

WEEK 1
GOD'S
FAMILY

WE ARE
GOD'S
FAMILY
ON MISSION TOGETHER

When we forget who we are, we cannot be united on what we are to do.

We cannot know what we are to do if we do not know who we are.

"Getting the church right is so important. The church is God's world-changing social experiment of bringing unlikes and differents to the table to share life with one another as a new kind of family. When this happens, we show the world what love, justice, peace, reconciliation, and life together are designed by God to be. The church is God's show-and-tell for the world to see how God wants us to live as a family."

Scot McKnight (A Fellowship of Differents, p. 16)

If we forget who we are, we cannot show the world who Jesus is.

Identity defines mission. Mission drives vision. Vision directs behavior. Behavior creates culture.

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. ¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Ephesians 2:11-22 (NIV)

We are God's family, united together by the blood of Jesus Christ to become a new humanity.

^{3:1} For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— ² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. ⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

Ephesians 3:1-13 (NIV)

God's mission is for the world to know the gospel that Jesus is Lord, and that through faith in Jesus as our Savior, we have freedom from the curse of sin.

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:14-21 (NIV)

God's vision is that His family is filled with His Spirit in order to experience the fullness of His love, live in His power, and to glorify Him.

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^{4:1} As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:1-2 (NIV)

God has called us to be His family and we are to live like we belong to Him.

³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:3-6 (NIV)

God wants there to be a culture of unity because of the bond of peace we have together.

SERIES BIG IDEA:

We are God's family on mission together loving Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and sharing Jesus to build up Christ-centered families by wrapping God's family around your family.

By loving one another the way Jesus has loved us, we will show the world what love, justice, peace, reconciliation, and life is meant to be.



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TEACHING SUMMARY:

Knowing who we are determines what we do. When the people of God forget who we are as the Family of God—the Church—our actions misrepresent Jesus.

When we identify with Jesus and His Church, our identity will define our mission; our mission will drive our vision; our vision will determine our behaviors; our behaviors will create a culture where people are loved the way Jesus has loved us.

God has called the Church to be His family who carries out His mission to establish the Kingdom of God and become the new humanity who loves one another the way Jesus has loved us. This is the wisdom of God at work in the gospel of Jesus and His church that will glorify God.

We are God's family on mission together loving Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and sharing Jesus to raise up Christ-centered families by wrapping God's family around your family.

TALK-IT-OVER:

Who do you say you are? Who does God say you are?

Our words and actions show others who we are. Who do your words and actions say you are?

Our identity defines our mission. What's your mission?

Disunity breaks the bonds of family and other relationships in our lives. Is there someone with whom you need to restore unity?

Who do you need to tell about what you've learned?

DAILY SCRIPTURE READING:

Day 1) John 13:34-35; 15:12-13

Day 2) Romans 6:1-14

Day 3) 1 Corinthians 12:11-13

Day 4) 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

Day 5) 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Day 6) 2 Peter 1:1-9