



Study Guide #1 – I Am Chosen: No Longer Defined by My Past

Small Group Discussion Guide on Ephesians 1:3-14

The sermon launches the Identity series and aligns most closely with the core value of Biblical Authority. As this message explores what it means to be chosen, forgiven, and made new in Christ, it calls believers to walk as disciples who know who they are in Christ and to help others discover that same transforming grace. As you walk through this guide, ask the Lord to move you from simply knowing the phrase “I Am Chosen” to embracing it as the foundation of how you think, feel, and live as His disciple.

Section 1 – ENCOUNTER

Observing God's Word

Imagine a heart weighed down by yesterday – decisions you wish you could unmake, words you wish you could unsay, patterns that seem welded to your name – wondering quietly, Is this all I'll ever be? Then picture the voice of Jesus cutting through that inner courtroom, not to rehearse your record but to rewrite it, declaring you forgiven, adopted, and chosen in Him. Suddenly, the labels that once defined you – failure, disappointment, outsider – begin to lose their power as your identity anchors not in what you have done but in what Christ has done for you. Scripture reminds us that God's choosing love is stronger than our past, and that His grace invites us to live as new creations, no longer chained to old names.

Start your study by anchoring yourself in Scripture. Read Ephesians 1:3-14 as a group, family, or individual, letting God's Word sink in. Picture the contrast – once dead, now alive in Christ; once not a people, now God's people; once defined by darkness, now called into His marvelous light.

Core Questions

- What do you notice about the words and phrases Scripture uses to describe who you were before Christ and who you are now in Him (chosen, adopted, redeemed)?
- Why is it important to see identity language anchored in what God has done (He chose, He redeemed, He called) rather than what you have achieved?
- What main lessons do you learn about the heart and character of God from these passages as He deals with your past, your present, and your future?

Section 2 – EXPLORE

As we explore these identity-shaping passages, we discover that being chosen in Christ is not a sentimental slogan; it is a spiritual reality grounded in God's eternal purpose, Christ's finished work, and the Spirit's ongoing transformation. The sermon unpacks how God graciously reaches into broken stories, redeems our failures, and gives us a new name so that we can live as His people rather than prisoners of our past. This message launches the Identity series by asking each of us a foundational question: Will I allow my past, my feelings, and culture's labels to define me, or will I take Jesus at His word when He says, "This is who you are in Me"?

Use the truths below to guide your discussion and connect the sermons insights to your life.

Truth 1 – Chosen in Christ Before Your Past Even Began (Ephesians 1:3-6)

Paul declares that God "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" and "predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ," showing that God's decision to love and adopt you was not based on your performance but on His gracious purpose. Before you ever succeeded or failed, before you wandered or returned, God had already set His sight on you in Christ, planning a redemption that would cover your worst moments and call you into a new family. The sermon emphasizes that when you feel disqualified by your past, you must remember that God's choice came first; your failures are real, but they are not final when they are brought to the cross.

- How does knowing that God chose you "before the foundation of the world" challenge the way you interpret the painful or shame-filled chapters of your story?
- When you think about adoption language in Ephesians 1, what images or emotions come to mind, and how does this picture help you see yourself less as a spiritual orphan and more as a beloved child?
- In moments of regret, are you more likely to replay your past or rehearse God's promises? What practical steps can help you shift from self-condemnation to embracing God's choosing grace?

Truth 2 – In Christ You Are a New Creation, Not a Renovated Failure (Ephesians 1:7-10)

Scripture declares, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come," (2 Corinthians 5:17) reminding us that salvation is not cosmetic improvement but spiritual rebirth. The sermon highlights that being a new creation means your core identity has changed; while memories and consequences may remain, sin no longer has the right to name you or rule you. You are no longer defined by your worst sin, deepest wound, or brokenness, but by Christ's righteousness credited to you and His Spirit working within you to reshape desires, habits, and hope.

- What “old” identities—labels you or others have used—do you still tend to carry around in your thoughts and conversations, even though Scripture says they have passed away?
- How have you seen evidence of “new creation” life in yourself or others (changed desires, healed relationships, new courage, freedom from patterns that once held you)?

Truth 3 – You Are Set Apart to Declare His Praise, Not Your Shame (Ephesians 1:11-14)

Peter reminds believers in 1 Peter 2:9-10 that they are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession,” called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light so that they may proclaim His excellencies. Once they were “not a people” and “had not received mercy,” but now they are God’s people who have received mercy, moving them from the margins of rejection into the center of God’s family and mission. The sermon explains that identity and purpose are intertwined: God does not simply free you from your past; He sets you apart to carry His light into the world turning former wounds into platforms for worship and witness.

- How might God use parts of your past that you once hid—failures, addictions, broken relationships—as redeemed testimony to point others to His mercy?
- Peter connects identity (“you are”) with mission (“that you may proclaim”). How does embracing your chosen identity move you from silence and self-protection to courageous worship and witness in everyday life?

Section 3 – EMBRACE

Applying God’s Word

Go deeper into the Word of God by applying what you’ve learned to your life today. Reflect on these action steps and discuss how you can live out the truths from “I Am Chosen: No Longer Defined by My Past.”

Name and Nail Your Old Labels

Identify two or three labels from your past that still whisper over your life—words like “failure,” “unworthy,” “angry,” “forgotten,” or others. Write each one down on a piece of paper, then beside it write a truth from Scripture that replaces it (for example, “failure” → “new creation in Christ”; “unwanted” → “adopted and chosen in Him”). Take time in prayer to confess where you have allowed old labels to define you, now turn these over completely to the Lord.

Turn Your Past into a Platform for Ministry

Ask the Lord to show you one person who may be wrestling with the very struggles that once defined you—shame, regret, addiction, brokenness, or fear. Commit to one intentional step of encouragement this week: share a brief part of your story, invite them to church or the Identity series, offer to pray with them, or simply remind them that in Christ they are not stuck in who they used to be. Remember, God often uses the most healed parts of our past to open doors for others to discover that they too can say, “I am chosen, no longer defined by my past.”

Memorize and Reflect

Memorize a key Identity verse for this week, such as 2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” Throughout the week, repeat this verse when old memories surface, when accusations echo in your mind, or when you face temptation to return to former patterns.

Closing Challenge and Prayer

Friends, the God who chose you before the foundation of the world, who sent His Son to bear your sin, and who raised Him to give you new life has not finished writing your story. In Christ you are no longer chained to who you were; you are called to live as who you are—chosen, forgiven, and set apart for His glory. As a group, close by praying for one another:

- Thank God for His choosing love and the new identity He gives in Christ.
- Ask Him to break the power of shame, fear, or labels that do not come from Him.

Study Guide #2 – I Am Made New: Empowered to Influence

Small Group Discussion Guide on Ephesians 1:15-23

The sermon examines Paul's prayer for believers in Ephesus, it highlights that in Christ we are not only forgiven but also made new and empowered to impact a dark and confused culture through faith, love, and Spirit-driven living.

Paul's focus is not merely on what Christians know but on how they live as people whose eyes have been opened and whose hearts have been strengthened by resurrection power. He prays that believers will grow in wisdom, revelation, hope, and awareness of God's mighty power so that their everyday lives—at home, at work, at school, and in the community—become instruments of influence for Christ.

Section 1 – ENCOUNTER

Observing God's Word

Imagine a believer plowing through life like that Texas farmer—tired, frustrated, feeling spiritually poor—unaware that beneath the surface of their ordinary days lies a vast reservoir of grace, power, and calling in Christ. Then, as Scripture is opened and prayer begins to deepen, it is as if the drill hits the hidden reservoir: eyes are opened, hope rises, and a new understanding of identity and influence erupts like a fountain. That is the picture Paul paints in Ephesians 1:15–23—a prayer that God would help His people discover the riches already theirs in Christ so that they can live with confidence, clarity, and courage in a spiritually confused world.

Let's start our study by anchoring ourselves in Scripture. Read Ephesians 1:15–23 ESV as a group, family, or an individual, letting God's Word sink in. Picture Paul in prison, thanking God for the believers' faith and love, and pleading that they would see the hope, inheritance, and power that are theirs in Jesus.

Core Questions

- What do you notice about the way Paul speaks to these believers—his gratitude, his prayer, and his focus on what God has already given them in Christ?
- What key words, phrases, or themes grab your attention in this text?
- What main lessons do you learn about the character of God from this passage?

Section 2 – EXPLORE

Understanding the Passage and Sermon

As we explore Ephesians 1:15–23, we see that Paul is not praying for believers to receive something new, but to recognize and live out what God has already given them in Christ. Surrounded by a culture of idolatry, immorality, and confusion, the Ephesian Christians needed to know that their new identity included power to influence because Christ's resurrection power was at work in and through them. This sermon unpacks three power-packed lessons: your new identity unleashes eternal impact, gives you a new vision with a Kingdom perspective, and runs on the same resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead.

Use the truths and questions below to connect the sermons insights to your life and to your role as an influencer for Christ.

Lesson 1 – Your New Identity Unleashes Eternal Impact (Ephesians 1:15-16)

Paul begins by thanking God because he has heard of the believers' faith in the Lord Jesus and their love toward all the saints, showing that real identity in Christ always shows up in trust and love. In a city driven by greed and spiritual confusion, these Christians chose to live differently, pursuing the Kingdom of God rather than the world, and their example became a bright light that rippled far beyond their own circle—even reaching Paul in prison. The sermon emphasizes that kingdom influence is not sustained by personality, programs, or platforms but by prayer and faithfulness; like the quiet ticket agent who helped reroute missionaries, unseen acts of love can keep God's mission moving in powerful ways.

- Why do you think Paul links “faith in the Lord Jesus” and “love toward all the saints” as evidence of a new identity? How do these two qualities show up in your life today?
- Paul models continual thanksgiving and prayer for other believers. How can regularly praying for fellow Christians' influence change the way you see your church, small group, or family?
- The sermon states, “Your new identity in Christ leads to a new influence on others.” Where has God placed you right now to have an eternal ripple effect?

Lesson #2 – Your New Position Gives You New Vision (Ephesians 1:17-19)

Paul prays that God would give believers “the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him,” and that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened. This prayer is not about collecting Bible facts but about gaining God-shaped wisdom and awareness—seeing who God is, what He is doing, and how He is calling us to live with hope, inheritance, and confidence in His power. The sermon shows that when the Spirit opens our eyes, even hard circumstances can become platforms for Gospel opportunity rather than reasons for despair.

- Paul prays that believers would know “the hope to which He has called you” and “the riches of His glorious inheritance.” How does this eternal perspective change the way you face daily pressures, temptations, or discouragements?
- If Paul were praying Ephesians 1:17-19a over you by name, what specific area of your thinking, attitude, or perspective would you most want the Spirit to transform?

Lesson #3 – Your New Life in Christ is Fueled by Resurrection Power (Ephesians 1:19-23)

Paul reaches for the strongest illustration he can find to describe God's power at work in believers: the power that raised Jesus from the dead, seated Him at the Father's right hand, and placed all things under His feet. He explains that this same “working” is directed toward those who believe, giving us power not merely to survive but to overcome temptation, endure suffering, and courageously influence others. The sermon reminds us that too many Christians aim just to “hang on until heaven,” but God intends for resurrection power to fuel our identity and mission today, turning ordinary obedience into influence that can echo for generations.

How might God use parts of your past that you once hid—failures, addictions, broken relationships—as redeemed testimony to point others to His mercy?

- How does knowing that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is at work in you reshape your view of your weakness, fears, or sense of inadequacy?

- Where are you tempted to live by willpower—trying harder in your own strength—rather than by resurrection power through prayer, dependence, and obedience?
- How does viewing yourself as a Spirit-filled, heaven-called ambassador rather than “just” a parent, student, or employee change the way you approach this coming week?

Section 3 – EMBRACE

Applying God's Word

Go deeper into the Word of God by applying what you've learned to your life today. Reflect on these action steps and discuss how you can live out the truths from “I Am Made New: Empowered to Influence.”

Identify Your Sphere of Influence

Take a moment to list three specific circles where God has placed you—family, church, workplace, school, team, or neighborhood. Beside each circle, write one person's name and one way you can intentionally demonstrate faith in Christ and love toward them this week (a prayer, a conversation, a meal, an encouraging note, an invitation to church). Ask the Lord to use these small steps as part of the eternal ripple effect He desires through your life.

Pray Paul's Prayer Over Yourself and Others

Using Ephesians 1:17-19, turn Paul's words into a daily prayer: “Lord, give me and my church family the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to know You better; open the eyes of our hearts to know the hope, inheritance, and power we have in Christ.”

Lean into Resurrection Power in a Specific Battle

Identify one area where you feel weak or stuck—an ongoing temptation, a discouraging circumstance, a ministry challenge, or a relationship that seems beyond repair. This week, instead of simply trying harder, consciously depend on Christ's resurrection power: memorize a verse related to that struggle, ask at least one believer to pray with you, and take one concrete step of obedience that you could not sustain in your own strength.

Memorize and Reflect

Memorize the sermons memory verse, Isaiah 1:18 ESV:

“Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.”

As you meditate on this verse, thank God that He has not only cleansed your past but also made you new and empowered you to influence others with His grace. Share with your group how this promise strengthens your confidence to live out your identity as a made-new, Spirit-empowered disciple.

Closing Challenge and Prayer

Friends, Paul wrote from a prison cell to remind believers that they were sitting on a treasure of hope, inheritance, and power in Christ—and the same is true for you today. You are not merely trying to get by until heaven; you are made new and empowered to influence a watching world through prayer, Spirit-shaped vision, and resurrection power at work in your everyday obedience. Close in prayer:

- Thank God for making you new in Christ and for the spiritual riches He has already given you.
- Ask Him to open the eyes of your hearts, deepen your hope, and help you see where He is calling you to influence others.

Study Guide #3 – I Am Rescued: God’s Masterpiece in Progress

Small Group Discussion Guide on Ephesians 2:1-10

This message on Ephesians 2:1-10 reminds us that the Word shapes how we see God, ourselves, and our purpose in the world. The Bible teaches that your true identity is not defined by your past, your feelings, or the culture’s labels, but by what God declares over you in Christ. In this passage, God answers the identity question with a stunning reality: in Christ, you are rescued by grace and are God’s masterpiece in progress – claimed, changed, and called to walk in the good works He prepared long ago.

Section 1 – ENCOUNTER

Observing God’s Word

Imagine a person standing in the ruins of a collapsed building – dust in the air, concrete all around, no way out on their own – until a rescuer’s voice breaks through the rubble and lifts them from death’s shadow to life. That is the spiritual picture Paul paints in Ephesians 2:1-10: you were dead, trapped, drifting – but God stepped in with mercy, love, and grace to make you alive and calls you His masterpiece. Let’s slow down and let this rescue story sink deep into our hearts.

Let’s start our study by anchoring ourselves in Scripture. Read Ephesians 2:1-10 as a group, family, or an individual, letting God’s Word sink in.

Core Questions

- What words or phrases does Paul use to describe life before Christ in verses 1-3? What emotions do those words stir in you as you read them?
- List the action words God performs in verses 4-7 (for example: “made us alive,” “raised us up,” “seated us”). What do these words tell you about who is doing the rescuing?
- In verse 10, Paul calls us God’s “workmanship” or “masterpiece.” When you hear that word, what image comes to mind – a painting, a sculpture, a building, a restored treasure? Why?

Section 2 – EXPLORE

Understanding the Passage and Sermon

As we explore Ephesians 2:1-10, we see three marks of a masterpiece in progress: your past condition, your new position, and your new purpose. Use the questions below to connect biblical truth to real life and to see how deeply God has rescued you.

Truth #1 – Your Past Condition: Spiritually Dead, But the Savior Stepped In (Eph. 2:1-3)

Before Christ, Paul doesn’t say we were just “struggling” or “a little off” – he says we were dead in trespasses and sins, drifting with the world’s current, and by nature children of wrath. This is not to shame us but to magnify the mercy of God who reaches into our ruin and rescues us.

- Why is it important to see ourselves as spiritually dead (not just spiritually “sick”) apart from Christ? How does this deepen your appreciation for God’s mercy?

- Verse 2 describes our old walk as “following the course of this world” and the influence of a real spiritual enemy. *Where do you see cultural currents today normalizing rebellion against God and His Word? How have you felt those currents tug at your own heart?*

Spiritual Truth from the sermon: “You will never grasp how rescued you are until you remember how lost you were.”

- *How has remembering your past condition helped you grow in humility and worship?*

Truth #2 – Your New Position: Rescued by Christ and Made Alive to Live Forever (Eph. 2:4–7)

The two words “But God” draw a bright line between who you were and who you are now in Christ. God, being rich in mercy and great in love, made you alive, raised you up, and seated you with Christ—even when you were still dead in sin.

- *According to verse 4, what motivated God to rescue you—your performance, or His mercy and great love? How does this truth steady you on days when you feel like a failure?*
- Verses 5–6 say God “made us alive,” “raised us up,” and “seated us...in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” *Which of these realities is hardest for you to believe personally, and why?*
- Verse 7 says God rescued you “so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” *How does it feel to know that your life will forever be a display of His grace?*

Truth #3 – Your New Purpose: God’s Masterpiece Under Construction (Eph. 2:8–10)

Paul anchors our salvation in grace alone: “For by grace you have been saved through faith...not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Then he lifts our eyes to see that we are God’s workmanship—His masterpiece—created in Christ Jesus for good works He prepared in advance for us to walk in.

- *How do verses 8–9 guard you against two dangers: pride (“I earned this”) and despair (“I’ll never be good enough”)? Which danger do you battle more often?*
- Verse 10 says you are God’s “workmanship/masterpiece.” *What unfinished areas of your life make it hard for you to believe that God sees you this way? How does the “unfinished Leonardo painting” illustration encourage you to trust the Artist’s process?*

Spiritual Truth from the sermon: “Your salvation is anchored in who God is, not in what you have done.”

- *How can you preach this truth to your heart when guilt, shame, or comparison tries to steal your joy?*

Section 3 – EMBRACE

Applying God’s Word

Go deeper into the Word of God by applying what you’ve learned to your life today. Reflect on these action steps and how you can live as God’s masterpiece in progress.

Remember Where You Were

Take a moment this week to write a brief “Before Christ” snapshot of your life – attitudes, habits, fears, or sins that marked you when you were spiritually dead and drifting. Then, next to that list, write the words “But God...” and note at least three ways He has made you alive, changed your direction, or shown you mercy.

Embrace Your New Position

Pray through Ephesians 2:4-7, thanking God specifically that you are made alive, raised up, and seated with Christ, even if you don’t fully feel it yet. Each day this week, when you face discouragement or temptation, whisper this simple confession: “In Christ, I am rescued and made alive – my life is in His hands.”

Live as God’s Masterpiece Under Construction

Ask the Lord to show you one specific good work He has prepared for you this week – a person to encourage, a need to meet, a conversation to have, or a step of obedience to take. Write it down, pray over it, and then follow through.

Memorize and Reflect

Memorize the memory verse for this week: Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) – “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”

Throughout the week, repeat this verse when you feel overwhelmed or aimless. Ask: “Lord, where are You inviting me to walk in the good things You’ve already prepared for me today?”

Closing Challenge and Prayer

Remember, you are of great value in God’s eyes – you are His masterpiece in progress, rescued by grace, raised with Christ, and sent into the world to display His immeasurable riches of grace. Don’t let your past define you, your feelings derail you, or your unfinished areas discourage you; instead, fix your eyes on the Master Artist who will finish what He started in you.

Prayer: Father, thank You that when we were dead in our sins, You did not leave us in the rubble, but reached down in mercy and made us alive with Christ. Teach us to remember where You found us, to rest in who we are now in Jesus, and to walk boldly in the good works You prepared for us long ago. Help us to see ourselves as Your workmanship – rescued, redeemed, and under construction for Your glory. Use our lives to point others to the Savior who still rescues today. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Study Guide #4 – I Am Set-Apart: Reconciled and Rebuilt by Christ

Small Group Discussion Guide on Ephesians 2:11-22

This message on Ephesians 2:11-22 shows Paul describing a reconciled family and a rebuilt household where Jews and Gentiles, near and far, enemies and strangers are made one in Christ. Being set-apart means we live as salt and light together, reflecting Christ's peace in a fractured world and inviting others into the family God is building. As you work through this guide, ask the Lord to deepen your love for His people, heal old divisions, and help your group live as a visible picture of the reconciled, rebuilt community described in Ephesians 2.

Section 1 – ENCOUNTER

Observing God's Word

Imagine two families camped on opposite sides of a river, stories of insult and injury passed down like heirlooms, children taught not only their last name but whom they must despise. Decades of pride and revenge harden into identity until one day, descendants from both sides gather – not with weapons but with pens – to sign a peace treaty, declaring that the feud will not define them any longer. That is a small glimpse of what Paul describes in these verses: a world locked in a spiritual feud – far from God, divided from one another – yet transformed when Jesus tears down the wall of hostility and brings enemies near by His blood.

Let's start our study by reading Ephesians 2:11-22 (HCSB or ESV) as a group, family, or an individual, letting God's Word sink in.

Core Questions

- What do you notice about the contrast between who believers were (far off, without hope, without God) and who they are now in Christ (brought near, at peace, fellow citizens, members of God's household)?
- What key words, images, or phrases stand out to you in this passage?
- What main lessons do you learn about the character of God from Ephesians 2:11-22?

Section 2 – EXPLORE

Understanding the Passage and Sermon

As we dig into Ephesians 2:11-22, we discover three encouraging reminders of our new identity in Christ: we remember our past separation, we rejoice in Christ's present peace, and we recognize our new role as a set-apart people being built together for God's glory. Paul writes to a divided culture of Jews and Gentiles and announces that Jesus has torn down the wall of hostility, fulfilled the law, and created one new humanity at the cross. This final message in the Identity series reminds us that being set-apart is not about retreating from people; it is about living reconciled lives that display Christ's peace and invite others to come to the Lord.

Use these reminders to guide discussion and connect the sermon's insights to your life, your relationships, and your church.

Reminder #1 – Remember Who You Were and What Christ Has Done (Ephesians 2:11–13)

Paul begins by calling believers to “remember” their former condition: Gentiles in the flesh, without the Messiah, excluded from the family of Israel, foreigners to God’s covenants, without hope and without God in the world. This painful list is not meant to shame but to deepen gratitude and crush any pride, reminding us that we all started as spiritual outsiders, unable to bridge the gap to God on our own. Then comes the turning point: “But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah,” emphasizing that Jesus’ sacrifice – not our effort – closed the distance and gave us a new identity as God’s people.

- Why is it important for believers to “remember” who they were apart from Christ? How does this memory protect us from pride, legalism, or impatience with those who are still far from God?
- Paul describes being without Christ, without citizenship, without promises, without hope, and without God. Which of these phrases most resonates with your story before you came to Christ – or with people you know who are still searching?
- In what ways could remembering your former separation make you more thankful, more worshipful, and more compassionate toward those who have not yet experienced reconciliation?

Reminder #2 – Let Christ’s Peace Define Your Relationships (Ephesians 2:14–18)

Paul declares, “For He is our peace,” describing how Jesus has made both groups one and torn down the dividing wall of hostility, creating in Himself one new man from the two. The sermon reminds us that in Christ, peace is not just a feeling; it is a Person and a new reality – we now have access by one Spirit to the Father and are called to let His peace reshape how we view and treat those who are different from us.

- How does the image of the temple’s dividing wall – and the deadly warning inscriptions discovered by archaeologists – help you feel the seriousness of the separation Christ has overcome?
- What kinds of “walls” still divide people today (racial, political, generational, cultural, personal)? Which of these do you feel most keenly in your own context?
- In practical terms, what might it look like for you to live as someone whose identity is shaped by Christ’s peace?

Reminder #3 – Live as a Rebuilt People for God’s Glory (Ephesians 2:19–22)

Paul concludes by showing that believers are no longer strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. In Him, the whole building is being fitted together and growing into a holy temple in the Lord – a spiritual house where God chooses to dwell by His Spirit through His people. The sermon emphasizes that being set-apart means we are not scattered bricks but living stones carefully placed together to display God’s glory.

- What encouragement do you find in being called a “fellow citizen” and a “member of God’s household”? How does this confront feelings of isolation or insignificance?
- Christ is the cornerstone who aligns and holds together the whole building. How does this truth speak into church conflicts or personal preferences that threaten unity?

- What do you want those outside the faith to see when they look at how you worship, serve, forgive, and love one another?

Section 3 – EMBRACE

Applying God's Word

Go deeper into the Word of God by applying what you've learned to your life today. Reflect on these action steps and how you can live as God's masterpiece in progress.

Remember and Rejoice in Your New Identity

Take time this week to write out two columns: "Who I Was" (far off, without hope, without God) and "Who I Am Now in Christ" (brought near, forgiven, part of God's family). Use Ephesians 2:11-13 to guide your words, and then spend a few minutes in prayer thanking Jesus specifically for each change He has made. Consider sharing part of this testimony with your group or family so that gratitude for reconciliation becomes a shared song of praise.

Tear Down a Wall, Build a Bridge

Ask the Lord to show you one relational "wall" that needs attention—a strained friendship, a family rift, a division within the church, or a group you tend to avoid. Prayerfully choose one step toward reconciliation: initiate a conversation, send a note of humility and grace, ask forgiveness, or seek to understand someone different from you. Remember that Christ has already torn down the ultimate wall at the cross; your step of obedience is simply walking in the peace He has purchased.

Invest Intentionally in God's Community

Because you are part of God's household and temple, your presence and participation matter. This week, identify one specific way to strengthen the community of believers around you—joining a small group, serving in a ministry, mentoring a younger believer, or inviting someone new into your circle. Talk as a group about how each person can use their gifts, story, and time to help your church look more like the reconciled, rebuilt dwelling place Paul describes.

Memorize and Reflect

Memorize a key verse from this passage, such as Ephesians 2:13 (HCSB): "But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah." Throughout the week, repeat this verse when you struggle with old divisions resurface, or when you feel tempted to withdraw from community.

Closing Challenge and Prayer

Friends, as we conclude the Identity series, remember the story God has been writing: in Christ you are chosen, made new, rescued, and now set-apart—reconciled and rebuilt to shine as salt and light in a divided world. You no longer have to live by the old feud of sin, shame, and hostility; by His blood Jesus has brought you near, given you peace, and placed you in a new family where He Himself is the cornerstone.

As a group, close by praying for one another:

- Thank God for bringing you from "far off" to "brought near" and for making you part of His household.

- Ask Him to reveal any walls of hostility—personal, relational, or cultural—that He wants to tear down through the cross.
- Pray that your church would live as a visible, set-apart community where reconciliation is real, peace is practiced, and Christ is clearly seen, so that others might be drawn to the Savior who rebuilds broken lives.

