

**BUT**

*Good*

His Intervening Love  
Changes Everything

# ...But God

*His Intervening Love Changes Everything*

A College Park Church Women's Bible Study

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# **...But God**

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# Week One

## Introduction

Welcome! We are so glad you are joining us for this study of six passages that feature a **But God** moment in Scripture. Think about it—where would we be without these two precious words? Hopeless, alone, lost? Over the next six weeks, you're invited to open your Bible and discover how God's intervention in human life changes everything!

As you begin this study, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Begin your time in **prayer**. Ask God, through his Holy Spirit, to open your eyes to the truths found in Scripture, to give you insight into his character, and to help you see application to your life.
- Each week you will find five days of individual study, with our class happening on the sixth day, leaving the seventh day of the week for rest and reflection. We designed it this way to encourage you to **spend time in the Word daily** and allow Scripture to saturate your week in preparation for the class time.
- Each day's study will have a Scripture passage(s) noted at the beginning. Please read this selection before answering the questions. Note: Some of the passages are printed out within the lesson for use in a **Scripture observation** exercise. Feel free to highlight the text in different colors on your device or print it out. Notice patterns and repetitions as the Scripture comes alive visually.
- We will be **memorizing Ephesians 2:1-7** together. We will start with a small portion and add to it each week. Memorizing a passage of Scripture can be a real joy as the Word is woven into your heart. Take time each day to learn and review the passage presented in each lesson.
- Occasionally, you may be asked to look something up in a dictionary or on the internet. (Phone apps are handy tools!) Otherwise, wait to do further study in commentaries or study notes until after our class discussion and teaching. The weekly Discussion Group time is designed for you and others in your group to share what you've learned in your study, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

May God bless your study of his Word!

## Teaching Notes

## Week Two

# *Joseph: Rags to Riches*

Genesis 37, 39-44, 50

Memory Passage: **Ephesians 2:1-2**

<sup>1</sup>And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—

Day One – Review of *Introduction*, **Ephesians 2:1-7**

Type out our memory verses for this week, **Ephesians 2:1-2**.

1. Look over your notes from last week. Share one or two main takeaways from the teaching.
2. Review **Ephesians 2:1-7**. Explain the **But God** of this passage. Why did God intervene and what was the result?

3. Each **But God** passage that we will explore over the next several weeks is unique and exciting as the power of God's intervention in lives and situations changes everything. Has there been a time in your life that you would consider a **But God** moment? Please describe.

## Day Two – Genesis 37

Type out our memory verses for this week, **Ephesians 2:1-2**.

*Isaac and his wife Rebekah had twin boys. Esau was the favorite of Isaac and Jacob the favorite of Rebekah. Jacob deceived his father and cheated his brother to receive a birthright and a blessing. Jacob was later deceived by his father-in-law into marrying Leah instead of his beloved, Rachel. This led to a dysfunctional family with favorites. It explains the family background for Joseph, one of Jacob's twelve sons. But, the providence of God will come shining through when all looks lost.*

### Genesis 37

#### *Joseph's Dreams*

<sup>1</sup>Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan.

<sup>2</sup>These are the generations of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.<sup>3</sup>Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. <sup>4</sup>But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

<sup>5</sup>Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. <sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: <sup>7</sup>Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." <sup>8</sup>His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

<sup>9</sup>Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." <sup>10</sup>But when



he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?” <sup>11</sup>And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

### ***Joseph Sold by His Brothers***

<sup>12</sup>Now his brothers went to pasture their father’s flock near Shechem. <sup>13</sup>And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.” And he said to him, “Here I am.” <sup>14</sup>So he said to him, “Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word.” So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. <sup>15</sup>And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, “What are you seeking?” <sup>16</sup>“I am seeking my brothers,” he said. “Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.” <sup>17</sup>And the man said, “They have gone away, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

<sup>18</sup>They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. <sup>19</sup>They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. <sup>20</sup>Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.” <sup>21</sup>But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” <sup>22</sup>And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him”—that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father. <sup>23</sup>So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. <sup>24</sup>And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

<sup>25</sup>Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. <sup>26</sup>Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup>Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers listened to him. <sup>28</sup>Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.

<sup>29</sup>When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes <sup>30</sup>and returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?” <sup>31</sup>Then they took Joseph’s robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. <sup>32</sup>And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, “This we have found; please identify whether it is your son’s robe or not.” <sup>33</sup>And he identified it and said, “It is my son’s robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.” <sup>34</sup>Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. <sup>35</sup>All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, “No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.” Thus his father wept for him. <sup>36</sup>Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

4. As you read this passage, highlight every time you see an emotion described.
  - a. How did Joseph's brothers feel about him?
  - b. How did Israel (also referred to as Jacob) feel about Joseph?
5. Highlight in a different color every time a piece of clothing is mentioned.
  - a. What did Joseph's father have made specially for him?
  - b. Why did this piece of clothing spark such emotion in his brothers?
6. Joseph had two dreams that he conveyed to his brothers. Describe these dreams and how his brothers responded to them.
7. Sometimes in Scripture, God communicated through dreams to warn, to make a promise, to offer encouragement, to convey a spiritual truth, or to convey what would happen in the future. These dreams were vivid and coherent and had a definite meaning. Though dreams are not the normal way God speaks to believers today, as we have the written word of God, dreams were a part of many biblical stories in the Old Testament. Can you think of other times in Scripture God used dreams?

*One day Israel sent Joseph to find his brothers who were out tending sheep and to bring back a report on how they were doing. Joseph got lost trying to find them. But God, in his providence, arranged for a man to find him and send him in the right direction. God was setting his plan into motion.*

8. What did the brothers plot to do to Joseph?
  - a. Who spoke up suggesting not to kill him?
  - b. Whose idea was it to sell Joseph to a group of passing Midianite traders? How much did they get for him?
9. What did the brothers do with Joseph's robe (**Genesis 37:23, 31-32**)? Ironically, what did Jacob (Israel) use to deceive his own father (see **Genesis 27:15**)?
10. Deception was handed down from generation to generation in Joseph's family. While negative behaviors can be learned from parents, how much more can a godly parent influence the next generation? How does a parent as a role model help or hinder a child from developing godly character?

### Day Three – **Genesis 39-41**

Type out our memory verses for this week, **Ephesians 2:1-2**.

*Joseph was thrown into a pit, a victim of human trafficking, and “brought down to Egypt.” God, in his providence, arranged for Joseph to be sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. Joseph’s time in Potiphar’s home would have exposed him to royalty, customs of Egypt, and taught him administrative and leadership skills.*

11. Describe Joseph’s responsibilities and how Potiphar benefited (**Genesis 39:1-6**).

12. Joseph, a slave, was in charge of everything, except for Potiphar’s wife.

- a. What was Joseph’s reaction to Potiphar’s wife’s advances?
- b. We made note of the times clothing was mentioned in chapter 37. How does his garment play an important role in **Genesis 39:12-18**?
- c. What was Potiphar’s response to the accusations according to **Genesis 39:19-20**?
- d. Who was with Joseph while in prison and made him succeed (**Genesis 39:21-23**)?

*Once again, God’s providence is seen when two officers of Pharaoh are imprisoned with Joseph. Both the chief baker and the king’s cupbearer had dreams that Joseph was able to interpret by God’s power. The interpretations came about just as Joseph had predicted. The chief baker was hung, but the cupbearer was restored to his position. Joseph begged the cupbearer to remember him when he was restored. The chief cupbearer may have forgotten Joseph (**Genesis 40:23**), but God did not. Two years later, Pharaoh had two dreams, and no one could interpret them.*

13. Briefly describe Pharaoh’s two dreams (**Genesis 41:1-8**). Who was brought forth to interpret them?

14. The chief cupbearer then remembered Joseph. According to **Genesis 41:14**, what happened to Joseph?
15. Who did Joseph credit for the correct interpretation and the surety of bringing about the events?
16. To what position did Pharaoh promote Joseph, and how did he attire him (**Genesis 41:37-44**)?
17. Joseph was put in charge of gathering and storing the harvests for the next seven plentiful years. Two sons were born to him. What were they named, and what did these names mean (**Genesis 41:50-52**)?
18. How long has Joseph been in Egypt at this point in time (see **Genesis 37:2, 41:46**)?
19. While in prison, Joseph must have wondered at times if he had been forgotten. At what points in your life have you felt forgotten or wondered how God would work out the circumstances in your life? Can you now understand why God allowed the situations that he did, or are you still in a season of trusting him in the unknown?

## Day Four – Genesis 42-44

Type out our memory verses for this week, **Ephesians 2:1-2**.

*The famine was a life and death situation in Canaan as well as Egypt. Joseph's father Jacob learned there was grain for sale in Egypt and sent the brothers (with the exception of Benjamin) to buy grain for the family. Joseph recognized his brothers when they came and bowed before him, though they did not recognize him dressed and speaking as an Egyptian. He also remembered the dreams he had dreamed so many years ago.*

20. What did Joseph do to see if there had been a change in family relationships and in the hearts of his brothers (**Genesis 42:14-16**)?
  - a. According to **Genesis 42:21-22**, how did the brothers show remorse?
  - b. To whom do the brothers attribute their calamity (**Genesis 42:28**)?
21. When the family had eaten their supply of grain, they returned to Egypt to buy more. This time they took Benjamin as Joseph had demanded. From **Genesis 44:1-12**, how did Joseph continue to test his brothers?
22. How did they express their grief (**Genesis 44:13**)?

*Judah, who originally came up with the idea of selling Joseph, now knew the pain of losing sons (**Genesis 38**). He took the weight of responsibility for Benjamin (**Genesis 43:9, 44:33**). Reuben initially had suggested not killing Joseph. He is the brother that promised on the life of his two sons to bring Benjamin back (**Genesis 42:37**). The brothers had once eaten bread while Joseph was abandoned in a pit. Now they eat bread in his presence, but the roles are reversed, and he is second in command to Pharaoh. When Joseph saw the change in the hearts of his brothers, he wept and identified himself to them.*

23. The brothers had sold Joseph as a way of dealing with their animosity against him. Joseph tested them by putting them in a similar situation with their father's other favorite son to see if there had been moral reformation over time. God tests Christians for a variety of purposes. What do the following verses give as reasons for God's testing?

**Exodus 20:20**

**Deuteronomy 8:16**

**Zechariah 13:8-9**

**James 1:2-3**

**1 Peter 1:6-7**

**1 Peter 4:12-13**

24. Can you look back over your life and see how God has tested you? Did it produce the desired results that the above verses cite? How do those verses help you in a current testing to persevere with the proper attitude?

## Day Five – Genesis 45:4-8, 22, 50:15-21

Review our memory passage, **Ephesians 2:1-2**.

25. Joseph did not dismiss the crime his brothers committed but realized there was a greater plan in the hands of God. He conquered bitterness by resting in the providence of God.

- a. What two purposes did Joseph see in how God had worked (**Genesis 45:4-7**)?
- b. Who does Joseph credit with the outcome of his life (**v. 8**)? In your Bibles, underline this **But God** moment.

26. Joseph had his robe ripped from him, exchanged for slaves' garments, then prison garb, and finally the robes of a prince. What does he give to each of his brothers in **Genesis 45:22**? What significance do you see in this?

27. Seventeen years later, Joseph's brothers still held on to the weight of what they had done to him. When Jacob died, they were still fearful of being paid back for the evil they had done (**Genesis 50:15**). What was Joseph's gracious answer to them recorded in **Genesis 50:19-20**? In your Bible, mark this **But God** statement by underlining it.



28. Joseph made the choice to forgive his brothers and trust God to right the wrongs. One definition of forgiveness is “you choose to absorb the pain and loss caused by the other person and they go free, even when they don’t deserve it.” (Stephen Cole)<sup>1</sup> Do you have pain from the past you need to let go of and trust God to deal with?

a. How does **Psalm 103:12** encourage you?

b. Write out **Proverbs 16:9**. How can this verse apply to you?

29. From the following verses, what are some areas in which God exercises his sovereign providence?

**Deuteronomy 32:39**

**Job 12:23**

**Proverbs 16:33**

**Isaiah 45:7**

**Matthew 5:45**

**Acts 2:23**

**Acts 17:26**

<sup>1</sup> Cole, Steven. “Lesson 74: The Key to Reconciliation (Genesis 45:1-15)” Accessed January 20, 2020. <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-74-key-reconciliation-Genesis-451-15>.

**Ephesians 1:11**

**James 4:15**

30. What a mighty God we serve! God, working in his providence, is in control of all situations. How does **Romans 8:28-29** express this? In what area/situation in life do you need to apply the attribute of God's providence?

*Joseph's life should be a vital reminder to all. There are no accidents. God orchestrates all events in history for his purposes. There are no coincidences – just “but God.” We don't know God's full plan; however, we do know God's providence secures his promises, and we can trust him with the outcome.*

## Teaching Notes

## Week Three

# *A Change of Perspective*

### Psalm 73

#### Memory Passage: **Ephesians 2:1-3**

<sup>1</sup>And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup>**among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.**

#### Day One – Review of *Joseph: Rags to Riches*, **Genesis 37, 39-44, 50**

Type out our memory verse for this week, **Ephesians 2:3**.

1. Look over your notes from last week. Share one or two main takeaways from the teaching or lesson.
2. How would you define “the providence of God”? What is your level of awareness of the providence of God working in your life?

3. What were the "**But God**" verses from Joseph's story?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Did the example of Joseph's forgiveness help you see how you should deal with any wrongs you may experience in the future?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How can you encourage someone, who is in a situation that seems unexplainable, to understand God's providence?

## Day Two – Psalm 73

Type out our memory verse for this week, **Ephesians 2:3**.

### Psalm 73

*A Psalm of Asaph.*

<sup>1</sup>Truly God is good to Israel,  
to those who are pure in heart.  
<sup>2</sup>But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled,  
my steps had nearly slipped.  
<sup>3</sup>For I was envious of the arrogant  
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

<sup>4</sup>For they have no pangs until death;  
their bodies are fat and sleek.  
<sup>5</sup>They are not in trouble as others are;  
they are not stricken like the rest of mankind.  
<sup>6</sup>Therefore pride is their necklace;  
violence covers them as a garment.  
<sup>7</sup>Their eyes swell out through fatness;  
their hearts overflow with follies.  
<sup>8</sup>They scoff and speak with malice;  
loftily they threaten oppression.  
<sup>9</sup>They set their mouths against the heavens,  
and their tongue struts through the earth.  
<sup>10</sup>Therefore his people turn back to them,  
and find no fault in them.  
<sup>11</sup>And they say, “How can God know?  
Is there knowledge in the Most High?”  
<sup>12</sup>Behold, these are the wicked;  
always at ease, they increase in riches.  
<sup>13</sup>All in vain have I kept my heart clean  
and washed my hands in innocence.  
<sup>14</sup>For all the day long I have been stricken  
and rebuked every morning.  
<sup>15</sup>If I had said, “I will speak thus,”  
I would have betrayed the generation of your children.

<sup>16</sup>But when I thought how to understand this,  
it seemed to me a wearisome task,

<sup>17</sup>until I went into the sanctuary of God;  
then I discerned their end.

<sup>18</sup>Truly you set them in slippery places;  
you make them fall to ruin.

<sup>19</sup>How they are destroyed in a moment,  
swept away utterly by terrors!

<sup>20</sup>Like a dream when one awakes,  
O Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms.

<sup>21</sup>When my soul was embittered,  
when I was pricked in heart,

<sup>22</sup>I was brutish and ignorant;  
I was like a beast toward you.

<sup>23</sup>Nevertheless, I am continually with you;  
you hold my right hand.

<sup>24</sup>You guide me with your counsel,  
and afterward you will receive me to glory.

<sup>25</sup>Whom have I in heaven but you?  
And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.

<sup>26</sup>My flesh and my heart may fail,  
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

<sup>27</sup>For behold, those who are far from you shall perish;  
you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you.

<sup>28</sup>But for me it is good to be near God;  
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,  
that I may tell of all your works.

6. As you read **Psalm 73**, highlight each pronoun that is third person plural (they/their/them). Who does they/their/them refer to?
7. What are some examples given of life going seemingly well for the “arrogant” or “wicked” in **Psalm 73:4-12**?

8. What examples of riches/prosperity might we include if we were rewriting this Psalm with today's culture in mind?
9. What self-reflection do you hear from the author of this Psalm in vv. 2-3 about the wicked?
10. Although it may appear life is near perfect for those with prosperity and who don't know Jesus, what truth do these verses expose?

**Psalm 1:6**

**Psalm 5:4**

**Isaiah 48:22**

**Romans 6:23**

11. What does **Ephesians 2:8-9** say about salvation?



12. If you know the Lord as your personal Savior, take a few moments to write a prayer of thanksgiving that he alone has saved you from the punishment of sin. If you are not sure where you stand, write down some questions and talk to your leader or another trusted Christian friend.

### Day Three – Psalm 73

Type out our memory verse for this week, **Ephesians 2:3**.

13. Read **Psalm 73** again and highlight, in a different color, the references to “you.” Who does “you” refer to?
14. It is easy to get caught up in the comparison trap and only see the outward appearance of what people have. What is the one thing this psalmist has that the wicked do not? What verses point to this?

15. Using **vv. 16-28**, contrast the outcome of those who know the Lord as their Savior to those who do not.

Praises of the psalmist (and all believers) for the Lord	Outcome of those who don't know the Lord (wicked/arrogant)

16. What do these verses say about our role versus God's role in our salvation?

**Romans 5:6-8**

**Titus 2: 11-14**

**Titus 3:3-7**

17. Do you know Jesus? Is that enough when life is hard, lacking, or trying? How do you center your focus on the Lord when life's trials attempt to steal your joy?

## Day Four – Psalm 73

Type out our memory verse for this week, **Ephesians 2:3**.

18. Reread **Psalm 73**. This time look for the shift from “they/them” to “you.” Where does it occur?

19. What do you think caused the shift in focus?

20. What about himself and others does the psalmist see differently?

21. What do these verses say about dwelling with God or studying his Word?

**Joshua 1:7-8**

**Psalm 1:1-3**

**Psalm 16:9-11**

**Psalm 27:4**

**Psalm 91: 1-2**

22. Describe a time in your life when prayer and Scripture reading changed your perspective concerning a specific situation.

### Day Five – Psalm 73

Review our memory passage, **Ephesians 2:1-3**.

23. The Bible is the story of God’s redemption. Therefore, it is no surprise that it is full of stories where encounters with God transformed a person. Read these biblical examples of people encountering a Holy God and see how they are changed. Sometimes it is a clear declaration of a change in attitude, and sometimes it is inferred in their actions. Read these references and complete the chart:

Bible reference	Person	Description of encounter	Evidence of change
<b>Numbers 12</b>		Aaron and Miriam are jealous of Moses and complain to God.	
<b>2 Samuel 12: 7-20</b>	David		
<b>Matthew 4: 18-22</b>			
<b>Luke 19:1-10</b>			v. 8- give to poor; give 4x as much to those defrauded*

Acts 8:26-39			
Acts 9:1-19			

\* Amount expected to pay back if money is stolen

24. What are some similarities you see in these examples? Differences?

25. These examples vary widely in how the individuals encountered God. Sometimes God spoke through a person in their life. Who in your life has pointed you to Christ? Or with whom has God laid on your heart to share Christ?

26. Underline the **But God** moment of **Psalm 73**. In which verse is it found? What is its significance in this passage?

27. How does this verse encourage you?

28. Describe a time when you felt weak or discouraged and God had an impact on your thoughts, attitude, and/or circumstances?

## Teaching Notes

## Week Four

# *Jonah: Pursued by Love*

Jonah 1-4

### Memory Passage: **Ephesians 2:1-5**

<sup>1</sup>And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup>among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup>**But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—**

### Day One – Review of *A Change of Perspective*, **Psalm 73**

Type out our memory verses for this week, **Ephesians 2:4-5**.

1. Look over your notes from last week. Share one or two main takeaways from the teaching or lesson.
2. In what ways do you seek out meeting with the Lord?



3. What truth about God will you hold on to from last week's lesson?

## Day Two – Jonah 1

Type out our memory verses for this week, **Ephesians 2:4-5**.

### Jonah 1

#### *Jonah Flees the Presence of the LORD*

<sup>1</sup>Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” <sup>3</sup>But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

<sup>4</sup>But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. <sup>5</sup>Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. <sup>6</sup>So the captain came and said to him, “What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish.”

#### *Jonah Is Thrown into the Sea*

<sup>7</sup>And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. <sup>8</sup>Then they said to him, “Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?” <sup>9</sup>And he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” <sup>10</sup>Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, “What is this that you have done!” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

<sup>11</sup>Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?” For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. <sup>12</sup>He said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.” <sup>13</sup>Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not,

for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. <sup>14</sup>Therefore they called out to the LORD, “O LORD, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you.” <sup>15</sup>So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. <sup>16</sup>Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

### ***A Great Fish Swallows Jonah***

<sup>17</sup>And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

4. Read **Jonah 1** printed above and highlight every mention of “the Lord.” What two things did God call Jonah to do, and what did he do?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. About a hundred years after God called Jonah to Nineveh, God would also send the prophet Nahum. What additional insight does **Nahum 3:1-4** give us about this city?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. The Bible’s first mention of the prophet Jonah is in **2 Kings 14:23-25**. Even though King Jeroboam II did evil in the sight of the Lord, God sent Jonah to speak the good news that he would restore the northern border against Assyria.
  - a. How does this verse describe Jonah?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. In what ways are Jonah’s two assignments different?

7. Reread **Jonah 1**. Use one color to highlight Jonah’s actions and another color to highlight the actions of the sailors.

a. Summarize your observations in the chart below.

	Spiritual identity	Response to storm
Jonah		
Sailors		

b. What did the captain tell Jonah to do in **v. 6**? Do we have any record he did this?

8. Underline the “But the Lord” (a **But God** moment) in **v. 4**. Bringing a tempest on the sea is probably not the first thing that comes to mind when we think of loving actions.

a. Do you think Jonah perceived the storm as God’s love or wrath?

b. In what ways did God use this violent storm to demonstrate his love?

9. Read **James 1:2-4** and **Romans 8:28**. Whether you face a storm as a consequence of your wrongdoing (like Jonah) or not (like the sailors), Christians can stand on the promise God will use those storms for our good. How has the Lord used a trial you have faced to demonstrate his love for you?

## Day Three – **Jonah 1**

Type out our memory verses for this week, **Ephesians 2:4-5**.

10. What was Jonah running from? (**Jonah 1:3, 10**)

11. What do we learn about the presence of the Lord from these verses?

**1 Chronicles 16:11**

**Psalms 16:11**

**Psalms 31:19-20**

**Psalms 90:8**

**Psalms 139:7-12**

**Psalms 140:13**

**Isaiah 19:1**

12. As God's prophet, Jonah would have known these truths about God's presence, yet he still chose to run the other way. Read **Jonah 4:2** and **Jeremiah 18:7-8**. Why did Jonah flee God's presence?

13. Jonah identifies two things about himself in **Jonah 1:9**. What were they, and why is the order in which he listed them important?
14. Do you see any present-day examples of people putting nationalism ahead of their love for Jesus?
15. Reflect on a time when you resisted God's calling. What prevented or delayed your obedience? What were (are) you valuing more than Jesus and the gift of his presence?
16. Despite our best efforts to outrun God, we can take comfort in the promise of **Romans 8:38-39**. Spend some time in the space below thanking God for his love that pursues us and never lets us go.

## Day Four – Jonah 2

Type out our memory verses for this week, **Ephesians 2:4-5**.

### Jonah 2

#### *Jonah's Prayer*

<sup>1</sup>Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, <sup>2</sup>saying,

“I called out to the LORD, out of my distress,  
and he answered me;  
out of the belly of Sheol I cried,  
and you heard my voice.

<sup>3</sup>For you cast me into the deep,  
into the heart of the seas,  
and the flood surrounded me;  
all your waves and your billows  
passed over me.

<sup>4</sup>Then I said, ‘I am driven away  
from your sight;  
yet I shall again look  
upon your holy temple.’

<sup>5</sup>The waters closed in over me to take my life;  
the deep surrounded me;  
weeds were wrapped about my head  
<sup>6</sup>at the roots of the mountains.

I went down to the land  
whose bars closed upon me forever;  
yet you brought up my life from the pit,  
O LORD my God.

<sup>7</sup>When my life was fainting away,  
I remembered the LORD,  
and my prayer came to you,  
into your holy temple.

<sup>8</sup>Those who pay regard to vain idols  
forsake their hope of steadfast love.

<sup>9</sup>But I with the voice of thanksgiving  
will sacrifice to you;  
what I have vowed I will pay.  
Salvation belongs to the LORD!”

<sup>10</sup>And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.

17. Reread **Jonah 1:3-5** printed in Day Two. Highlight, in its own color, the word “down” or any phrase that indicates going down. Do the same in **Jonah 2**. Where was Jonah when he remembered and called out to the Lord?
18. Jonah said he called out to the Lord in his distress. Is that your first response when you are in distress? Do you regularly call out to the Lord when you are *not* in distress?
19. Yesterday we read **Psalms 139:7-12** as we reflected on the presence of the Lord. How does Jonah’s prayer echo these verses?
20. Reread **Jonah 2**. Highlight “Lord,” “God,” and “you.” How has Jonah’s perception of the storm changed from when he was on the boat?
- a. Underline “yet you” in **v. 6**. (In other translations, this reads “But you, O Lord”, a **But God** moment!) How did God intervene to do something Jonah could not do on his own?
  - b. Perhaps you are currently in a storm. What makes it hard to see God’s hand in the storms of life?

21. Where did Jonah look to find hope and restore trust?

22. In **v. 8**, do you think Jonah had any idols in his life?

a. If so, was he aware of it/them? Why do you think so?

b. Consider **Matthew 7:3-5**. How can you discern your own blind spots?

23. Note that Jonah offered thanksgiving to the Lord in **v. 9** before he was delivered from the fish. How much of your worship to God is dependent on what he does for you? Put a mark on the line below to show where you land. If completing electronically, hold down the space bar to help position your X.

Who God is \_\_\_\_\_ What he's done for you

24. Many consider **Jonah 2:9** to be the theme of Jonah and even all of Scripture. How have the first two chapters of Jonah demonstrated "Salvation belongs to the Lord!"?

a. In what ways have you seen "Salvation belongs to the Lord!" in your own life?

b. In what area do you need to trust God to do what you cannot?



## Day Five – Jonah 3-4

Review our memory passage, **Ephesians 2:1-5**.

### Jonah 3

#### *Jonah Goes to Nineveh*

<sup>1</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” <sup>3</sup>So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days’ journey in breadth. <sup>4</sup>Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” <sup>5</sup>And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

#### *The People of Nineveh Repent*

<sup>6</sup>The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. <sup>7</sup>And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, <sup>8</sup>but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. <sup>9</sup>Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.”

<sup>10</sup>When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

### Jonah 4

#### *Jonah’s Anger and the LORD’s Compassion*

<sup>1</sup>But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. <sup>2</sup>And he prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. <sup>3</sup>Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” <sup>4</sup>And the LORD said, “Do you do well to be angry?”

<sup>5</sup>Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. <sup>6</sup>Now the LORD God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. <sup>7</sup>But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. <sup>8</sup>When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, “It is better for me to die than to live.” <sup>9</sup>But God said to Jonah, “Do you do well to be angry for the plant?” And he said, “Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.” <sup>10</sup>And the LORD said, “You pity the plant, for which you

did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. <sup>11</sup>And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”

25. Summarize what happened in **Jonah 3-4** in two to three sentences.

26. How long did it take to travel across the city of Nineveh?

- a. How far into the city did Jonah go to preach God’s message?
- b. How did this reflect Jonah’s heart toward the Ninevites?

27. What was God’s heart toward the Ninevites? Toward Jonah? How do you know?

God’s heart toward...	How you know
Nineveh	
Jonah	

28. Jonah’s anger shows us the ease of forgetfulness. It wasn’t long ago that Jonah experienced God’s extravagant grace himself!

- a. What did Jonah’s anger reveal about his values? When you are angry, what values do you reveal?

b. How is **James 1:19-20** instructive to us?

c. What did God's response to Jonah's anger teach us about his love?

29. Underline **But God** in **Jonah 4:9**. In response to Jonah's anger, how does God demonstrate he is "a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster?" (**Jonah 4:2**)

30. Review Day Three, [questions 10-12](#). Since then, Jonah had obeyed God's command, but had his heart changed? How would the events of **Jonah 3-4** read differently if Jonah were resting in the presence of the Lord?

31. The opposite of fleeing from the presence of the Lord (as Jonah did) is resting in his presence. What do you learn from these verses about resting in God's presence?

**Matthew 11:28-30**

**John 15:9-14**

**2 Corinthians 3:17-18**

**1 John 1:5-10**

32. What practical steps will you take to rest in Christ?

## Teaching Notes

## Week Five

# *Peter and Prejudice: God and Diversity*

Acts 10

Memory Passage: **Ephesians 2:1-7**

<sup>1</sup>And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup>among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup>**But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup>**and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,** <sup>7</sup>**so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.**

Day One – Review of *Jonah: Pursued by Love*, **Jonah 1-4**

Type out our memory verses for this week, **Ephesians 2:6-7**.

1. Look over your notes from last week. Share one or two main takeaways from the teaching or lesson.

2. What do the three **But God** moments in Jonah teach us about God's love?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Read **Matthew 12:40-41** and **Luke 11:29-32**. In what ways does Jonah point us to Jesus, and how is Jesus greater than Jonah?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. In what ways did you see yourself in Jonah?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Can you identify any "Ninevites" in your life, those with whom you would rather not engage? What will it take to have God's heart toward them?

## Day Two – Acts 10

Type out our memory verses for this week, **Ephesians 2:6-7**.

### Acts 10

#### *Peter and Cornelius*

<sup>1</sup>At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort,<sup>2</sup>a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. <sup>3</sup>About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, “Cornelius.” <sup>4</sup>And he stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?” And he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. <sup>5</sup>And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. <sup>6</sup>He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.” <sup>7</sup>When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, <sup>8</sup>and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

#### *Peter’s Vision*

<sup>9</sup>The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. <sup>10</sup>And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance <sup>11</sup>and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. <sup>12</sup>In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. <sup>13</sup>And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” <sup>14</sup>But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” <sup>15</sup>And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.” <sup>16</sup>This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

<sup>17</sup>Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon’s house, stood at the gate <sup>18</sup>and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. <sup>19</sup>And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you. <sup>20</sup>Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them.” <sup>21</sup>And Peter went down to the men and said, “I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?” <sup>22</sup>And they said, “Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say.” <sup>23</sup>So he invited them in to be his guests.

The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. <sup>24</sup>And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. <sup>25</sup>When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. <sup>26</sup>But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am a man.” <sup>27</sup>And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. <sup>28</sup>And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit



anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. <sup>29</sup>So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me.”

<sup>30</sup>And Cornelius said, “Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing <sup>31</sup>and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. <sup>32</sup>Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’ <sup>33</sup>So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”

### ***Gentiles Hear the Good News***

<sup>34</sup>So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, <sup>35</sup>but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. <sup>36</sup>As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), <sup>37</sup>you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: <sup>38</sup>how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. <sup>39</sup>And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, <sup>40</sup>but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, <sup>41</sup>not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. <sup>42</sup>And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup>To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

### ***The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles***

<sup>44</sup>While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. <sup>45</sup>And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. <sup>46</sup>For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, <sup>47</sup>“Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” <sup>48</sup>And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

6. Highlight words and phrases in **Acts 10** that are descriptive of or provide information about Cornelius.

7. Define the following terms. Use a dictionary or other Bible study tool if necessary.
- a. centurion
  - b. Italian Cohort
  - c. alms
  - d. devout
  - e. tanner
  - f. Gentile
8. From your reading, you now have a good description of Cornelius, the Gentile Roman soldier. What do the following verses say about Gentiles?

**Galatians 2:15**

**Ephesians 4:17-19**

9. How is the description of Cornelius inconsistent with the passages in Ephesians and Galatians?
10. Review the highlighted words and phrases which describe Cornelius. Which of these do you have in common with him?

### Day Three – Acts 10

Write out our memory verses for this week, **Ephesians 2:6-7**.

11. What three things did the voice in Peter's vision tell him to do? (**Acts 10:11-13**)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. Like Cornelius, Peter answered the voice, "Lord." In what ways were the two responses different?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. Read **Deuteronomy 14:2-3**. In this passage, the Lord commands his people to separate. In it, the Israelites are identified as holy, chosen, and treasured. Peter, born an Israelite, knew his Jewish heritage, including food laws and rituals. Why did Peter answer the voice as he did in **Acts 10:14**? How did the voice respond to Peter in **v.15**?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. Based on Old Testament laws, what would Peter have believed to be the condition of Simon the tanner?
  - a. How might you know that God is at work in Peter's heart regarding prejudice both before and after his vision? (**Acts 10:6, 23**)

- b. Are there certain groups of people that we should avoid? (**Acts 1:8** and **Matthew 28:18-20**) Explain.
  - c. Either currently or in the past, are there certain groups of people that you avoid(ed)? Did you then or now, regard this avoidance as an act of prejudice?
  - d. Prejudicial thoughts and actions are sin issues. As you continue to reflect, what are you willing to do about any acts of prejudice you are now aware of?
15. In order to commend or make Cornelius acceptable to Peter, the men from Caesarea representing Cornelius use an extra phrase in **Acts 10:22** that is not present in **Acts 10:2**. What is the phrase? Why was it important to them?
16. How are we made acceptable to God according to these passages?

**John 1:12**

**Galatians 3:26**

**Ephesians 1:5**

## Day Four – Acts 10

Type out our memory verses for this week, **Ephesians 2:6-7**.

17. Underline the the **But God** moment in v. 28 as Peter is faced with the "intersection" between his tradition and truth.

a. What was Peter's tradition? What was the truth?

b. How was Peter's life changed by his **But God** experience?

18. Examine your heart. What principles, beliefs, or traditions do you hold that limit your ability to reach out to people "different" from yourself? Explain.

19. Based on Peter's background, he had to experience a change of heart to be willing to obey the Spirit's call which was in direct opposition to his life's training. Explain the relationship between these verses: **Matthew 15:11, Acts 10:15, Acts 10:28**.

- a. What words in the following verses express God's heart about human differences?

**Acts 10:34-35** "So Peter opened his mouth and said: Truly I understand that God shows not partiality <sup>35</sup>but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him."

**Acts 10:43** "To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

- b. How does man expose his heart concerning others who are different?
- c. When facing your own prejudices, what must happen before you can change?

20. What is significant about Peter's use of the phrase "every nation" in **Acts 10:35**?

21. For the first time, a Jew is telling Gentiles that God does not show favoritism based on race, religion, gender, or any other artificial barriers that men erect against other men.

- a. What are some acts of prejudice and partiality demonstrated in the church today?
- b. What is the only basis of God's favoritism?

- c. If you were in the crowd gathered at Cornelius's house that day, what would Peter's words have meant to you?

22. Pray and ask God to reveal your heart regarding prejudice and diversity.

- a. Has God shown you choices, even small ones, you make based on prejudices? What are they?

- b. This could be a **But God** experience for you! Identify the "intersection" of truth and tradition regarding your own prejudice. What is the tradition to which you hold? What is the truth? Are you willing to obey truth rather than tradition?

- c. Identify Scriptures from question 19, or other scripture, that you will begin to use to help you overcome prejudices. Write them out below.

## Day Five – Acts 10

Review our memory passage, **Ephesians 2:6-7**.

23. Why does Peter say Jesus is “Lord of all” (**Acts 10:36**)?

a. How are **Matthew 28:18** and **Romans 10:12** related to **Acts 10:36**?

24. How did Peter and the Jews who were with him know that the household of Cornelius had truly received the Holy Spirit? (**Acts 10:44-46**)

25. Why were the believers from among the circumcised amazed? (**Acts 10:45**)

26. Compare the following Scriptures: **Acts 10:47** and **11:15, 17**. What phrases show that the Gentiles received the same experience as those on the day of Pentecost when Jewish believers first received the Holy Spirit? (**Acts 2**)



27. Read **Acts 10:34-43**. Identify three or four main points that Peter preached to the Gentiles.

- a. What did Peter's message mean for the Gentiles?
- b. What did it mean for the Jews?
- c. What is the difference between Jew and Gentile believers in Christ?
- d. How does anyone know God? Give at least one Scripture reference.

28. Compare **Acts 2:1-4** and **10:44-46**. What point is Peter making? Why?

29. God sent his Son because he loves the whole world. No one is beyond God's grace regardless of who they are. You have studied Peter's **But God** experience in **Acts 10**. It is our prayer that you also have had an "intersection" between truth and tradition—your own **But God** experience.

Identify at least two immediate steps (along with prayer) that you can take to change how you interact with and how you demonstrate love for people for whom you have held prejudices. (Prejudices might include skin color, ethnicity, ageism, class discrimination, attire, worship styles/music, etc.)

## Teaching Notes

## Week Six

# *The Foolish Wisdom of God*

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Memory Passage: **Ephesians 2:1-7**

<sup>1</sup>And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup>among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup>**But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup>and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

**Day One – Review of *Peter and Prejudice: God and Diversity*, Acts 10**

Review our memory passage, **Ephesians 2:1-7**.

1. Look over your notes from last week. Share one or two main takeaways from the teaching or lesson.

2. Why is the story of Peter and Cornelius so important in the book of Acts?
3. Has studying **Acts 10** added to your understanding of the biblical view of racial and ethnic reconciliation? Explain.

## Day Two – 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Review our memory passage, **Ephesians 2:1-7**.

### 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

#### *Christ the Wisdom and Power of God*

<sup>18</sup>For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

<sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

<sup>26</sup>For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup>But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup>God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup>And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup>so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

4. In the passage above, highlight each mention of God and highlight, in a different color, the action he is taking. What observations do you make?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. God is making a statement about what he thinks of worldly wisdom. Highlight each of the times the word wisdom (wise, wiser) is used. What is God saying about the wisdom of the world?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What do these verses have to say about wisdom?

**Psalms 37:30**

**Proverbs 1:7**

**Proverbs 3:7**

**James 1:5**

**James 3:17**

7. In vv. 26-29, a clear distinction is drawn between what God chooses and what the world chooses. In your experience, what values, people, and accomplishments does the world choose?

8. Highlight the three uses of the word, “choose.” Note below what God chose and the reason why.

God Chose	Why?

9. How can the gospel seem like foolishness? What was your honest response when you first heard the gospel story?

## Day Three – Acts 18:1-21, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Review our memory passage, **Ephesians 2:1-7**.

*This week's passage comes from one of Paul's letters written to the church in Corinth. Let's dig into Acts 18 and discover the origins of the Corinthian church and its diverse cultural setting.*

10. As you read **Acts 18:1-19**, make note of the different characters mentioned. List them below and describe their relationship to the story.
11. What kind of opposition did Paul face, and how was he reassured?
12. Find ancient Corinth on a map (possibly in the back of your Bible or on the internet). What do you think might have been the cultural significance of Corinth's geographical location?
13. About five years after the events of **Acts 18**, Paul was in Ephesus and received reports from the church and several of its members. He wrote this letter in response. Read the passages from 1 Corinthians listed below. Besides divisions, what were some of the other issues faced by this body of believers?

## 1 Corinthians 3:2-3



**1 Corinthians 5:1**

**1 Corinthians 6:1**

**1 Corinthians 6:16-18**

**1 Corinthians 7:1-5**

**1 Corinthians 7:12-16**

**1 Corinthians 8:1-8**

**1 Corinthians 10:14**

**1 Corinthians 11:13-15**

**1 Corinthians 11:20-22**

14. The people of Corinth were having a hard time separating from the thinking of their culture. **But God!** He is in the business of breaking through the pretense of our human wisdom and exposing the foolishness in our thinking. Read **1 John 2:15-17**. Where do you struggle in love for the “world”?

## Day Four – 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Review our memory passage, **Ephesians 2:1-7**.

15. Reread **1 Corinthians 1:18-31**. What does v. **21** say “pleased God?”
16. Paul was a preacher of the gospel. Read **1 Corinthians 15:1-11** to better understand his message to the Corinthians. Outline the basics of the gospel as stated in this passage.
17. Put yourself in the place of the Corinthian people hearing Paul’s preaching and Christ’s story for the first time having experienced only their Greco/Roman culture. How might this have sounded foolish?
18. By God’s grace, what was the result? (**1 Corinthians 1:30**)
19. What were the Jews looking for? What about the Greeks (or Gentiles)? (**1 Corinthians 1:22**)

20. Instead, Paul preached Christ crucified, which he called a stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Greeks. What do you think he meant by a “stumbling block” or “folly”?

21. What are the stumbling blocks to faith that people encounter today?

### Day Five – 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Review our memory passage, **Ephesians 2:1-7**.

22. Reread **1 Corinthians 1:18-31**. In v. 26, Paul reminds his readers who they were before they encountered Christ. How did he describe them?

23. Describe yourself before your encounter with Christ.

24. Underline the **But God** statement in v. 27. In his love, he chose what seemed foolish in our thinking (the cross), to prove that we can do nothing for ourselves, demonstrating that our salvation is completely from him. He does this for our good so that we will be dependent on him and reap the benefits of living life “in Christ” (or “in him”).

List and define the four benefits of being “in Christ” that are found in v. 30. Use a dictionary if needed.

Benefit	Definition

25. The words “in Christ” are used throughout the letters in the New Testament. Read the following verses and record what each verse says about the believer’s position of being “in Christ.”

**Romans 8:38-39**

**2 Corinthians 5:21**

**Galatians 3:26**

**Ephesians 1:4**

**Ephesians 1:7**

**2 Timothy 1:9**

26. Read over your answers to today's questions and write a prayer acknowledging the blessings of being in Christ. Thank him for the **But God** moments in history that affect your life now. Thank him for how he continues to lovingly intervene in your life.

## Teaching Notes

## Other Selected **But God** Verses

**Genesis 8:1** – **But God** remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided.

**1 Samuel 23:14** – And David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, **but God** did not give him into his hand.

**1 Kings 5:4** – **But now the LORD my God** has given me rest on every side. There is neither adversary nor misfortune. (Solomon)

**Nehemiah 9:17** – They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. **But you are a God** ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them.

**Psalms 49:15** – **But God** will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. Selah (sons of Korah)

**Isaiah 40:8** – The grass withers, the flower fades, **but the word of our God** will stand forever.

**Matthew 19:26** – But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, **but with God** all things are possible.”

**Acts 3:15** – ...and you killed the Author of life, **whom (but) God** raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.

**Acts 13:29-30** – And when they carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. **But God** raised him from the dead,

**Romans 5:8** – **But God** shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**Romans 6:23** – For the wages of sin is death, **but the free gift of God** is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**2 Timothy 2:9** – ...for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. **But the word of God** is not bound!

## ...But God

### *His Intervening Love Changes Everything*

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## **...But God** *His Intervening Love Changes Everything*

### **Writing Team**

**Montinia Darby** grew up in Indianapolis but spent most of her career as an elementary school teacher and middle school administrator on the East Coast. Montinia is a member of College Park Church and serves on the College Park Women's Council. For several years she was a Women's Bible Study leader and a member of the greeting team. Along with teaching, Montinia's other great joy is mentoring young women for Christ, which she has done extensively through Heart Change Ministry. She lives with her husband, Joseph, and their beloved dog, Pharaoh.

**Laura Huff** is the Women's Bible Study administrator and has taught and led many Bible studies. She loves all things food (especially baking macarons), Zumba, and traveling the world with her husband, Jamie. The Huffs are long-time College Park members. They have three children and three grandchildren, who they are blessed to have all in Indianapolis.

**Robin Kim** and her husband, Peter, have been members of College Park Church since 2012. She loves diving deeper into God's Word with other women and currently serves on the Women's Ministry Council and in Children's Ministries on Sunday mornings. Before staying home with her three children—Thomas (9), Daniel (7), and Anna (2)—she worked as a communications business consultant. Robin enjoys volunteer opportunities at the boys' school, singing, playing piano, cooking, baking, a great pure barre class, and connecting people.

**Karen Pourcho** and her husband, Bob, have three grown children. After serving and teaching for many years in Community Bible Study, Karen accepted the position of Director of Women's Ministry at College Park Church in 2015. Besides loving Bible study, Karen enjoys spending time with her new granddaughter; playing the piano; baking; gardening; needlepoint; walking with her trusted pup, Tracker; and traveling with her best friend, Bob.

**Jane Schuth** is refreshed by time in the Word and exploring nature. She is blessed to do life with her husband, David, and their three vibrant daughters. When not outside, Jane can be found playing board games or experimenting with new recipes in the kitchen. She has had several **But God** moments in her life and is thankful to be a part of this teaching team. College Park has been Jane's church home for twenty years. She joined staff in 2016 as the Women's Ministry Coordinator.

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