

COMMUNITY GROUP WEEKLY DISCUSSION GUIDE
WEEK OF OCTOBER 19, 2009

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Persevering in the Knowledge of God

"From all which it is shown with sufficient clearness that the grace of God, which both begins a man's faith and which enables it to persevere unto the end, is not given according to our merits, but is given according to His own most secret and at the same time most righteous, wise and beneficent will."

-St. Augustine

"Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved."

-Mat 10:21-22

"We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring."

-2 Thes 1:3-4

THIS WEEK'S TEXT

Eph 1:15-23

RELATED TEXTS TO EXPLORE

Col 1:4; Rom 1:8; Heb 10:35-37, 12:1-13; James 1:12; 2 Thes 1:1-10; Phil 1:6; Titus 2:13; Rev 21:1-5; Eph 1:9;

STUDY GUIDE

- **What observations can be made about:**
 - The type of relationship Paul has with these Ephesian Christians
 - The kinds of things Paul prays for Ephesus
 - The effects of one having their "heart enlightened"
 - Where the power of God is benevolently exercised
 - This portrayal of Christ as preeminent
 - The expressed relationship between Jesus and His church
 - The "hope" described
 - The "inheritance" described
 - The "power" described
 - The kinds of adjectives used throughout this passage
 - The "heavenly places"

- **What does each of these things mean? What did they mean for the church at Corinth then, what do they mean for us now?**

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Use any or as many of these questions as will be helpful for your discussion.

- What has God spoken to you about this week regarding the sermon or passage?
- What does this passage reveal to us about Jesus?
- How does this passage enhance our understanding of the Gospel?
- What does this text mean for us as a community? Individually? How does it free us to be the people God intends for us to be?
- How do we need to live out the meaning of this text in our city?
- In what ways have you grown experientially in your knowledge of God over the past year?
- If the hope that we're called to isn't just about avoiding hell and going to heaven, but rather that Jesus is healing all of creation, what does that mean for your daily life?
- In the sermon, Pastor JR said, "You will not allow God to be over you until you see that He is for you." Do you believe that God is for you? What does it mean for Him to be "for you"?
- Are you experiencing the strengthening of God changing you? Changing the world? What is different about the change resulting from the power of God at work as opposed to change that we might observe even amongst secularists, atheists, or anyone else who denies the lordship of Jesus?
- In what ways are you being tempted to falter in following Jesus? What will perseverance in knowing God look like for you in this specific season of life?

"Those who turn back know only the ordeal, but they who persevere remember the adventure."
—Milo L. Arnold

MEMORY VERSES

Last Week: Eph 6:4

This Week: Eph 1:18-21

PRAYER FOCUS

For the Vision and Direction of the church (October):

Apostles Church wants to be a people who intentionally connect others to Jesus. We will authentically, compassionately and intelligently dialogue with the culture about the Gospel of Jesus.

In Response to the Text:

- Praising God for enlightening man's heart by the work of His Spirit
- Praising God for displaying His all-surpassing redemptive power by raising Christ from the dead
- Confessing the ways in which we have disbelieved God's goodness and rejected His lordship
- Confessing the ways in which we are even now failing to persevere according to His goodness
- Thanking God for securing our salvation by His grace, apart from our endurance or efforts
- Thanking God for carrying unto completion the good work He has begun in us
- Asking for strength, endurance, faith and focus
- Asking that our hearts would learn to gladly submit all things to the loving rule of Jesus

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDY AND PREPARATION

- *Darkness and Light* – Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones
- *Knowing God* – J.I. Packer
- *The Holiness of God* - R.C. Sproul
- *The God Who Is There* – Francis Schaeffer
- <http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/ScriptureIndex/3/>

NEXT WEEK'S TEXT

1 Samuel 16:1-13