

*You will seek me and find me  
when you seek me with all your heart*

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart  
and lean not on your own  
understanding;  
in all your ways submit to him,  
and he will make your paths straight.*

*The whole your treasure is  
from your heart will be able*

# made for this



*Could we see a pure heart? God  
will make a beautiful spirit within us*

*After beauty should not come from outward  
adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the  
wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it  
should be that of your inner self, the unfading  
beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of  
great worth in God's sight.*

*my life as God intended*

This book belongs to:

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Phone:

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# CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	01
<b>Week 1:</b> .....	03
<b>Week 2:</b> .....	21
<b>Week 3:</b> .....	31
<b>Week 4:</b> .....	43
<b>Week 5:</b> .....	53



## MADE FOR THIS

*Here's the deal. You were not placed on this planet for **nothing**. And you also weren't placed here for **just anything**. God created you with a specific plan in mind: to worship and reflect him in all you do. **That** is your purpose. And while it might seem daunting to live a Godly life in today's culture, rest assured—you are right where he wants you. You were made for this.*

We are so glad you are engaging in this teaching series at West Side. This book is designed to help you dig deeper through conversation with a small group, daily time with Jesus during the week, and more. **Developing regular habits that help us connect with God, with community, and with God's mission is important.** We hope this season of focus helps you develop more regular habits of connection.

Writing down a few notes along the way can help things “stick” and allows you to remember things from Sunday and during the week, which makes it easier to discuss in group time. Even if you're not a regular note-taker, try to **write down a few things each time you pick up this book!**

Some of the key spiritual habits we'll focus on during this series:

- Worshiping every week with the church community
- Gathering with a group to share honestly and support one another
- Reading scripture regularly and reading straight through two books of the Bible
- Writing down notes of how God encourages and challenges you
- Stretching yourself to practice prayer in consistent and new ways

# The Messiah Poem

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,

for through him God created everything  
in the heavenly realms and on earth.

He made the things we can see  
and the things we can't see—

such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world.

Everything was created through him and for him.

He existed before anything else,  
and he holds all creation together.

Christ is also the head of the church,  
which is his body.

He is the beginning,  
supreme over all who rise from the dead.

So he is first in everything.

For God in all his fullness  
was pleased to live in Christ,  
and through him God reconciled  
everything to himself.

He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth  
by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

**Colossians 1:15-20**

# WEEK 1 | WORSHIP NOTES

## Created to Connect | Sunday, January 28

*What stood out to you from Sunday’s service? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through the songs, the message, and being with others as part of the church?*

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## Questions for Discussion

Want to receive a weekly guide for digging into Sunday's message—either on your own or with others? Our staff puts together a simple sermon discussion guide with questions and prompts to reflect and practically apply the teaching. Looking to find one of the scripture references or main points from a message? Sign up to receive the guide using the form at [wschurch.org/discussionsubscribe](https://wschurch.org/discussionsubscribe).

## Group Leaders

Check your email for detailed notes and agenda. If you have questions, email [MichaelS@wschurch.org](mailto:MichaelS@wschurch.org).



## WEEK 1

## SMALL GROUP SESSION NOTES

*What stood out to you from your group discussion? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through listening and sharing with one another? What do you want to explore more?*

[illegible]

# Small Group Values

## **Relationships:**

While prayer and discussion are important elements of any group, the driving force behind the group is the building of relationships in community.

## **Authenticity:**

The atmosphere of a group should encourage openness and transparency among members.

## **Confidentiality:**

For authenticity to occur, members must be able to trust that issues discussed with the group will be treated with care and sensitivity.

## **Respect:**

Group members should avoid saying anything that embarrasses another member of the group.

## **Prioritize:**

Group members will make group meetings and daily time with God a priority. The meetings are essential, and the daily time with God is important to be able to participate in conversation.

# SCHEDULE

*The group will meet on the dates and times below:*

**Week 1 - Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 2 - Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 3 - Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 4 - Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 5 - Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

I commit to prioritize being present and engaging with each session. If I cannot attend, I will contact the group leader. I commit to the group values.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Daily Time With God

## Tips for Your Daily Time

- Choose a regular time and place where you can be free from distraction.
- If you need a Bible in a version you can read and understand, we have free copies of the New Living Translation at the Next Steps Area.
- There are free online Bibles and apps, including free audio versions and access to many different translations.
  - YouVersion Bible app – **Bible.com**
  - **BibleGateway.com**

## START HERE!



**SCAN ME**

We have links and QR codes throughout this book for several video resources. To view them, make sure you have signed up for a FREE RightNow Media account through West Side at **[wschurch.org/RNM](https://wschurch.org/RNM)**.

*Make sure you have an account for RightNow Media and can log in.*

## Prayer and Gratitude

We have included space each week to record some of the things you're praying for and to record some of the specific things for which you are grateful to God. Writing these down helps you remember and notice God's work in your everyday life.

# READING PLAN

We hope that you will start or continue a habit of spending daily time with God during these five weeks. We have provided a reading plan and space for you to read through two books of the Bible (Colossians and Ephesians) over the next five weeks, to write down observations, and to remember that God is with you along the way.



If you'd like to sign up to receive text message devotions that complement this reading plan, text **DEVO** to **217217**.

# S.O.A.P.

**SOAP** is a simple acronym that can help you structure a regular time to meet with God, engaging with scripture and prayer. While reading and taking notes is a way to learn and gain understanding, remember that the most important thing is to be with God and invite him to work in your heart, mind, body and soul.

## **SCRIPTURE:**

Read through the scripture passage. Write down a verse or phrase that stands out to you.

## **OBSERVATION:**

Write down observations about the scripture you just read. What do you think God is saying through the scripture (reading it in its context)? What do you learn about God's character?

## **APPLICATION:**

Personalize what you just read. How might God want this to apply to your life right now?

## **PRAYER:**

Write down a response to God based on what you read and observed. Ask him to help you apply this truth in your life.



Use the space provided each day to take a few notes as you go through each section. The habit of writing down notes is a great way to slow down and keep track of what you're learning and observing. It will also help you look back and reflect in group discussions.

# READING COLOSSIANS

Whether you're new to reading the Bible or more familiar with it, it's important to remember that the words of scripture, inspired by God's Holy Spirit, were written by human people in a specific historical and cultural moment.

The first book of the Bible we will read together is the New Testament letter of Colossians.

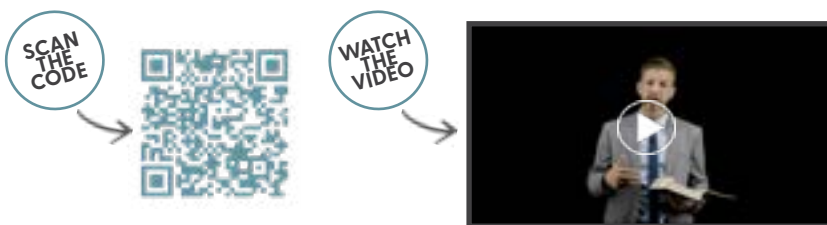
## Watch Before You Read

See page 9 to sign up for a **FREE** Right Now Media account.

Before you dig into this week's reading, we recommend you watch this overview video from *The Bible Project* on RightNow Media: ***How to Read Colossians - Tim Mackie***.



If there are specific verses or sections where you want to dig deeper or have questions, there are several videos that go into more detail in a series, ***Colossians by Michael Defazio*** (professor at Ozark Christian College), on RightNow Media.





# Reading Checklist

## Week 1

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- ☐ Colossians 1:1-14
- ☐ Colossians 1:15-23
- ☐ Colossians 1:24-2:5
- ☐ Colossians 2:6-12
- ☐ Colossians 2:13-23

## Week 2

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- ☐ Colossians 3:1-8
- ☐ Colossians 3:9-17
- ☐ Colossians 3:18-25
- ☐ Colossians 4:1-6
- ☐ Colossians 4:7-18



# WEEK 1 | DAILY TIME WITH GOD

What I am praying for this week:

## DAY 1

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*Colossians 1:1-14*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 2

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### *Colossians 1:15-23*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 3

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### *Colossians 1:24-2:5*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 4

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### *Colossians 2:6-12*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

DAY 5

Colossians 2:13-23

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

GRATITUDE LIST FOR THIS WEEK:

*Gratitude opens us up to God’s good gifts in our everyday lives. What are the good things from this week for which you want to thank God?*

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## Week 1 Bonus Experience

### Meet with a Smaller Group (Triad)

Jesus modeled having spiritual friendships. While his 12 disciples were people he walked with intentionally for several years, he had three with whom he was especially vulnerable and transparent. We also see his friendship with a set of siblings, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, who refreshed and encouraged him. Jesus also promised to be with us until the very end—and when we meet with one another in spiritual community, it helps us stay open to his work in us.

While it may be a stretch, **find 2 or 3 people (preferably from your small group) that you can connect with, ideally in person.** Plan to share a meal, take an early morning walk, or meet digitally and take turns sharing with each other. Here are some questions you can use when you meet. (Choose from them; don't try to rush through every one.) Vulnerability requires trust and time, so if you don't know one another well, don't rush into the deep end right away.

- What has life been like for you lately?
- What has been the best part of this recent season (day/week)? What's the hardest part?
- Finish this statement: I need someone to know that I...
- What's something that you've been thinking about often? Why do you think that's been on your mind?
- What has God been showing you lately?
- What things are helping you move toward God?
- How can I pray for you?

## Bonus Experience Reflection

Who could you meet with sometime in the next month?

When will you try to meet?

How do you react to this challenge? Why?

## A Breath Prayer from John 3:30

**Breathe in:** More of you, Jesus

**Breathe out:** Less of me

**Breath prayers** are a way of connecting your body's rhythm of breathing to prayer. It can help you slow down and turn your whole attention (mind and body) to being with God. You can use a simple phrase (including one from scripture) and let the pattern of inhalation and exhalation connect you to God's Spirit (who is as close as our breath).



# WEEK 2 | WORSHIP NOTES

## My Highest Purpose | Sunday, February 4

*What stood out to you from Sunday’s service? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through the songs, the message, and being with others as part of the church?*

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## WEEK 2

## SMALL GROUP SESSION NOTES

*What stood out to you from your group discussion? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through listening and sharing with one another? What do you want to explore more?*

[illegible]

## WEEK 2 | DAILY TIME WITH GOD

What I am praying for this week:

### DAY 1

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*Colossians 3:1-8*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 2

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### *Colossians 3:9-17*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 3

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### *Colossians 3:18-25*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 4

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### *Colossians 4:1-6*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 5

### Colossians 4:7-18

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

*Gratitude opens us up to God's good gifts in our everyday lives. What are the good things from this week for which you want to thank God?*

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GRATITUDE LIST FOR THIS WEEK:

## **Week 2 Bonus Reflection**

### **Colossians Recap**

Take a moment to look over your notes from reading Colossians. Answer the questions on the following page.



## Bonus Reflection

Is there a theme, verse or truth that stands out to you?

How was the experience of reading straight through a book of the Bible? How does it compare to how you usually read the Bible?

How has it been for you to use the SOAP headings and questions to help guide your time?

What questions do you have from this book of the Bible?

What do you want to explore more?

## **Ephesians 1:11-12 (The Message)**

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.

## WEEK 3 | WORSHIP NOTES

Built Different | Sunday, February 11

*What stood out to you from Sunday's service? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through the songs, the message, and being with others as part of the church?*

[illegible]

## WEEK 3

## SMALL GROUP SESSION NOTES

*What stood out to you from your group discussion? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through listening and sharing with one another? What do you want to explore more?*

[illegible]

## READING EPHESIANS

Whether you're new to reading the Bible or more familiar with it, it's important to remember that the words of scripture, inspired by God's Holy Spirit, were written by human people in a specific historical and cultural moment.

The next book of the Bible we will read together is the New Testament letter of Ephesians.

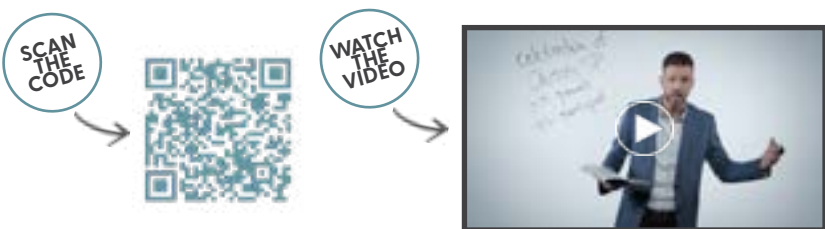
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Before you dig into this week's reading, we recommend you watch this overview video from The Bible Project on RightNow Media: **How to Read Ephesians - Tim Mackie**.



If there are specific verses or sections where you want to dig deeper or have questions, there are several videos that go into more detail in this series called, **Ephesians by Michael Defazio** (professor at Ozark Christian College), on RightNow Media.





# Reading Checklist

## Week 3

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- ☐ Ephesians 1:1-8
- ☐ Ephesians 1:9-14
- ☐ Ephesians 1:15-23
- ☐ Ephesians 2:1-10
- ☐ Ephesians 2:11-18

## Week 4

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- ☐ Ephesians 2:19-3:13
- ☐ Ephesians 3:14-21
- ☐ Ephesians 4:1-10
- ☐ Ephesians 4:11-16
- ☐ Ephesians 4:17-32

## Week 5

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- ☐ Ephesians 5:1-14
- ☐ Ephesians 5:15-20
- ☐ Ephesians 5:21-33
- ☐ Ephesians 6:1-9
- ☐ Ephesians 6:10-24

## WEEK 3 | DAILY TIME WITH GOD

What I am praying for this week:

### DAY 1

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*Ephesians 1:1-8*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 2

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### *Ephesians 1:9-14*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?



## DAY 3

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### *Ephesians 1:15-23*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 4

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### *Ephesians 2:1-10*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

DAY 5

Ephesians 2:11-18

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

GRATITUDE LIST FOR THIS WEEK:

*Gratitude opens us up to God's good gifts in our everyday lives. What are the good things from this week you want to thank God for?*

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## Week 3 Bonus Reflection

### Imago Dei

At the very beginning, the Bible's account of creation describes God making humans in his own image, the image of God (Latin: "imago Dei").

#### Genesis 1:27-28 (The Message)

God created human beings;  
he created them godlike,

Reflecting God's nature.

He created them male and  
female.

God blessed them:

"Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth!

Take charge!

Be responsible for fish in the  
sea and birds in the air,  
for every living thing that moves  
on the face of Earth."

#### Genesis 1:27-28 (NLT)

So God created human beings in  
his own image.

In the image of God he  
created them; male and  
female he created them.

Then God blessed them and said,  
"Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the  
earth and govern it. Reign over  
the fish in the sea, the birds in  
the sky, and all the animals that  
scurry along the ground."

## Bonus Reflection

How do you react to the idea that you are made in God's image? What does it mean?

What questions do you have for God about this?

What characteristics of God do you want to reflect and embody?

Is there anything you want to say to God about this?

## **Ephesians 4:16**

He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

## WEEK 4 | WORSHIP NOTES

Custom Made | Sunday, February 18

*What stood out to you from Sunday's service? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through the songs, the message, and being with others as part of the church?*

[illegible]

## WEEK 4

## SMALL GROUP SESSION NOTES

*What stood out to you from your group discussion? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through listening and sharing with one another? What do you want to explore more?*

[illegible]



## WEEK 4 | DAILY TIME WITH GOD

What I am praying for this week:

### DAY 1

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*Ephesians 2:19-3:13*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 2

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### *Ephesians 3:14-21*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 3

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### *Ephesians 4:1-10*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 4

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### *Ephesians 4:11-16*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

DAY 5

*Ephesians 4:17-32*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

GRATITUDE LIST FOR THIS WEEK:

*Gratitude opens us up to God's good gifts in our everyday lives. What are the good things from this week for which you want to thank God?*

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## Week 4 Bonus Reflection

### Custom Made

Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

Romans 12:3-5

God, our creator, has made each of us with unique abilities and has blessed us with different gifts and resources. Take a moment to think about what those are for you, specifically.

## Bonus Reflection

What gifts and abilities has God given to you?

What are some of the resources and opportunities you have?

Who are the people and where are the places where you have influence?

Look over what you have listed. How might God want to use those things?

Take a moment to pray or write out a prayer, asking God to use you in his good work in the world.

## **Ephesians 6:22-23**

Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters, and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness. May God's grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.



## WEEK 5 | WORSHIP NOTES

## Ruined and Remade | Sunday, February 25

*What stood out to you from Sunday's service? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through the songs, the message, and being with others as part of the church?*

[illegible]

## WEEK 5

# SMALL GROUP SESSION NOTES

*What stood out to you from your group discussion? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through listening and sharing with one another? What do you want to explore more?*

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# WEEK 5 | DAILY TIME WITH GOD

What I am praying for this week:

## DAY 1

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*Ephesians 5:1-14*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 2

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### *Ephesians 5:15-20*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 3

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### *Ephesians 5:21-33*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 4

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### *Ephesians 6:1-9*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

## DAY 5

### *Ephesians 6:10-24*

**Scripture** – What verse or phrase stands out?

**Observation** – What is God saying in these verses?

**Application** – What is God saying to you? How might his word connect to your life today?

**Prayer** – What do you want to say to God in response?

GRATITUDE LIST FOR THIS WEEK:

*Gratitude opens us up to God's good gifts in our everyday lives. What are the good things from this week you want to thank God for?*

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## Week 5 Bonus Reflections

### **Ephesians Recap**

Take a moment to look over your notes from reading Ephesians. Answer the questions on the following page.



## Bonus Reflection

Is there a theme, verse or truth that stands out to you?

How was the experience of reading straight through Ephesians? How does it compare to reading Colossians?

What questions do you have from this book of the Bible?  
What do you want to explore more?

What do you plan to read next?

## ***Made for This Reflection***

How has this season helped you connect to God, others at church and God's mission?

Did you complete the **Bonus Experience** by meeting with a smaller group (Triad)?

What stands out from that experience?

Is there a next step on your journey that you know you need to take?

- What is it?
- Who will you share it with?

## Stay Connected

Thanks for leaning in and engaging during this series!  
If you need help taking a next step or want to talk to someone, please reach out at **[wschurch.org/nextsteps](https://wschurch.org/nextsteps)**.

West Side Christian Church  
**[wschurch.org](https://wschurch.org)**

