

SESSION  
**5**

THE CONVERSATION STARTER

# “Second-Class Citizens”

DRAW NEAR TO GOD

CONVERSATION STARTER

[Watch the video](#) or read it below.



READ

Before the study, take a moment to read Ephesians 2:11-22



BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to Podcast episode #186, “It Depends” before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/186](https://biblegeeks.fm/186)



**W**e think of ourselves as an egalitarian society, but when you board a plane, airlines literally categorize people into different classes. “First class” passengers lie in a bed or eat fresh-cooked meals. On the other side of the curtain, we second-class citizens squeeze in like sardines, happy to get a cup of water. Comedian Jerry Seinfeld jokes about the little look flight attendants give before closing the curtain, like, “Maybe if you worked a little harder, I wouldn’t have to do this.”

In Ephesians 2:11-23, Paul tells Gentile Christians to remember that they once stood outside looking in. Before Christ came, the temple, the covenant, and all its privileges belonged to Jews. But now God has brought Jews and Gentiles near him, creating one new humanity in Christ.



THE BIG IDEA

People who once couldn't enter the temple have now become God's holy house.

The temple structure provided a way to draw near God, but its walls, courts, and curtain veil also blocked access. One temple wall divided the Court of the Gentiles from the inside, keeping them afar. By abolishing the “*law of commandments*” Christ tore down the “*dividing wall*” (Eph. 2:14-15). In his flesh, he eliminated the distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision (cf. Eph. 2:11,14; Phil. 3:3).

Our last lesson featured a “before and after” story, going from death to life (Eph. 2:1,5). But Gentile Christians have also gone from “*separated ... strangers*” (Eph. 2:12) to family (Eph. 2:19). We weren’t second-class citizens — we were aliens, distant from God and hopeless (Eph. 2:12). “*But now*” Christ’s blood has brought us near (Eph. 2:13), offering us full-citizenship (Eph. 2:12, 18-19). God lives within his church — a new multi-ethnic community living like Christ. We’re living stones (1 Peter 2:5) in this ever-growing temple, built on the apostles’ and prophets’ teachings, all aligned to our cornerstone and life source, Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:20; cf. Acts 2:42; Ps. 118:22).



THE BIG QUESTION

How should we worship and serve before God now that he's made us his home?

# One New Humanity

DRAW NEAR TO GOD

## INTRODUCTION

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Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea.

Read or watch "Second-Class Citizens" – [biblegeeks.fm/ephesians/5](https://biblegeeks.fm/ephesians/5) ▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.

Have you ever maintained a "long distance" relationship of any kind?

## ACT I

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**FINDING JESUS** — Ephesians 2:11-22

What does this passage teach you about Jesus?

Of all that Paul tells us about Christ's work and character, what strikes you the most? Why?

How can reflecting on and applying this passage draw us closer to Christ?

# One New Humanity

DRAW NEAR TO GOD

## ACT II



### HERE'S THE STORY — The Temple

Our text (Eph. 2:11-22) is built on an understanding of the temple and its meaning in Israel. So what is the story of the temple that the Bible tells? It starts all the way back at the Bible's beginning and ends on the last page of Scripture.

**Introduction: The Garden & the Fall** (Gen. 2-3; e.g. 2:8; 3:8; 3:24). What connections do you see between the Garden of Eden and the tabernacle and temple?

**Act I: The Tabernacle** (Exod. 29:43-46; 40:1-38). What did the tabernacle's construction and encampment among Israel mean for them? What was required for God to dwell among them?

**Act II: The First & Second Temple** (2 Chron. 2:5; 1 Kings 8:1-11; 2 Kings 25:1,13; Ezra 1:2-4,7; 3:3,8-13; Matt. 24:1-2). What happened when the ark was placed in Solomon's temple? What was the ultimate fate of both the first and second temple?

**Act III: Christ & the Church** (John 1:14; 2:19; Eph. 2:11-22). Why would the Bible use tabernacle and temple language to describe Jesus' bodily presence on earth? And how is the church now God's temple?

**Conclusion: The New Jerusalem** (Rev. 21:1-4,22; 22:1-2). How does the end of the story signal both the end of the temple and its fulfillment?

# One New Humanity

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## ACT III

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**REACH OUT** — Connect with each other with this question.

What threats to church unity trouble you?

## WRAP UP

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**THE CHALLENGE** — Ready to put it into practice?

Reconcile with any brother or sister you don't have peace with.



**REQUEST** — Go to God in a closing prayer.

"Bless you for opening the door that was once closed and offering us peace with you through Jesus" (cf. Eph. 2:17-19).



**NEXT SESSION** — Eternal Purpose

Prepare by reading Ephesians 3:1-13