

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

Worshipping Together is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. frankstonrp.org.au bit.ly/WTrpcaf

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. airdrierpcs.org

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. bit.ly/WkBbl or bit.ly/3yrBbl

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on commentaries on Ephesians by William Hendriksen, R. Kent Hughes, RC Sproul, and notes from the HCSB Study Bible, and the Reformation Study Bible

Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.



If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

Read, pray, repeat.

* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested, a godly mother will lead her children

Reading Ephesians 2:1-3 Dead in sin

Notes
(See back page for authors)

And you were dead... Not the most upbeat way to begin talking to someone, is it? Bad news hurts. But good news is only good in the context of bad news. So, Paul begins with the bad news.

The Ephesians were not just sick with sin. They were dead. Sometimes we hear a sinner is like a drowning man who only has to grasp the life-preserver that is thrown to him, or a dying man who only has to open his mouth to receive life-saving medicine. But God tells us, through Paul, that without salvation, we lived/walked as dead men and women. We were the walking dead.

Sproul notes that *Paul is not contradicting himself. His point is to describe man's spiritual state, not his biological state. Obviously, when we come into this world we are biologically alive: we have minds that function, hearts that beat, wills that choose; we have affections, emotions, and all the rest. The problem is that even though we have the power to choose, we are dead to the things of God, and as a result have no desire for the things of God. Rather, we follow a different course. We follow it wilfully; we follow it freely, in the sense of doing what we want to do. But with respect to spiritual things, we are dead.*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What is the condition of fallen mankind?
2. How did we walk in that condition? (v2)
3. How do we know this is a universal condition? (v3)

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 113b²
1. Rejoice in prayer that You are no longer dead in your sin
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

¹ You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord's Day you review the previous week's readings and/or the previous or current week's sermons and pray together

² Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading Ephesians 2:19-22 Members of God's household

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Paul here describes the unity all Christians have in Christ. Later (4:1-3) he will instruct these Christians to work diligently at keeping that unity they have been given. What is that unity?

Paul uses three images to express that unity – citizenship, family, and dwelling. As Hughes notes: *Believing Jews and Gentiles had become a common people. They had a common language... a common heritage and history as part of the community of faith. They had a common allegiance which superseded all loyalties. They had a common goal (glorifying God). They even had the same destination – a place prepared by Christ to which he would take them – the ultimate polis, the heavenly city (cf. Jn 14:1-6)*

As wonderful and soul-satisfying as our citizenship is, being "family" – "members of God's household" – represents a far deeper intimacy. All who are part of the reconciled third race have the same Father...As members of God's household we are in satisfying and tender relationship to one another... The Church is the place of reconciliation and acceptance, where you can be your true, redeemed self.

Paul loved to mix metaphors (he never took Freshman English), and we are the richer for it. Now he appropriates the image of a building to illustrate a further dimension of the new humanity. It is a temple... Jesus is the chief cornerstone, the teaching of the apostles and prophets is the foundation, and we are the living stones – God lives in us!

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What three images of Christian unity does Paul use?
2. How do each of those images describe the unity we have?
3. How can we work diligently at preserving that unity?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 113b
1. Pray that you will be agents of unity in Christ's church
 2. Pray for your family
 3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
 4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God's word tomorrow

Reading Ephesians 2:14-18 Brought together in Christ

Notes (See back page for authors)
Similarly to it being too small a task for God to send Jesus merely to save the Jews (Isa 49:6), it is too small a task for God to send Jesus merely to save Jews and Gentiles for their relationship with God alone.

Paul emphasises here the division between Jew and Gentile – a division that in Jesus no longer exists. As Hughes notes in *Herod's Temple there was a wall which separated the Court of the Gentiles from the rest of the Temple, and on that wall were inscriptions in Latin and Greek forbidding Gentiles to enter. Josephus spoke of these inscriptions, and in excavations made in 1871 and 1934 two of these inscriptions were found. They read: "No foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death."* These Thanatos (death) inscriptions are now on display in the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul and the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem.

Paul says that Christ has ripped this odious barrier down by his death, and thus Jews and Gentiles alike have access to God and have spiritual unity. The ultimate answer to vertical and horizontal alienation is not intellectual or political or social, but spiritual! The answer comes when we cross the broken barrier and thus come near to God and then near to each other (cf. 1 John 1:3, 4).

God saves people – Jew and Gentile – to make a church!

Questions (see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What does God do, in Christ, with hostile unbelievers?
2. If Christ has saved us, where has He put us?
3. Christ has saved us into His church. What should that look like?
4.     

Praise Pray Psalm 113b

1. Rejoice in prayer that you have been saved into the Church
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Ephesians 2:4-7 But God

Notes (See back page for authors)
I've got some bad news and some good news for you... And this news is no joke. After giving them the terribly bad news of their deadness in sin, Paul introduces the good news with 2 words that change everything – “But God.” But God, what?

But God made us alive! Hendriksen comments that *the apostle chooses to take his stand alongside of the Ephesians. He is convinced that his own state...was basically no better than that of the Gentiles, and also that the new-found joy is the same for all. So instead of saying, "And you he made alive," he says, "And us he made alive." ...Paul ascribes the dramatic and marvelous change that has taken place, in his own life and in that of the others, to the mercy, love, and grace of God.*

Sproul comments that *God, out of the treasury of his grace, made us alive with Christ...The grace that brings us life comes to us at the very time we are dead in sin and trespasses. It is the act of God... It is by grace you are saved...Grace is defined simply as 'unmerited favour' or 'undeserved benefit'. Christians should never look at non—Christians with a spirit of contempt. Their attitude must reflect the classic saying, 'There, but for the grace of God, go I.' They have nothing of which to boast. They are redeemed not because of merit or good works, but by grace and by grace alone.*

Questions (see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What is the good news?
2. Why did God make us alive?
3. How did God make us alive?
4.     

Praise Pray Psalm 113b

1. Rejoice in prayer that You have been made alive in Christ by God's undeserved grace
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Ephesians 2:8-10 Saved by grace through faith

Notes
(See back page for authors)

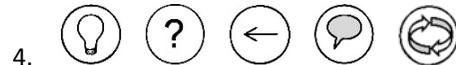
How is one saved? Hughes asks and answers. We answer first with Paul's negative affirmation in verse 9: "not by works, so that no one can boast." It is absolutely essential to understand and believe this if one is to be saved. Salvation does not come by works!... Our text gives us one reason salvation is not by works — "so that no one can boast." If salvation came by works, eternity would spawn a fraternity of rung-dropping, chest-thumping boasters.

So, rather than being saved by works, anyone who is saved is saved by grace – unmerited favour – through faith. And even that faith, Paul says, is God's gift, not something that exists in us. So, Hendriksen notes, *the credit for the entire process of salvation must be given to God.*

Yet our works which did not save us – indeed cannot save us – are required if God has saved us. To summarise Hendriksen's comments: *As a basis for salvation, a ground upon which we can plead, works are rejected. Yet, Paul tells us that God prepared for us good works. And so, in that sense, good works are confected (prepared). This is not an optional extra, no, our good works are expected. And finally, even though our own efforts may often disappoint us, so that we are ashamed even of our good works, victory will arrive at last – our good works will be perfected.* How good is that?!

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. How are we not saved? How are we saved?
2. Where do we get our faith?
3. What 4 words could summarise good works re: salvation?



Praise Psalm 113b

- Pray**
1. Rejoice that you are saved by grace, resolve to do good works
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Ephesians 2:11-13 Brought near in Christ

Notes
(See back page for authors)

In Isaiah 49:1-6 God the Father discusses with God the Son, that to send God the Son to simply save the Jews is too small a task. No, God says, "I will also make you a light for the nations, to be My salvation to the ends of the earth." Isaiah 49:6

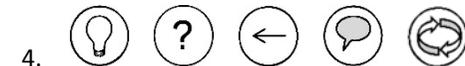
Paul picks up on that theme here. These Ephesian Christians were, as Hendriksen notes, *Christless, stateless, friendless, hopeless, and Godless.* But God changed all that in Jesus – for them, and for all Christians, especially Gentile converts.

Paul expresses this in terms of location. The Jews were near to God – that is, God's temple in Jerusalem was near where they lived, and God was spiritually near to them by His promise. The Gentiles (all the non-Jewish nations) lived far away – and were both physically and spiritually distant from God.

However, God changed that for all believers in Christ. The result, as Hendriksen notes, is this: *formerly separate from Christ, now "in Christ Jesus" saved by grace through faith (verse 8); formerly alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, now "fellow-citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (verse 19); formerly strangers to the covenants of the promise, now covenant members (Gal. 3:29); formerly without God, now at peace with him (verse 17) and in possession of the privilege of blessed access (verses 16–18).*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What was the condition of the Gentile unbelievers?
2. Was that different from the condition of Jewish unbelievers?
3. How did God change this condition?



Praise Psalm 113b

- Pray**
1. Rejoice in prayer that you have been brought near in Christ
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member