace. You’re not holding the unity together. You’re living inside it.

Sticky phrase: **“Unity is a gift to protect, not a goal to achieve.”**

READ IT | Scripture • ~3 minutes

Say it:

So we share one foundation. But Paul isn’t finished — because within that unity, every person has been given something different.

Leaders Note: Ask a different volunteer to read 4:7-16. Encourage them to read slowly through the list in verses 11–12 — the roles Paul names there are worth landing on one at a time.

Context Note: Verse 8 quotes Psalm 68:18, which originally described a conquering king distributing plunder to his people after a victory. Paul applies it to Christ: the risen, ascended King distributing gifts to his church. The gifts in verse 11 — apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers — are not titles or ranks. They are functions given to the body for one specific purpose: “to equip his people for works of service.” The leaders exist to equip the people, and everyone else exists to do the work. That’s the whole model. This is the biblical basis for Brazos Pointe’s discover, develop, deploy mission statement — and it’s worth naming that connection for your group.

- Ephesians 4:7-16

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~16 minutes

★5. Verse 7 says “to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.” Not some of us. Not the especially gifted ones. Each one. What do you think your contribution to the body actually is . . . and have you ever been told, told yourself, or felt that what you bring doesn’t count?

This question has two parts and both matter. The first is an honest self-assessment — what do you actually contribute? Some people will answer quickly and confidently. Others will go quiet, and that silence is important. Many people in your group have never been told specifically what they bring to the body. Take a moment to tell them what you see. Some have been told — explicitly or implicitly — that what they bring isn’t the kind of thing the church values. Let people name that and speak encouragement over them honestly. The second part of the question is where the pastoral weight is. People who feel their contribution doesn’t count tend to stop contributing — and the body loses something it can’t replace. Paul’s argument in this passage is that the body needs every part functioning. No gift is decorative.

Sticky phrase: “In Christ, no one is just for decoration; everyone has a part to play.”

★6. Verses 11–12 say leaders exist “to equip his people for works of service.” The leaders aren’t the ones doing the work — they’re the ones preparing everyone else to do it. How does it change your understanding of your own role in the church when you realize the “works of service” aren’t reserved for staff or volunteers in official roles . . . but for you, wherever you are?

This is one of the most practically important questions in the series. A lot of people in your group have a consumer posture toward the church without knowing it — they attend, they receive, and they occasionally help when asked. Paul’s model in 4:11-12 flips that completely. The leaders exist to equip the people. The people are the ones who do the works of service. That means the accountant in your group is doing ministry when she gives financial counsel to a struggling family. The teacher is doing ministry in his classroom. The neighbor who shows up with food after a loss is doing the work of the Christ. This is also the natural connection to Brazos Pointe’s “deploy” language. Deployment isn’t about signing up for a church program. It’s about living your whole life as someone who has been equipped/grounded in Christ and sent by Him – **Grounded and Sent**. (title of this study)

Sticky phrase: “God didn’t design the church for you to consume; He designed it to display His glory through you.”

★7. Verse 16 says the whole body grows when “each part does its work.” Not the gifted parts. Not the visible parts. Each part. Is there a place in your life right now — your family, your neighborhood, your workplace, your small group, your finances, etc — where you’ve been holding back? What would it look like to actually show up in one of those places as someone who has been equipped and sent?

This is the application landing point for the session and it connects directly to the Going movement that begins in Session 6. The question isn’t hypothetical — it asks people to name a specific place where they’ve been holding back. Some people will name a relationship. Some will name a responsibility they’ve been avoiding. Some will name a calling they’ve been deferring because they don’t feel ready. Paul’s point in verse 16 is that **readiness isn’t the prerequisite — participation is**. The body grows when each part does its work. Not when each part feels fully prepared. This question is also a natural setup for the Do It options — let people sit with a specific answer before you move on.

Sticky phrase: “**Just show up. You don’t have to feel ready to be used by God.**”

SAY IT | Leader Teaching • ~3 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Read the following aloud or put it in your own words. Keep it brief. If you’re running short on time, skip this section and move directly to Do It.

In the original Greek, chapter 4 begins with the word “therefore”. Everything Paul says about how to live flows directly from what he’s already said about who you are. You don’t walk worthy in order to become someone. You walk worthy because of who you already are.

And the walk he describes isn’t primarily about personal spiritual achievement. It’s about the body. Humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another — these are all relational. You can’t practice them alone. And the gifts Christ gives . . . apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers . . . aren’t given so a few people can feel special. They’re given so that every person in the body gets equipped for the work they were made to do.

That’s what Brazos Pointe is trying to do. Discover, develop, deploy. Not as a program. As a way of understanding what the church is actually for. You’re sitting in the “develop” part of that right now. But develop was never the destination. The destination is a body where every part is doing its work . . . deploying it’s faith, and the whole thing is growing up into the fullness of Christ.

We've been talking tonight about what it means for each part of the body to do its work. Over the next couple of weeks, I want us to be thinking about a bigger question together: What does this specific group, our small group exist to do? What's our mission? Who are we to each other, and who are we being sent to together? We're going to land on something in Session 7 — but start noticing between now and then. *(check the Mission Statement Framework attached at the end of this document)*

DO IT | Application • ~6 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Ask everyone to pick one option and say it out loud before you close. Check in at the start of Session 5. If someone named a specific place they've been holding back during Question 7, nudge them gently toward the option that connects to that.

Choose one of the following this week:

- **Speak It.** Think of someone in your life—a coworker, a family member, or a friend—who is carrying a heavy load or whose contribution often goes unnoticed. Send them a quick text or pull them aside this week to tell them specifically what you see in them and how they build up the people around them. Don't look for a return text; just give it away.
- **Show Up Somewhere.** From Question 7 — the place where you've been holding back. Do one thing this week to show up there. Not a commitment to change everything. Just one move. A conversation. A text. Showing up when you'd normally opt out.
- **Equip Someone.** Verses 11-12 say leaders exist to equip others for works of service. Think about someone in your life who is younger in faith, newer to the church, or still searching. Do one thing this week to invest in that person. A conversation about faith. An invitation. Pointing them toward something that helped you. You don't have to be a pastor to equip someone.
- **Practice One of the Five.** Pick one of the five qualities from verses 2–3 — humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, making every effort for peace — and intentionally practice it every day this week in one specific relationship. At the end of the week, notice what it cost you and what it produced.
- **Reflect On It.** Read Ephesians 4:1-16 slowly. Write down your honest answers to these two questions: What has Christ given me to contribute? And where have I been sitting on it?

PRAY IT | Closing Prayer • ~3 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Read this prayer over your group, or use it as a closing after open prayer. If your group tends to linger in prayer requests, use this as a gentle anchor to bring the session home.

Father, thank you that you didn't save us and leave us to figure it out alone. You put us in a body. You gave each of us something to bring. And you promised that when every part does its work, the whole thing grows into something that looks more and more like Jesus. We confess that we often hold back — waiting until we feel ready, waiting to be asked, waiting for someone else to go first. Tonight we heard that the body needs what you put in us. So we ask for the courage to actually show up — in our groups, in our families, in our neighborhoods, in the places only we can reach. Equip us for the works you prepared. And may what you're building through us be far more than anything we could have built alone. In Jesus' name, Amen.

“Taking Off, Putting On”

Session 5: Ephesians 4:17–5:21

Movement: Grown

Theme: Transformation isn’t a feeling that comes over you. It’s a daily decision you make — one thing taken off, one thing put on, over and over again.



Leader’s Notes:

Goal: 100% participation – everyone talks.

Prioritize ★ questions. These make up the central theological themes. In time constraints unstarred questions can be skipped. A great conversation on two or three questions is better than a rushed one on five.

Sessions 1–3 built the foundation of identity. Session 4 opened the door to calling and community. Session 5 is where Paul gets specific about what transformation actually looks like on the ground. This is not a vague call to “be better.” It’s a list of concrete, daily decisions: take this off, put that on. Stop lying, start telling the truth. Stop stealing, start giving. Stop tearing people down with your words, start building them up. Paul’s vision of transformation isn’t mystical — it’s practical. And it’s always relational.

This is also the passage where Paul makes the clearest connection between who you are in Christ and how you live. The old self was “corrupted by deceitful desires.” The new self was “created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” You don’t put on the new self to become someone. You put it on because of who you already are. That thread — identity driving behavior, not behavior producing identity — runs through the whole series and is worth naming explicitly in this session.

The goal is to lead your group to a habit of taking off and putting on as a daily, practiced decision — and then let them apply it to their own lives.

Check-In | DO IT follow-up from Session 4 • ~3 minutes

Leader note: Keep this brief. If anyone chose “Name It” last week and asked people what they bring to those around them, this is a rich moment — what did they hear? If anyone chose “Show Up Somewhere,” a sentence about where they showed up is worth the group hearing. Two responses maximum, then move on.

1. Last week you chose a Do It option. Did anyone try theirs? What happened . . . or what got in the way?

OPEN IT | Icebreaker • ~5 minutes

Leader note: This question is almost always good for a laugh. Keep it light and move on after two or three responses. What you’re listening for is the instinct that some things just don’t fit who you are anymore — which is the exact image Paul uses in 4:22-24.

2. Is there something you used to wear, say, or do regularly that you look back on now and think . . . what was I thinking? What changed?

People love this question — fashion choices, phrases they used to say, habits they’ve outgrown. Keep it fun. The point isn’t the specific thing they’ve left behind. It’s the fact that growth naturally involves leaving some things behind and picking up new ones. That instinct connects directly to Paul’s “take off / put on” language without you having to make the connection explicit yet.

READ IT | Scripture • ~4 minutes

Say it:

Paul is about to get specific. He’s going to name things that need to come off and things that need to go on — and he’s going to be blunt about it.

Leaders Note: Ask a volunteer to read. Encourage them to read slowly through the list in verses 25-32. These aren’t abstract principles — they’re behaviors Paul names directly, and they deserve to land.

Context Note: Verse 17 says Paul insists his readers “no longer live as the Gentiles do.” This is significant because many of his readers were Gentiles. He’s not talking about

ethnicity — he’s talking about a way of living characterized by darkened understanding, hardened hearts, and sensuality. The contrast in verses 22-24 between the “old self” and the “new self” isn’t a call to try harder. It’s a call to act in accordance with what is already true. The new self has already been created. The daily work is learning to live inside it.

- Ephesians 4:17-32

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~10 minutes

★3. Verses 22-24 give us the core command: take off the old self, be made new in the attitude of your minds, put on the new self. Paul isn’t describing a one-time event. He’s describing a daily practice. What’s the difference between transformation as something that happens to you and transformation as something you participate in every day?

This question is the theological anchor for the whole session. Many Christ followers have a passive view of transformation — they’re waiting for God to change them, and in the meantime they feel stuck. Paul’s language here is active and volitional. Take off. Put on. These are decisions. At the same time, verse 23 says “be made new in the attitude of your minds” — that’s passive. The renewal of the mind is something God does. So Paul holds both: God renews the mind, and we make daily decisions that align with that renewal. Neither passive waiting nor white-knuckled effort on its own. Help your group feel that tension and find the both/and.

Sticky phrase: (Use these to help your group remember what they learn)

“Transformation isn’t something that comes over you. It’s something you put on.”

★4. Verses 25-32 get very specific: lying, uncontrolled anger, stealing, unwholesome words, bitterness, rage, slander. Paul isn’t writing to obviously wicked people. He’s writing to church members. Which of these is the one your group . . . or if you’re honest, you personally . . . would most benefit from taking more seriously?

This question requires courage from the leader. Model honesty before you ask for it. The list in 4:25-32 isn’t a list of dramatic sins — it’s a list of the mundane, daily patterns that quietly corrode relationships. Unwholesome talk. Bitterness. Anger that doesn’t resolve. These are things every person in your group recognizes in themselves if they’re honest. The question asks for personal honesty — not a group diagnosis. Let people answer for

themselves before anyone starts naming what others need. If the room goes quiet, share your own honest answer first.

Sticky phrase: **“The things Paul names aren’t dramatic. They’re the small daily patterns that quietly corrode everything.”**

5. Paul says "do not let the sun go down while you are still angry" (v.26). Most of us have let the sun go down . . . and then the next day . . . and then longer. Is there a relationship in your life right now where unresolved anger or bitterness has been sitting longer than it should?

What's kept you from dealing with it?

This question will land differently depending on the room. Some people will immediately think of a specific relationship and feel the weight of it. Others will deflect into generalities. If that happens, gently hold people to the specific with the follow-up question "Is there someone in particular you're thinking of?" What you're listening for isn't dramatic conflict stories. It's the quiet, unresolved stuff that people have learned to live around — the family member they're civil but not close with, the friend they drifted from after something that was never addressed, the coworker they've written off. Paul's instruction isn't to resolve everything perfectly. It's not to let it sit. The sun-going-down image is practical and almost humorous in its specificity — he's not giving a theological treatise on anger management. He's saying deal with it today. Before tonight is over. That kind of specificity is worth naming for your group. If someone shares something vulnerable here, receive it without trying to fix it or counsel them in the moment. A simple "thank you for being honest about that" and a move toward the next question is enough. The Do It option "Name Your One Thing" can be a natural place for someone carrying this to take a next step.

Sticky phrase: **"Paul didn't say don't be angry. He said don't let it sleep over."**

READ IT | Scripture • ~4 minutes

Say it:

Paul told us what to take off. Now he's going to tell us what to put on — and it's bigger than a list of behaviors.

Leaders Note: Ask a different volunteer to read the next passage. It shifts from specific prohibitions to a broader vision: walk in love, walk in light, walk in wisdom. It's the same take-off/put-on structure, but now zoomed out to a way of life.

Context Note: Depending on which version you read, verse 1 says “Follow (or imitate) God’s example . . . as dearly loved children.” This word is *mimetes* in Greek — where we get the word “mimic.” Paul is saying: copy God. That’s an audacious command. But notice the basis: you are dearly loved children. Mimicking a parent isn’t performance — it’s the most natural thing in the world for a child who has been loved well. The putting-on in chapter 5 flows from that relationship, not from moral obligation.

- Ephesians 5:1-21

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~14 minutes

★6. Verse 1 says to “follow God’s example . . . as dearly loved children.” The word means to mimic or imitate. Children mimic their parents naturally — not out of obligation, but because of relationship. What does it look like in your actual daily life to mimic God? And is that mostly something you do consciously . . . or something that just happens as you spend time with him?

This question reframes the whole ethical section of Ephesians in relational terms. Most people approach Christian behavior as a standard to meet. Paul frames it as a family resemblance — you look like your Father because you spend time with him and love him. The question of whether it’s conscious or just happens is important: most people will say it’s mostly not happening, which opens up an honest conversation about what it would take for it to become more natural. Don’t rush this question. It’s the emotional center of this passage.

Sticky phrase: “You mimic who you spend time with. The question is who that is.”

★7. Verse 29 says only say what is “helpful for building others up according to their needs.” Think about the people closest to you — your family, your small group, your coworkers. Do they experience you as someone whose words build them up? What would they say if you asked them?

This question is outward-facing in a way that questions 4 & 5 aren’t — those asked people to look inward at their own patterns. This one asks them to imagine how their patterns are landing on the people around them. That’s a different and slightly more uncomfortable angle. Most people consider themselves reasonably kind. Fewer have actually stopped to ask whether the people closest to them feel built up by the words

they receive. The second part of the question — "what would they say if you asked them?" — is where the honest discomfort usually lives. Some people will realize they genuinely don't know. Others will know, and the answer isn't flattering. Let people sit with that for a moment before anyone answers. If the room gets quiet, that silence is doing work. A useful follow-up if the conversation stalls: *"Is there one person in your life who you know could use more building up from you . . . and what's stopped you from doing it?"* This question also sets up the "Words That Build" Do It option directly — if someone names a specific relationship here, nudge them toward that application choice before you close.

Sticky phrase: **"The people closest to you are shaped by your words whether you intend it or not."**

SAY IT | Leader Teaching • ~3 minutes

Leaders Note: Read the following aloud or put it in your own words. Keep it brief. If you're running short on time, skip this section and move directly to Do It.

Here's what's easy to miss about this passage: Paul isn't describing a program for moral improvement. He's describing what it looks like when identity becomes behavior. You've been made new. The new self already exists. Taking off and putting on isn't how you get there — it's how you live from there.

And notice that every single thing Paul tells people to take off or put on has to do with other people. Stop lying — to each other. Resolve anger — before it damages the relationship. Build each other up with your words. Be kind and compassionate to one another. You can't practice any of this alone. Transformation in Ephesians is always communal.

So the question this session leaves us with is simple: What needs to come off . . . and what needs to go on? Not as a way to earn anything. Not as a performance for God or for this group. But as someone who has already been made new . . . and is choosing every day to live like it.

Do NOT skip this:

Leaders Note: Give your group members a copy of the "Mission Statement Framework" attached to the end of this document. (A digital copy is available on the small groups website and will also be emailed to you.) You will use this for sessions 5, 6 and 7. This is the first of two

informal conversations that build toward the Session 7 mission statement finalization. Think of Sessions 5, 6, and 7 as a three-week arc toward something your group will own together. Allow 3-4 minutes of open conversation before moving to the Do It section. This is informal. You're not facilitating a structured exercise, just opening questions 1 & 2 and letting people respond naturally. Two or three responses are plenty. If the conversation goes longer and you need to trim time, shorten the Do It section **DO NOT skip this.**

Say It: (read the following transition aloud.)

Before we move into our "Do It" choices tonight, we're going to take 3-4 minutes on something we'll be building toward across the next few weeks. We've been talking all quarter about what it looks like to be grounded and sent. Starting tonight, I want us to begin thinking together about what that looks like specifically for this group. The first two questions can be found on your handout.

1. Who are we?
2. What has God been doing this quarter?

Don't try to answer it fully right now. Just give a few answers out loud. We'll come back to this in Session 6 and land on something together in Session 7.

Once you have discussed these 2 questions, make sure someone has written down a few of your answers and then move on to the DO IT section. (or the PRAY IT section if you're under a time constraint.)

DO IT | Application • ~6 minutes

Say it:

Verse 15 says "Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity." Choose one of the following or create your own "Do it" plan for this week and share it with the group.

Leaders Note: Trim this section if your "Mission Statement Framework" conversation went long. Ask everyone to pick one option and say it out loud before you close. Check in at the start of Session 6. If someone named something specific in question 4, nudge them toward the "Name Your One Thing" option.

Choose one of the following this week:

- **Name Your One Thing.** From the list in 4:25-32, identify the one behavior that most needs to come off in your life right now. Write it down. Then write down what you're going to put on in its place — Paul always pairs them. Tell one person in your group what you chose. Ask them to check in with you next week.
- **The Mimic Practice.** Each morning this week, before you engage with anyone, ask one question: "How would someone who is dearly loved by God treat the people I'm about to encounter today?" Then try to live the answer. At the end of each day, notice where you did and where you didn't.
- **Words That Build.** Verse 29 says let nothing unwholesome come out of your mouth — only what is helpful for building others up. For one day this week, pay attention to every word that comes out of your mouth. At the end of the day, ask: Did my words build anyone up today? Who . . . and how?
- **Deal With It Before the Sun Goes Down.** Consider the relationship where unresolved anger or bitterness has been sitting longer than it should (question 5). This week, do one thing to address it. Not necessarily a full conversation. Not a resolution of everything. Just one move: a text that opens a door, a phone call you've been putting off, or an honest prayer asking God to prepare you to deal with it. Name what you're going to do before you leave tonight.
- **Reflect On It.** Write two headings on a page: "Taking Off" and "Putting On." Under each one, write honestly about what that looks like in your life right now. Bring what you find to God as a prayer.

PRAY IT | *Closing Prayer • ~3 minutes*

Leaders Note: Read this prayer over your group, or use it as a closing after open prayer.

Father, you've already made us new. The old self has been crucified and we are empowered by Your Holy Spirit. Forgive us for the days we live in our old ways — reaching back for what we've already been freed from, holding onto patterns that belong to a version of ourselves you've already buried. Tonight we heard your invitation: take it off, put it on. Not to earn anything. Not to impress anyone. But because we are your dearly loved children . . . and we want to look like our Father. This week, give us the awareness to notice what needs to come off, and the courage to actually take it off. And may what we put on in its place be something that builds the people around us up rather than tearing them down. In Jesus' name, Amen.

“Sent Into Your Closest Relationships”

Session 6: Ephesians 5:22-6:9

Movement: Going

Theme: Mission doesn’t begin overseas. It begins in your closest relationships.



Leader’s Notes:

Goal: 100% participation – everyone talks.

Prioritize ★ questions. These make up the central theological themes. In time constraints unstarred questions can be skipped. A great conversation on two or three questions is better than a rushed one on five.

This is the first session in the Going movement and it lands in the most personal territory of the whole series. The household codes in 5:22-6:9 are among the most misread and most avoided passages in Ephesians. People either skip them because they feel culturally awkward, or they apply them legalistically without understanding the revolutionary context in which Paul wrote them. Your job as a leader is to help your group feel the weight of what Paul is actually saying: the gospel transforms the most ordinary, closest relationships first. You don’t get sent to the world before you’re sent into your own home.

Handle this passage with care and confidence. The session title reframes the household codes missionally — these aren’t rules for maintaining domestic order. They’re a description of what gospel-shaped relationships look like from the inside. In a first-century world where relationships were almost entirely defined by power and obligation, Paul’s instructions were not a reinforcement of the status quo. They were a quiet revolution. The husband who lays down his life for his wife the way Christ laid down his life for the church wasn’t the norm. Neither was the master who treated his slave “in the same way” as himself. Paul is describing something the world around them had never seen.

You will almost certainly have people in your group for whom this passage carries pain — people in difficult marriages, people who grew up in homes where these verses were misused, people navigating complicated family dynamics. Read the room carefully. The goal of this

session isn't to produce a set of household rules. It's to help people see that the relationships closest to them are the first and most important mission field they have.

Check-In | *DO IT follow-up from Session 5 • ~3 minutes*

Leader note: Keep this brief. If anyone chose “Deal With It Before the Sun Goes Down” last week, this is a moment worth honoring — not pressing for details, but acknowledging that someone took a hard step. One or two responses, then move on.

1. Last week you chose a Do It option. Did anyone try theirs? What happened . . . or what got in the way?

OPEN IT | *Icebreaker • ~5 minutes*

Leader note: This question is warm and often funny. Keep it to two or three responses. What you're listening for is the instinct that the people we're closest to are often the hardest to love well — which is exactly the territory Paul is walking into.

2. Who in your life has required the most patience from you . . . and what have they taught you about yourself in the process?

People will name spouses, children, parents, siblings, roommates. The answers are often funny and occasionally tender. What you're listening for underneath the humor is the honest reality that the people we love most are also the ones who reveal the most about us — our patience, our selfishness, our capacity for grace. That's not a coincidence. It's the whole point of the passage.

READ IT | *Scripture • ~4 minutes*

Say it:

Paul is about to describe what it looks like when the gospel enters the most intimate relationships we have. This passage has been misread and misused in a lot of contexts — so read it carefully and we'll talk about what Paul is actually saying.

Leaders Note: Ask a volunteer to read 5:22-33. After the reading, let it breathe for two seconds. Don't rush to explain or defend the passage. Let the questions do that work.

Context Note: In the first-century Roman world, wives had almost no legal standing, children were property, and slaves were not considered fully human. Paul's household codes weren't reinforcing these power structures — they were quietly dismantling them from the inside. Notice that Paul addresses wives, children, and slaves directly — something no first-century moralist would do, because those groups weren't considered worth addressing. And notice what he asks of the more powerful party in each relationship: husbands love sacrificially, fathers don't exasperate, masters treat workers with the same standard they themselves expect. In a world of unchecked power, that was radical. The revolutionary instruction in this passage isn't primarily directed at wives. It's directed at husbands.

- Ephesians 5:22-33

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~12 minutes

★3. Verse 25 says husbands are to love their wives “as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” That’s not a posture of authority. It’s a posture of sacrifice. “In your most important relationships — marriage, family, close friendship — what does self-giving love actually look like compared to self-protecting love? And honestly, which one shows up more often in yours?”

Frame this question broadly so it applies to everyone in the room, not just married people. The principle Paul is describing — love that gives itself rather than protects itself — applies to every significant relationship. What you’re listening for is the gap between self-giving love as a concept and self-giving love as a daily practice. Most people will immediately think of a relationship where they know they’ve been more self-protecting than self-giving. Let them name it honestly. Don’t let the conversation drift into a debate about submission or gender roles — those conversations are worth having, but not here. The passage’s center of gravity is Christlike sacrifice, not hierarchy.

Sticky phrase: (Use these to help your group remember what they learn) “**Healthy relationships don't just happen. They reflect the love that Jesus modeled first.**”

4. Verse 31 quotes Genesis: “A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife.” Paul uses a marriage to describe the relationship between Christ and the church. If your closest relationships are meant to be a picture of something larger — of love, sacrifice, and faithfulness — what does the picture your relationships currently paint actually look like?

This is an imagination and honesty question. Paul’s point in citing Genesis is that marriage — and by extension, our most committed relationships — was always meant to point beyond itself to something true about God’s love. That’s a high calling and most people have never thought about their relationships in those terms. The question doesn’t require people to be married — frame it around their most committed relationships. Some people will laugh uncomfortably. Some will go quiet. Both responses are honest. Don’t push for resolution. The point is simply to help people see their relationships as more than personal arrangements — they’re a witness to something.

Sticky phrase: **“Your closest relationships are a picture of something. The question is what they’re showing people.”**

READ IT | Scripture • ~3 minutes

Say it:

Paul now moves from marriage into the other relationships that define our closest world — parents and children, employers and employees.

Leaders Note: Ask a different volunteer to read 6:1-9. Note that Paul addresses children and workers directly — again, people the ancient world didn’t typically bother addressing. Remind your group after the reading: these aren’t just household rules. They’re a description of what grounded, sent people look like in the most ordinary contexts of life.

- Ephesians 6:1-9

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~16 minutes

★ **5. Verse 7 says to “serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people.” Paul is describing a way of working — at a job, in a home, in any context of responsibility — that is**

fundamentally different from just doing what's required. What would change about how you approach your work, your roles, or your responsibilities this week if you genuinely treated them as service to God rather than obligation to people?

This question takes the passage out of the ancient slave/master context and lands it in Monday morning. Everyone in your group has responsibilities they didn't choose and contexts they find difficult — a job they're not sure they want, a role in the family they find exhausting, a responsibility they've been resenting. Paul's reframe is simple and radical: what if you did it as an act of worship rather than an act of obligation? The question isn't asking people to pretend everything is fine. It's asking them to imagine what a different motivation would do to the same set of circumstances. Let people be specific. Vague answers about "working harder" aren't the goal — concrete images of specific roles done differently is what you're listening for.

Sticky phrase: **"Ordinary work becomes mission when you change who you're doing it for."**

★6. Paul's instructions in this passage are almost entirely directed at the person with more power in each relationship — husbands, parents, masters. He's not asking the powerful to maintain their position. He's asking them to use their power differently. Where in your life do you hold more power or influence than others . . . and are you using it the way Paul describes?

This is the most countercultural question in the session, and it requires some courage from the leader to ask well. Power in this context doesn't just mean formal authority — it includes anyone who has more resources, more stability, more voice, or more influence in a given relationship. That includes parents over children, employers over employees, older siblings over younger ones, financially stable people over financially struggling friends. Most people don't think of themselves as powerful. Help them locate where they actually are in the power dynamic of their closest relationships. Then ask what Paul's instruction looks like specifically there. This is also the most direct connection to Brazos Pointe's mission — deploying faith means using whatever influence you have in service of the people around you.

Sticky phrase: **"For a Christ follower, power doesn't dominate, it serves."**

★7. Looking across all the relationships Paul describes — marriage, family, work — which one feels most like a mission field to you right now? Not a burden . . . but a genuine place where you sense God might want to do something through you?

This is the landing question for the session and it reframes everything Paul has described as opportunity rather than obligation. The word “mission field” might sound dramatic for a marriage or a job, but that’s exactly what Paul is describing — the closest relationships are the first and most important place where grounded people get sent. Let people name a specific relationship or context. Some will name something obvious. Others will surprise themselves with what surfaces. If someone names a relationship that sounds more like a burden than a mission field, gently reframe: “What would it look like to see it as a place God specifically sent you?” This question also sets up the Do It section directly — whatever someone names here is what they should be taking into their application choice.

Sticky phrase: **“Your closest relationships are already your first mission field.”**

SAY IT | Leader Teaching • ~3 minutes

Leaders Note: Read the following aloud or put it in your own words. Keep it brief. If you’re running short on time, skip this section but don’t jump over the next section. It gives directions for our Mission Statement building.

Here’s what most people think being sent means: going somewhere. A mission trip. A ministry role. A dramatic moment where you do something significant for God in front of other people. Paul has a different picture. He says: go home. Go to work. Go back to the relationships you were already in. And do them differently.

The household codes aren’t a detour from the mission of Ephesians. They are the mission. Christ didn’t redeem you so you could go perform Christianity somewhere else. He sent you back into the most ordinary, most challenging, most revealing relationships of your life — and said: let what I’ve done in you show up there first.

Your marriage. Your family. Your workplace. Those aren’t obstacles to your calling. They are your calling. And the person whose identity is grounded in Christ, has grown in community, and is now learning to go . . . starts right where they already are.

Do NOT skip this:

SG Mission Statement Framework | Application • ~4 minutes

Leaders Note: Read the following transition aloud, then allow 3-4 minutes of open conversation before moving to Do It section. (Skip the Do It section if needed this week.) This is the second of two informal conversations building toward the Session 7 mission statement finalization. You're not looking for polished answers. You're listening for the honest, specific things that surface when people reflect on what God has actually been doing. Two or three responses is enough.

Say it:

Take out your Mission Framework handout. Last session we discussed the first two questions in the mission framework. This week we will consider the next two questions. Let's spend 3-4 minutes on this:

3. Who are we being sent to? Be specific!
4. What is the one thing we want to commit together going forward?

We're going to use what surfaces here next week in Session 7 to land on a short group mission statement together. So... take a minute. What has God been using us (our group) to do/accomplish?

Be sure someone is taking notes on their handout so you can refer to it next week when we finalize your group mission statement. Write down a word or phrase that keeps coming up. Those often find their way into the mission statement language.

DO IT | Optional Application • ~6 minutes

Leaders Note: Trim this section (or skip it completely) if your "Mission Statement Framework" conversation went long. Ask everyone to pick one option and say it out loud before you close. Check in at the start of Session 7. If someone named a specific relationship during Question 7, nudge them toward the "Go First" option that connects most directly to that relationship.

Choose one of the following this week:

- **Go First.** In the relationship you named in Question 7, do one act of self-giving this week that you wouldn't normally do — something that costs you something. Not a grand gesture. Just one move that puts the other person's needs ahead of your own preferences.
- **Change Your Why.** Pick one responsibility or role in your life that you've been approaching as obligation. This week, do it as an act of worship. Same task. Different posture. At the end of the week, notice whether anything changed — in you, or in the people around you.
- **Use Your Influence.** From Question 6 — the relationship where you have more power or influence. Do one thing this week to use that influence in service rather than self-protection. A conversation you've been avoiding. A need you've been ignoring. One move toward the person rather than away.
- **Tell Someone They're Sent.** Think of someone in your closest circle who doesn't yet know they're loved by God . . . someone who hasn't stepped over the line of faith. This week, do one thing to show them what that love looks like. Not a speech. Just one act that points somewhere beyond yourself.
- **Reflect On It.** Read Ephesians 5:22–6:9 slowly. Write honestly about this: Which relationship in my life most needs the Gospel to show up differently? What would that actually look like starting this week?

PRAY IT | *Closing Prayer • ~3 minutes*

Leaders Note: Read this prayer over your group or use it as a closing after open prayer.

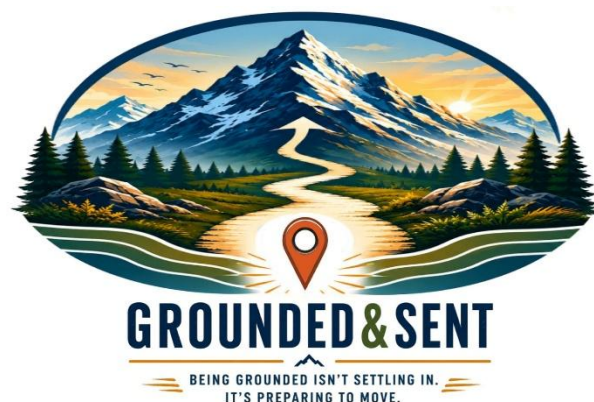
Father, you didn't send us somewhere dramatic. You sent us home. You sent us to work. You sent us back into the most ordinary, most challenging relationships of our lives and said: let what I've done in you show up there. We confess that we often treat our closest relationships as the hardest part of following you rather than the first part. Tonight we heard that the mission begins right where we already are. Give us the courage to go first in our homes. To serve as though we're serving you in our work. To use whatever influence we have in service of the people around us rather than in protection of ourselves. May the people closest to us be the first to see the difference you've made. In Jesus' name, Amen.

“Stand”

Session 7: Ephesians 6:10-24

Movement: Going

Theme: Calling requires courage. You were built for this, and you were never meant to stand alone.



Leader's Notes:

Goal: 100% participation – everyone talks.

Prioritize ★ questions. These make up the central theological themes. In time constraints unstarred questions can be skipped. A great conversation on two or three questions is better than a rushed one on five.

This is the final session of Grounded & Sent, and Paul ends the letter the way a commander sends troops into the field: put on your armor, know who you're fighting, stand firm. The armor of God passage is one of the most familiar in all of Scripture — which means it's also one of the most domesticated. People know the list. What they often miss is the urgency behind it. Paul isn't describing a spiritual wardrobe. He's describing a posture for people who have been grounded, grown, and are now being sent into a world that will push back.

This session ends differently from all the others. After the discussion and teaching, your group will finalize its mission statement together and then each person will personalize the mission — naming their own contribution to it. Both are built into the Do It section below. Read through the entire Do It section before your group meets. For the closing time you will need: paper and pens for each person. No purchases required.

TIMING NOTE: To protect time for the mission and Personalize the Mission section, skip Q5 if Explore It Block 1 runs long. Do not skip Q6, Q7, the mission statement finalization, Personalize the Mission, or the Pray It—these are the intended ending of the whole series.

Check-In | DO IT follow-up from Session 6 • ~3 minutes

Leader note: Keep this brief. If anyone chose “Tell Someone They’re Sent” last week, that’s a story worth hearing in thirty seconds. One or two responses, then move on. Remind your group this is the final session — and that tonight ends differently.

1. Last week you chose a Do It option. Did anyone try theirs? What happened . . . or what got in the way?

OPEN IT | Icebreaker • ~5 minutes

Leader note: This question tends to generate strong, specific answers quickly. Keep it to two or three responses. What you're listening for is the experience of being equipped and sent by someone who believed in you — which is exactly what the closing time tonight is meant to do for each person.

2. Think of a time someone sent you into something hard and said “I believe you can do this.” It could be a coach, a parent, a mentor, a friend. What did it feel like to be sent by someone who believed in you? And did it change how you faced what was ahead?

Let two or three people share. The stories will range from sports to career to family moments. What you're listening for is the weight that someone's belief in you carries — how being sent by a person you trust changes your posture going in. That's the emotional setup for the armor passage and for the closing experience.

READ IT | Scripture • ~3 minutes

Say it:

Paul ends this letter the way a commander sends people into the field. He's not wishing them well. He's equipping them.

Leaders Note: Ask a volunteer to read 6:10-17 slowly and clearly. The armor list deserves to be read deliberately — not rushed through.

Context Note: Paul is writing this from chains, surrounded by Roman soldiers. The armor he describes isn't invented imagery — he's looking at the soldier guarding him and describing each piece with a spiritual counterpart. Belt of truth. Breastplate of righteousness. Feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Shield of faith. Helmet of salvation. Sword of the Spirit. Notice also that Paul says “stand” four times in verses 11–14. This isn’t primarily an offensive posture. It’s a posture of holding ground that has already been won. You’re not taking new territory. You’re standing in territory Christ already secured.

- Ephesians 6:10-17

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~12 minutes

★3. Verse 12 says our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces. Most of us spend our energy fighting the visible things — the difficult person, the hard circumstance, the frustrating situation. What would change about how you approach your hardest challenges if you actually believed the real battle was happening at a different level?

This question is meant to reframe the nature of the struggle before the armor makes sense. Most people, when they feel attacked, identify the attack as coming from a person or situation. Paul says the person or situation is rarely the real thing. That doesn’t mean the person or situation isn’t real or isn’t hard — it means the response required is different from what we’d naturally reach for. A useful follow-up: “Think about your hardest relationship or your hardest season right now. What would it look like to address it at the level Paul is describing?”

Sticky phrase: (Use these to help your group remember what they learn) **“The hardest battles in your life are rarely about what they appear to be about.”**

★4. Verse 10 says “be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power” — not in your own strength, not in your own resolve, not in your own discipline. Where have you been trying to fight something in your own strength that actually requires a completely different kind of power? What would it look like to stop trying to win that battle alone?

This question is about misidentifying the source of strength, which is different from simply naming a hard situation. Most people have something in their life they’ve been white-knuckling — a habit they keep trying to break, a relationship they keep trying to fix, a fear they keep trying to overcome — entirely in their own power. Paul’s instruction isn’t to try harder. It’s to draw on a different resource entirely. Help people feel the difference between effort and dependence. The follow-up question — what would it look like to stop trying to win it alone — is where the real conversation lives. Some

people will immediately know the answer. Others will realize they've never actually tried anything other than their own strength.

Sticky phrase: **"The strength you need isn't something you produce. It's something you access."**

5. Look at the armor piece by piece: truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God. These aren't things you manufacture — they're things you put on. Which piece of armor feels most accessible to you right now . . . and which one feels like it's been sitting unused?

This question moves from posture to practical inventory. Most people will have an instinctive answer about which piece feels strong and which feels weak. The belt of truth tends to be weak for people living with hidden things. The shield of faith tends to be weak for people in a season of doubt. The sword of the Spirit tends to be weak for people who have drifted from Scripture. Let people name it without shame — the question isn't an accusation, it's an inventory.

Sticky phrase: **"The armor doesn't work if you don't put it on. Every piece matters."**

READ IT | Scripture • ~2 minutes

Say it:

Paul adds one more thing to the armor — and it's not a piece of equipment. It's a practice.

Leaders Note: Ask a volunteer to read 6:18-24. This final section is shorter but carries significant weight — Paul ends not with a command but with a request for prayer and a benediction of peace.

- Ephesians 6:18-24

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~8 minutes

★ **6. Verse 18 says to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." Then Paul immediately asks them to pray for him — a man in chains who has spent**

this entire letter telling them how strong they are in Christ. What does it tell you about the nature of this life that even Paul, in prison, still needed other people to pray for him?

This question lands humility in the best possible way at the close of the series. Paul is not a man who has arrived. He's a man in chains asking his friends to pray for his courage. That's the model: not independence, but interdependence. The grounded and sent life is never a solo endeavor. This connects directly to the closing time tonight — a community personalizing the mission together and sending each other out.

Sticky phrase: **"The armor of God was never meant to be worn alone."**

★7. Paul closes with "Grace and peace to you." The same words he opened with in chapter 1. Seven sessions later, after everything he's described — who you are, what God did, how you belong, what you're called to, how you live, where you're sent — it still comes back to grace and peace. What does grace and peace mean to you now that you've spent seven sessions in this letter . . . compared to what it might have meant before this series?

This is the series-closing discussion question and it deserves time. Let people answer slowly. What you're listening for is whether the seven sessions have actually moved something in people — whether "grace and peace" lands differently now than it did at the beginning. Some people will have a clear answer. Others will say they're still processing. Both are honest and right. Don't rush toward the Personalize the Mission time too quickly. This question is a threshold — let the group cross it together before you move them into the closing experience.

Sticky phrase: **"Grace and peace aren't just how Paul signs off. They're what he spent the whole letter describing."**

SAY IT | Leader Teaching • ~3 minutes

Leaders Note: Read the following aloud. This is the final Say It of the series — don't skip it. It bridges the discussion into the mission statement and Mission Personalization time.

Paul ends this letter standing in chains, writing to people he loves, asking them to pray for his courage. That's the picture he leaves us with. Not a triumphant commander. Not a polished teacher. A man in prison who knows that what he's been given is worth standing for . . . and who knows he can't stand alone.

That's what seven sessions of Grounded & Sent have been about. Not a curriculum. Not a set of ideas to agree with. An invitation to become people who know who they are in Christ — so deeply, so thoroughly, so immovably — that they can be sent into the ordinary, difficult, beautiful mess of their lives and actually stand.

You've been grounded. You've been grown. Tonight, you go. Not because you have it all figured out. Not because you feel ready. But because the same God who chose you before the world began, made you alive when you were dead, demolished the wall that kept you out, and gave you a piece of his own mission to carry . . . is the same God who is sending you. And that's enough.

DO IT | *Mission Statement Finalization & Mission • ~30 minutes*

Leaders Note: This replaces the standard individual Do It choices for this final session. It moves in two parts: 1) the group finalizes their mission statement together, then 2) individuals are asked to personalize the mission and determine how they can support and contribute to the cause of Christ.

PART 1 — Group Mission Statement Finalization (12 minutes)

Ask everyone to take out the [“Mission Statement Framework”](#)

Say it:

Over the last few weeks we've been asking ourselves some questions. Who are we? What has God been doing in us this quarter? Who are we being sent to? Tonight we land on something together.

We're going to take about ten minutes to develop a short group mission statement — one or two sentences that capture what this group exists to do and who we're being sent to together. It doesn't have to be perfect. It has to be ours.

Leaders Note: Work through the prompts on the document with your group to refresh everyone's mind and ask if there are any additional thoughts to add to the four questions.

Spend time working on “Session 7 Finalization” on your handout.

DO IT | Mission Personalization • ~9 minutes

Leaders Note: The group now has their mission statement written on their paper. Read the following transition aloud, then give people 2-3 minutes to write privately before sharing around the group.

Say it:

I'd like you to take a moment to think and pray. Ask God to show you a specific way that you can personally contribute to our group mission—an intentional decision—something you can commit to do or a direction you can walk in as you seek to satisfy what God is doing in you. Tonight, with a mission statement in hand, I'd like each of us to share this conviction, to identify this personal step. This is the one thing you sense God is asking you to do (or be) as a result of this quarter together.

It doesn't have to be dramatic. It doesn't have to be something you feel fully ready for. Follow where God is leading, not where you think you should go. Write it on the paper below your mission statement — one sentence. Then those who choose to do so, will have the opportunity to share it the group.

If you struggle to know where to start, take a moment to look over the “Personal Mission” categories list on the handout.

Leaders Note: After people have written, go around the group and ask each person to share their personal decision in one sentence. Don't force anyone to share, but a little positive peer pressure can be productive. Don't discuss or debrief each one — just let them be named before the community. That act of saying it out loud makes it real. Then move directly into Pray It.

PRAY IT | Closing Prayer • ~3 minutes

Leaders Note: Read this prayer aloud as the closing of the closing of the session.

NOTICE: There is a line that you should MAKE PERSONAL. When you reach this line in the prayer, insert your group's actual mission statement. If you prefer to pray in your own words, use this as a guide.

Father, we came into this series carrying a lot of ideas about who we are — some true, many not. You spent seven sessions telling us the truth.
Chosen.

Alive.
Belonging.
Gifted.
Growing.
And now . . . sent.
Not because we have it figured out.
Not because we feel ready.
But because you are the one doing the sending — and you’ve never sent anyone you haven’t also equipped.

We ask tonight for the courage to actually go. Into our marriages and our families. Into our workplaces and our neighborhoods. Into the relationships that are hard and the ones that are easy and the ones we’ve been avoiding. And we go together — as a community with a mission we’ve named: your group mission statement and each of us has a personal mission that we’ve committed to.

May the people closest to us be the first to see the difference that our time in your Word has made. And may we never forget that:

Being grounded isn’t settling in. It’s preparing to move.

So move us, Lord. Send us. And keep us standing in the territory you’ve already won. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

“Mission Statement Framework”



LEADER NOTE:

This framework is for informal use during **Sessions 5, 6 and 7**. You don't need to schedule a formal exercise or add time to the session.

Instead, use the final 3-5 minutes of either session — after “Do It” but before the closing prayer — to work through one or two of the questions below with your group. By the time Session 7 arrives, most groups will have enough raw material to finalize their statement in about 10-12 minutes. The goal is that the mission statement feels discovered rather than manufactured.

You don't have to follow this framework exactly. If the Holy Spirit is leading your group somewhere more specific or more personal, follow that. This is a scaffold, not a script.

The Four Questions

1. Who are we? (Session 5)

Not a theological answer. An honest description of this specific group. The ages, the backgrounds, the season of life, what brought you together, what keeps you coming back. What would you say to someone who asked “what kind of people are in your group?”

Leader tip: This question often produces the most natural and energized conversation. Let people describe themselves and each other. Listen for words that keep coming up — those tend to find their way into the statement.

2. What has God been doing this quarter? (Session 5)

Pull directly from what the group has experienced in Sessions 1-6. What has shifted? What has been named that hadn't been said before? Where has the group felt most alive? Where has God seemed most present?

Leader tip: This question anchors the mission statement in the actual Grounded & Sent content rather than abstract language. Groups who answer this well tend to produce statements that feel specific and owned rather than generic.

3. Who are we being sent to? (Session 6)

Not “the world.” The actual people. The specific neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, and families that this particular group of people touches every week. Think about who shows up in your everyday life that no one else in this group has access to. That’s your mission field.

Leader tip: Push gently for specificity here. “Our neighbors” is more useful than “the community.” “Our coworkers at the plant” is more useful than “people at work.” The more specific the group gets, the more actionable the statement becomes.

4. What is the one thing we want to commit together going forward? (Session 6)

This is where the statement language usually emerges. Not a list of commitments — one thing. The thing that, if this group did it consistently, would make the most difference in the people around them. It might be a practice. It might be a posture. It might be a type of person they’re going to show up for.

Leader tip: If the group gets stuck here, try this: “Finish this sentence together: We exist to ____.” Then see what comes out. Don’t rush toward the final language tonight. Just let the ideas surface. You’ll land on the words in Session 7.

(Session 7)

Session 7 Finalization

Session 7 will begin with approximately 10-12 minutes for groups to finalize their statement. By that point, your group will have done enough informal thinking that this time will feel like landing rather than starting. The leader should:

1. **Briefly remind** the group of the four questions they've been considering.
2. **Ask:** "Based on what we've talked about and what God has been doing among us — what do we want to say?"
3. **Let the language surface organically.** Write options on paper. Read them aloud. Notice which one the group leans toward.
4. **Land on something.** It doesn't have to be perfect. It has to be yours.
5. **Write it down.** In the space below. Every person leaves with the statement on paper.

Our Small Group Mission Statement is:

This statement becomes the center of the Mission Personalization experience that closes Session 7 and the series.

What does a good Mission Statement look like?

A strong group mission statement is:

- **Short.** One or two sentences. Memorable without looking it up.
- **Specific.** It couldn't be any other group. It can be owned by this group. Not generic.
- **Rich.** Every word carries weight. "Daily" instead of "often." "Jesus' story" not "our faith."
- **Actionable.** Can you evaluate your week against it. "Did we do this?" should have a real answer.

A Starting Point if your group is stuck.

Leaders Note: Some groups will land on their own language quickly and naturally. Others will stare at each other and go quiet. If your group needs a starting point, offer this:

“To tell Jesus’ story daily in our words and actions.”

Why this statement works:

- *“To tell”* — active, intentional, not passive or accidental.
- *“Jesus’ story”* — personal and narrative, not doctrinal or institutional.
- *“Daily”* — ordinary life, not special occasions or church events.
- *“In our words and actions”* — complete. What you say and what you do. Neither alone is enough.

Or consider the Brazos Pointe mission statement:

“To guide people to discover, develop, and deploy faith in Jesus.”

Groups can adopt one of these as-is, adapt it, or use it as a starting point to find their own language.

Session 7 – Personalize the Mission

Say It:

I’d like you to take a moment to think and pray. Ask God to show you a specific way that you can personally contribute to our group mission—an intentional decision—something you can commit to do or a direction you can walk in as you seek to satisfy what God is doing in you. Tonight, with a mission statement in hand, I’d like each of us to share this conviction, to name this personal step. This is the one thing you sense God is asking you to do (or be) as a result of this quarter together.

It doesn't have to be dramatic. It doesn't have to be something you feel fully ready for. Follow where God is leading, not where you think you should go. Write it on the paper below your mission statement — one sentence. Then we'll share them around the group.

If you struggle to know where to start, take a moment to look over the “Personal Mission” categories on the list.

Personal Mission Categories:

A relationship to invest in. Someone who needs what you’ve been receiving or someone who could help you be closer to Jesus. A mentee or a mentor.

A rhythm or practice to begin. Something I'll do consistently in my faith life that I haven't been doing.

A person to invite. Someone I'll ask into community, into church, or into a conversation about faith.

A place to show up. A serving opportunity, a neighborhood, or a context where I sense I'm being sent.

A conversation to have. Something honest I've been avoiding that needs to be said.

A step toward growth. Something I'll pursue to develop my faith in a specific way.

Baptism. I need to go public with my faith in Jesus by being baptized.

Discovering Brazos Pointe: I need to join the church.

My personal mission is: _____

Share Your Personal Mission

Use the QR code to post your
personal mission statement
on the BPF Small Group Wall.

(or just be nosey to see what others are doing)

