

# BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, April 16, 2025 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

T H E B O O K O F

EPHESIANS

*How to live the Christian life*

**EPHESIANS: HOW TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE – PART 14**  
*“Reconciled Relationships” - Ephesians 2:14-18*

*“<sup>1</sup>And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, <sup>3</sup>among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.<sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup>and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus..<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup>not of works, lest anyone should boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them <sup>11</sup>Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup> that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” – Ephesians 2:1-13 (NKJV)*

*“<sup>14</sup> For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, <sup>15</sup>having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup>and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body*



Knowing is half the battle. Simple awareness may help to prevent church conflicts, fights, quarrels, disunity, division in the early stages. It is best to stop the dispute/dissension/disagreement/division quickly.

Listen to Proverbs 17:14            /I think this is such good advice  *“The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.”* Again, I think that is such good and needed advice today. **What do you think that God inspired proverb is saying?**           of strife, division, quarrel, fighting, you are unleashing a devastating flood that will destroy

Below, I have listed seven critical causes of conflicts, fights, division, disunity between others, brother and sisters in Christ, and especially in the church. Becoming aware may help us adjust expectations and make strides to prevent or resolve disunity, conflict, and division, fights and quarrels      today we need this, and that we are more divided       church disputes and conflicts, fighting and disunity even in the body are Christ are more than common today then you have to be living

time in the church and among Christians?

## **7 Causes of Division and Fights Among Us?**

- (1) **Pride** - People often behave with self-centeredness, ego, and pride. When you feel that life is about you, you take things personally. Self-centeredness causes one to experience hurt feelings easily. James observed in James 4:1, *“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?”* Solomon wrote in Proverbs 13:10, *“By insolence comes nothing but strife, but with those who take advice is wisdom.”* Get the focus off of yourself and onto Jesus Christ! Value others above yourself. Make sure people in your church know that you care about their needs. When you feel that you have allowed pride to influence your relationship                      says, *“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves”* (Philippians 2:3). People prevent and resolve church conflicts when they implement this teaching.
- (2) **Spiritual and Emotional Immaturity** - Maturity helps a person understand that differences in perspective broaden understanding. Mature people learn to disagree without being distressed. Mature people are self-aware and seek to improve their weaknesses. Immature individuals have not learned to      personality or style. Likewise, maturation helps a person understand the futility of fighting over things that cannot be controlled. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:20,

*“Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking, be mature.”* Believers must learn to think, behave, and communicate with maturity.

- (3) **Change and Inflexibility** - In reality, change is the norm. But when we go through change, or when things are changing around us it can cause upheaval in our spirit and that can reflect in how we relate to other, make us short (short-tempered), more on edge, and more easily agitated. We need to be careful! When policies or priorities change in the church, misunderstandings and stresses are likely to occur. When pastors and church leaders make strategic decisions, an effective process of communicating these new directives and norms is crucial. Even so, some church members may struggle to accommodate the changes. Some people have a greater propensity to resist change than others. In times of change, one may benefit from evaluating emotional responses to change. Often change leads to feelings of powerlessness or insecurity because one may trust the status quo at church instead of trusting God for security and peace. *“The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe”* (Proverbs 29:25). Only God provides security in a changing world! Wise believers look for the benefits of change. Change can lead to a more biblical church and to a church that is following the Great Commission. James wrote in James 3:17-18, *“The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”* Wisdom is

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 However, wisdom looks for the positive.

- (4) **Abuses of Power** - Power is the influence a person has on his or her environment, relationships, or self. Shifts in power may create gains or losses. Power is the ability and means to get things done. Conflict expert Dudley Weeks wrote, □ □ □ □ □ use power and whether they allow it to be corrupt. We can use power negatively or positively. The severely damaging seesaw power approach creates the illusion that you □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ Thus, people must have a healthy view of power to prevent conflict. Jesus, the Son of God, used his power to serve others and to look out for those who were disadvantaged or in need. *“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45 □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

that anyone would use power to abuse or hurt someone! Likewise, power and influence in the church should ultimately be directed to Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the church.

- (5) **Church Politics** - Factions in the church may intentionally or unintentionally engage in political maneuvering and posturing that leads to conflict. For instance, senior church members may favor proven methods, while younger members desire to change. Factions may attempt to increase their power and recruit others to their side. A person may be challenged to resolve the situation without offending the other individuals and groups involved in the conflict. For believers in Christ, this takes extreme caution and integrity. The Bible addresses politics among factions. The Apostle Paul dealt with factions in the Corinthian church. In 1 Corinthians 3:3-4, *“For you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving*

*only in a human way? For when one says, 'I follow Paul,' and another, 'I follow Apollos,' are you not being merely human?"* One group in the Corinthian church claimed to be

following only Christ (1 Corinthians 1:12). One may find it interesting that Paul did not

Paul identified these political factions in Corinth as distractions from the mission of the church and selfish in motivation.

- (6) **Unclear Authority** - Conflicts arise among church staff and members when authority is unclear. When lines of authority are unclear, church volunteers and leaders sometimes exercise authority outside of the realm of their responsibility. Such conflicts may become worse in times of crisis. A biblical example of the lack of clarity and authority was during the transition between Kings Saul and David in Israel (1 Samuel 16-31). Severe and complicated relational difficulties erupted among those in authority and the citizens of

opportunities to prove his integrity amid the confusion (1 Samuel 31).

- (7) **Personality Differences** - The real or perceived differences among your congregation play underlying roles in communication and conflict. Remembering why others talk and act as they do may prevent misunderstandings and false assumptions. The time-honored
- lp church staff and committee members understand their differences. The four basic personalities or communication profiles are Dominant, Influencer, Steady, and Conscientious. When people discover and discuss their personality styles, healthy communication may result. More importantly, biblical fellowship among people is the best way for people to understand one another and grow together (Acts 2:46).

Now here is what Paul said concerning strife and division, fighting, and dissension both in warning and instructing us. I take his admonition in Romans 16:17-20 very seriously and

*<sup>17</sup> I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. <sup>18</sup> For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. <sup>19</sup> Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. <sup>20</sup> The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."-Romans 16:17-20*

### **SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER CONCERNING ROMANS 16:17-20:**

- *What are we to do about those who cause division and conflict? Why?*
- *What are we warned about concerning those who cause division and disunity (conflict)?*

- *What do you think, based on what Paul says in these verses, is the greatest danger of those who cause division and disunity?*
- *What is our hope in the midst of those who cause division and disunity (conflict)?*
- *Why is unity in the church so important? How can we protect unity in the church?*
- *What do you think causes disunity and conflict in church in our lives with others?*

I question. During the Los Angeles riots of 1992, Rodney King appealed for peace, saying, "I am a victim." That statement was often paraphrased as, "I am a victim."

Either way the answer seems to be no. Nothing has changed since Mr. King uttered those words 33 years ago now. Recent events in America have reminded us that we are a nation of violence. The events of 9/11 are not reassuring: the world is a dangerous place.

But the problem is not confined to America. Every day brings news of a new conflict somewhere on this blood-soaked planet. Today it might be North Korea or Iran. Tomorrow it might be a border conflict between India and China. Who would be surprised to hear of another conflict between the United States and China?

That makes the question of James 4:1 so very relevant, "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?"

### **READ: James 4:1-5 (ESV)**

*"What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? <sup>2</sup> You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. <sup>4</sup> You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?"*

So the question, "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?" How might you answer it?

Two stories in the Bible evoke strong feelings in me every time I read them. One is the story of the parable of the speck and the log.

these stories often cause tears to well up in my eyes is that they are stories of reconciled relationships.

When Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, treats them kindly, and forgives them for the terrible thing that they had done in selling him into slavery, it is a moving testimony to the power of reconciled relationships. Later, when their father has died, the brothers fear that Joseph would inflict revenge that he had been withholding. But Joseph wept and treated

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In the parable of the prodigal son, the young man impudently rejected the love of his father and chose instead the company of his fast-□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □  
longed for the return of his wayward son. When he finally saw him coming in the distance, the father felt compassion for him, ran to him, embraced him, kissed him, and joyously welcomed him back into the family. **That powerful story shows the tremendous joy both of reconciled human relationships and also of sinners being reconciled to the heavenly Father.**

God created us to have close, personal relationships with Him and with one another. Jesus said that the greatest commandment in the Law is to love God with our entire being. The second greatest is that we should love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:37-39). Those are both relational commandments. But when sin entered the human race, it alienated Adam and Eve from God and from one another. They tried to hide from the presence of God and then Adam blamed God and Eve for his own sin (Gen. 3:8, 12). **Sin always causes alienation towards God and between people.**

And so the great problem of the human race is, how can we be reconciled to a holy God from whom we are estranged because of our sin and rebellion? And, how can we be reconciled to one another?

- We need peace between nations in this war-torn world
- We need peace in our communities
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often are marked by division and strife
- We need peace between one another, within in this church, with each other
- And, we need peace in our immediate and extended families. But, how?

Paul addresses this vital subject in our text. The logical way to deal with the topic would be to start with reconciliation with God and then go on to reconciliation on the human level. **Being at peace with God is the foundation for peace with others.**

- ***But notice Paul begins here with peace between formerly alienated people (2:14-15)***
- ***And then goes to the underlying cause of this reconciliation, namely, reconciliation between those groups and God (2:16-18).***

*“<sup>14</sup> For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,<sup>15</sup> having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,<sup>16</sup> and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.<sup>17</sup> And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.<sup>18</sup> For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” – Ephesians 2:14-18 (NKJV)*

Perhaps his heart was burdened with the very real danger of the Jewish and Gentile wings of the church splitting into factions. So he begins with the problem at hand and then goes deeper to the foundational reconciliation with God that results in reconciliation between formerly hostile groups. He is saying,

*Through the cross, Christ reconciled us all to one another and to God.*

He uses the word “*peace*” four times (2:14, 15, 17 [twice]).

#### **4 Things Paul Talks About in Ephesians 2:14-18:**

- (1) He talks about Christ making the two groups into one**
- (2) He talks about breaking down the wall between them**
- (3) He talks about creating the two into one new man**
- (4) He mentions twice that Christ removed the enmity and that He reconciled the two groups into one body, so that they both have common access to the Father through the one Spirit**

Reconciliation is his theme here     . And we seen here in our passage to strong statement concerning this reconciliation.

#### **2 Strong Statements of Reconciliation in Ephesians 2:14-18:**

- (1) Through the cross, Christ reconciled us all to one another (Ephesians 2:14-15)**
- (2) Through the cross, Christ reconciled us all to God (Ephesians 2:16-18)**

#### **THROUGH THE CROSS, CHRIST RECONCILED US ALL TO ONE ANOTHER (Ephesians 2:14-15)**

Paul has just rehearsed the sad plight of the Gentiles before Christ (2:11-12). They were

- **Separate from Christ**
- **Excluded from the commonwealth of Israel**
- **Strangers to the covenants of the promise**
- **Having no hope and without God in the world**

anything meritorious in them, they had become proud and had developed an intense hatred for the Gentiles. They viewed them as uncircumcised dogs. They shook the dust off their feet after traveling in Gentile territory before coming back to the Holy Land, so as not to defile the land. They would never eat with a Gentile. Even Gentile converts to Judaism had to keep their distance in the temple.

We cannot begin to understand the radical nature of what Paul proclaims here unless we keep in mind this centuries-long hostility that had existed between the Jews and the Gentiles. We might compare it to the divide between whites and blacks in the South in our country, or to the conflict between the Shiite and Sunni Muslims in the Middle East. Paul is making the radical assertion that Christ has erased these centuries of racial hatred. So it is vital for the local church to display the peace of Christ in order to glorify Him before a world that only knows strife and conflict.

Listen again to verses 14-15, *“<sup>14</sup> For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,<sup>15</sup> having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace.”* Note three things from these verses:

### **3 Things of Note in Ephesians 2:14-15:**

**1. Apart from the cross, there is deep alienation between those from different backgrounds** - The source of the hostility between the Jews and Gentiles was sinful pride. Pride is at the heart of all racism and all sin.

➤ Satan appealed to the pride of Adam and Eve by tempting them to think that they knew better than God what was good for them.

➤ sin was pride.

Paul pictured the alienation between the Jews and Gentiles in his day as *“the barrier of the dividing wall.”*

➤ He was probably referring to a four-foot wall in the temple precincts that divided the Court of the Gentiles from where the rest of the Jews could worship.

➤ On this wall were inscriptions that have been discovered by archaeologists, which warn that if a Gentile goes beyond the barrier, he will have himself to blame for his death which follows.

➤ If Paul was writing to the Ephesians from his imprisonment in Rome, they probably would have known about this barrier, even if they had never visited Jerusalem,

➤ Paul was in the temple when a mob falsely accused him of bringing Trophimus, an Ephesian Gentile, beyond the barrier (Acts 21:27-36).





warring parties.

**What this “peace” is:**

1. It is an absence of war and strife
2. It is new relationship between to previously opposing forces

*\*Note: It speaks of a relationship.*

**Question: If we are at peace with God once we are saved (justified) how would you describe our relationship before we are saved? At war/enemies**

The fact that Christ is our peace does not mean that peace happens automatically, even between sincere, godly believers. The Corinthian church was rife with conflicts and divisions.

- Two faithful women in the Philippian church had some sort of conflict, which Paul was concerned about (Phil. 4:2-3).
- Even Paul and Barnabas had a sharp dispute that led them to part ways in their missionary endeavors (Acts 15:36-40).
- Paul seemed to realize that sometimes peace is not fully attainable when he wrote (Rom. 12:18), *“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live at peace with all men.”*
- He says (Rom. 14:19), *“So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”*
- The Bible says that we must *“seek peace and pursue it”* (1 Pet. 3:11).

So even though we are prone toward conflict, even with other believers, the way toward peace is to have Christ reigning as Lord in each heart. To the extent that He is truly Lord of your life and my life, we will experience peace between us, because He does not fight with Himself. One of the marks of true conversion is when those who formerly were deeply hostile towards one another begin to pursue peace with one another. At the source of this new peace is that Christ has come to dwell in each heart, subduing our selfishness and pride. Paul explains how Christ established this new peace between the Jews and Gentiles:

3. Christ established peace through the cross by **abolishing the old covenant law** and by creating one new man, the **church**

**2 Parts:**

- (1) Christ established peace through the cross by **abolishing the old covenant law** - I prefer the marginal reading of the NASB (Eph. 2:14-15), *“For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, the enmity, by abolishing in His flesh the Law of commandments contained in*

ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace.”

Jesus Christ broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, which created enmity between the Jews and the Gentiles. He further explains that the source

“abolished” means or “In His flesh” refers to

put to death the enmity. In my opinion, the relationship between the Law and the believer is one of the most difficult subjects in the Bible, and I can only be brief! As

is the end of the law f

Law for Israel to demonstrate the impossibility of sinners earning standing before God through law-keeping (Gal. 3:19-

law created a barrier between sinners and God. But the law also created a barrier

covenant people. Many stipulations in the law excluded Gentiles from the Jewish forms of worship. The priests alone could perform the sacrifices and ceremonies. Only Jews who had properly gone through the cleansing rituals could approach the altar with their sacrifices. So the law created a barrier between the Jews and the Gentiles.

Through the cross, Christ fulfilled and thereby nullified or abolished the old covenant law (this harmonizes Eph. 2:15 with Matt. 5:17-19). He instituted the new covenant in His blood, which puts His holy law into the hearts of believers (Heb. 8:6-13). So,

as Paul writes, because C

Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would

established the basis for peace between sinners and the holy God and peace between

slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ

**(2) Christ established peace through the cross by creating the one new man, the church -**

The Greek word translated “make” (NASB, 2:15) is literally, What

Adam and Eve lost through sin in the original creation, Christ is recovering through the new man, the church, which is His new creation. F. F. Bruce points out (*The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* [Eerdmans], pp. 295-

and Gentiles, Paul makes a threefold classification into Jews, Greeks (Gentiles), and

church is a new humanity or new race. The practical implication of this is that there is no basis for dividing the church along racial lines, unless there is a language barrier that keeps us from worshipping together. By being multi-racial and multi-cultural, the church should demonstrate to the world this one new man, which Christ created through the cross.

Himself is our peace. Also,

## **THROUGH THE CROSS, CHRIST RECONCILED US ALL TO GOD (Ephesians 2:16-18)**

*<sup>16</sup> and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. <sup>17</sup> And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” -Ephesians 2:16-18*

Paul makes three points here, which I can only touch on:

### **3 Points To Make on Our Reconciliation:**

- (1) **Through the cross, Christ reconciled us in one body to God, having put to death the enmity of the law (Ephesians 2:16)** - This overlaps what he said in verse 15, but the focus shifts from our reconciliation to one another to our reconciliation with God. Through the cross, Christ brought Jews and Gentiles into one body, the one new man. Now He reconciles this one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. The law condemned Jew and Gentile alike, because it clearly proves that we all
- Son, in whom I am well- through His death that paid our penalty, God offers complete reconciliation and peace to
- for being reconciled to God is not anything that you do, but only by trusting in what Jesus did for you on the cross.
- (2) **Through the cross, Christ preached peace both to pagans and to the religious (Ephesians 2:17)** - In verse 17, Paul paraphrases **Isaiah 57:19, “And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near.”**
- of the promise (Eph. 2:12). But Christ also preached peace to those who were near, the also to His preaching the gospel through the apostles and others in the early church, who, beginning with Peter, preached to the Gentiles (Acts 10; 11:20). But the point of verse 17 is, it is not only the pagan Gentiles who need to hear the good news of peace with God through the blood of Christ. Religious people (the Jews), those who know about the covenants of the good news. Religious observance, even of the strictest kind, cannot save anyone. Paul chronicles his own religious credentials (Phil. 3:5- a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church;

his own derived from the Law, but rather through the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith (3:9). This means that if you are counting on getting into heaven because of your religion or your good deeds, you will not succeed. Peace with God comes only through the cross of Jesus Christ. He paid the debt in full for all that believe in Him!

**(3) Through the cross, we all have access in one Spirit to the Father (Ephesians 2:18) -** Verse 18 is deliberately trinitarian, because the Trinity demonstrates perfectly the harmony and unity that we are to strive for in the church. While the doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery that we cannot completely explain or understand, the Bible is clear that the one God exists in three eternal persons, each of whom is fully God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They each are distinct persons and yet they are not three gods, but one God. The one God has enjoyed perfect fellowship and love between the three persons from eternity.

the gospel is that we now not a religion of rituals. It is a personal relationship with the Father through Jesus Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

the White House chief of staff, he can gain you access to the President. Jesus Christ gains us access to the God of the universe, who is a Father to us because of the cross! What an indescribable privilege, to be able to come into the presence of the Father, through the presence is the same: it is through the cross of Christ.

**CONCLUSION**

There are two obvious applications of these verses.

**2 Important Summeary Questions of Application from Ephesians 2:14-18:**

**(1) Do you have a personal relationship with the Father because you have trusted in the blood of His Son Jesus to cover all of your sins?** - The only way to know peace and where Jesus reconciled sinners with God, gains access into heaven. Make sure your trust is in Christ alone!

**(2) Are you pursuing peace with your fellow believers?** - This includes members of your family. It includes people in this church. Perhaps they are a part of another church. If they have been reconciled to God through faith in Christ and you have too, then you must do all that you can to be reconciled to them. The testimony of the cross before a strife-torn world depends on it.