



WOODLAND HEIGHTS

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Identity: Who Do You Say I Am? Part #2 – I Am Made New: Empowered to Influence

Small Group Discussion Guide on Ephesians 1:15-23

Woodland Heights Christian Church Core Value Connection

This sermon on Ephesians 1:15–23 aligns with the core value of **Discipleship** at Woodland Heights Christian Church. We believe that a disciple is a fully devoted follower of Christ who is transformed by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, prayer, and obedience, learning to live out a new identity that influences others for the Kingdom.

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 sermon’s 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.