

Ephesians

Week 02 – The Ephesians

Transition: We are starting off the new year by digging into one of the New Testament's most potent and influential books...Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus. If you are interested in the background of the letter and the city, please consider following this link from The Gospel Coalition's website ([Ephesians background](#)). Last week we covered the historical and cultural setting of the letter. Since Ephesus was the second (or third) largest city in the Roman Empire (in Paul's day), it was wealthy, cosmopolitan, and influential. It was also the location of one of the ancient Seven Wonders of the World—the Temple of Artemis, which made Ephesus a spiritual center as well.

Context: This week we are turning our attention away from the city and onto the people themselves. Like any city, the people who lived there had certain beliefs, values, and practices in common, all of which helped define them as a people. As anyone who comes to Jesus for salvation knows (but especially those who comes as adults), we bring our pre-saved predispositions and values into our understanding of the faith. Knowing this, Paul has written this powerful affirmation of who the Ephesian believers are in Christ and how they are to live as a result of their new identity.

Opening Questions:

- What words best describe who you are? Which ones are most important to you and why?
- What sources are influential in the development of a person's understanding of who he/she is? In your life, which ones have influenced your understanding of who you are the most? In what ways does your understanding of who you are influence you on a daily basis?

Scripture/Storying: Ephesians 1:1-2, Acts 20, Revelation 2:1-7

Discipleship Questions:

- After reading all three Bible passages, what words describe the people of the church in Ephesus? What else do you notice in any of the passages that interests you?
- What similarities do you notice between the people in the church at Ephesus and the people at Providence Church? What do you see that's different?
- What have been some of the hardest things to give up in your endeavor to follow Christ faithfully? What made them especially difficult? If you've learned to overcome the difficulty, what do you recommend to anyone facing something similar?
- How does confidence in your identity affect your walk with Christ?
- The passage from Acts occurs before Paul wrote Ephesians while the passage in Revelation occurs after. How do you imagine knowing the before and after stories will influence your reading (and understanding) of the letter?
- What is the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to today's discussion?

Prayer time: This week we are praying for Nova Campinas, Brazil (a Providence Church plant). Pray for their leadership to have wisdom concerning their next church plant. They've been given a facility, and are now looking for the right individual (and launch team) to lead getting the new church off the ground.