



HOME GROUP GUIDE

September 8, 2019

Becoming a Ready Bride — Ephesians 1; 2:4–10; 17–22; 5:22–33

About this guide: This guide is provided to assist your Home Group in discussion and application of the most recent sermon. This guide provides direction for application-based discussion within a small group as well as discussion material. **Please know that the guide is not designed with the intent that every question be answered systematically.** Feel free to pick and choose the questions that fit your group and structure your time together using the guide to maximize your group's benefit.

Notice organization of the guide: Looking Back, Looking Up and Looking Forward. “Looking Back” is the time for the group to consider how the last week or two has gone, to share about struggles and victories. Consider choosing one or two items from this section to answer.

“Looking Up and Looking Forward” is a time to discuss the sermon and how the group might further apply the truth of God's Word, making specific plans individually and as a group to walk by faith in the week to come. This is also a time to encourage each other, minister to each other and pray for each other. Try to choose a couple elements from this section.

The guide also contains a family discipleship section with a few ideas on how to intentionally engage in following the Lord as a family.

Looking Back:

- Share how you have been doing since you last met:
 - What biblical truths have been shaping your life and heart over the last week or so?
 - What has dominated your prayer life this week?
 - What was a “win” in your life this last week (something that happened that resulted in thankfulness, a moment of spiritual growth or victory, an answered prayer, etc.)?
 - What was the biggest challenge in your life this last week? Is there anything that you need to share with your Home Group in the form of confession?
- With whom were you able to begin to build a gospel bridge of conversation since the last time we met?
With whom were you able to share the gospel message?
- How can the group help you this next week?

Looking Up and Looking Forward (specific, realistic, measurable, personal): Read Ephesians 1; 2:4–10; 17–22; 5:22–23.

Recap: We want our lives to make a difference in this world and in our communities. We want to be faithful to be all that God has called and equipped us to be as a church but also as individuals within the church. As we prepare for Christ's triumphant return, we want the church to be a ready bride for Him. The church is and always has had a primary role in the way God reaches the world with the gospel. We desire to be faithful to all God has planned for us so that we might be a church ready for His return helping others in Williamson County prepare for His return.

1. The church is primary. The church is more than four walls sitting on a piece of land. The church is a body of people who gather together to worship our God and Creator and sit under the teaching of His Word so that our lives may come more in line with His calling. There are many avenues to pursue growth and godliness but the church is primary.
 - How have you experienced the impact of a local church in your life and in your walk with the Lord?
 - Why does it matter if you see the church as being primary or merely one of many organizations seeking to expand the kingdom of God?
 - If the church is to be primary in our lives, that means we should give the church our time, talents and treasure. Which of these three is the easiest for you to give to the church? Which is the most difficult and why?
 - What is your next step in making the church primary in your home and in your life? How can you encourage each other as a Home Group in this?
2. As a church, we want to be a ready bride for Christ. Throughout the New Testament, there is language used to illustrate the relationship between a husband and wife and the parallels that exist between Christ and His bride the church. One place we see this is in Ephesians 5.
 - Being ready has both a corporate element for our entire church as a body, but also a personal element. What does it look like to be a ready bride? How would you assess your readiness? What informs this assessment?
 - In the 1 John series, we discussed leaving more sin behind as a mark that we are growing in our relationship with Christ. Are you seeing fruit of that in your life now? Identify areas where you need to become a more ready bride.
 - Being a ready bride as a corporate body involves helping others get ready as well. Describe a time when someone helped you become more ready and more equipped in your walk with the Lord.
 - Who is someone you can identify in your life that you can help to become a more ready bride?
3. Williamson County is our people group. We want to live on mission in such a way that regularly and effectively demonstrates the gospel in real and tangible ways.
 - Where are the connection points you have within Williamson County where you can take the gospel with you as you go day to day?
 - What areas of your time, talents and treasures are you investing into carrying the gospel in Williamson County on a weekly basis?
 - What time, talents and treasures has God equipped you with that you want to use more effectively in engaging our community?
4. We all have a next step in our relationship with Christ and in engaging with the church.
 - What is your next step?
 - How can your Home Group help each other take a next step?
 - Spend time praying together through these things and for our church family.

Don't forget:

1. Pray for one another. Share one specific prayer request you need your group to pray each day until you meet again.
2. Pray for each of our campuses: the Georgetown Campus — Sundays at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. and the Liberty Hill Campus at 11:00 a.m.
3. Pray that the group's fellowship with God and one another would become enriched by the study of how God wants us to surrender to His will for our lives.

Family Discipleship (Deuteronomy 6:5–7):

When you wake: Choose one verse to read in the morning.

- Read Ephesians 1:5–8 — understanding God's grace. What does this verse tell us about God? About His grace? What have we received because of His grace?
- Read Ephesians 1:15 — one step to help others know Jesus. Consider whether others have heard about your faith in Jesus. Consider whether others have heard about your love for all the saints. If not, what is one step you can take today so others may know of your faith and see how you love people?
- Read Ephesians 2:10 — one step. You are God's workmanship, created for good works. What is one step you can take today to "walk in them"? (i.e., Trust in Christ? Be baptized? Become a member of FBG? Live generously?)

Before you sleep: Remind your family about the specific verse you read that morning. Talk about God's abundant grace to each of us in light of the verses — how, through Christ, we have been given the opportunity to be forgiven, to be made alive, to be a part of God's family and to have an inheritance.

When you sit down: Tell everyone in your family to get ready for a reward sometime this week. Tell them at some point you will return and it will be time for the reward. Come up with some necessary preparations (rooms clean, dogs fed, whatever the case may be for the reward you'll be bringing). When they ask when it will happen, tell them they don't know the time, they just need to be ready. At an unexpected time, when you return, announce that it's time for the reward. For those who are ready, the reward is _____. But for those who are not, the result is _____. If everyone is ready, celebrate! But if some are not, talk about what it is like to be left out of the reward. Read Ephesians 5:22–23 together and talk about what it means to be ready for the return of Christ. If everyone was ready, talk about how exciting it was for everyone to be ready. If someone wasn't ready, talk about how difficult it was for everyone that someone missed out. Remind them that the Lord has given us the opportunity to help others prepare for the return of Christ so they can celebrate and not be left out. Pray for some friends that your family wants to see prepared to celebrate the return of Jesus.

Along the way: As you go about your normal routine, talk to your kids about what it means to be dead in your sin (Ephesians 2:1), but then to be made alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:4–6). Talk about what our lives should look like now that we are alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:10). Talk about how new life, a new family and a new inheritance should stir our hearts to walk in the good works God has prepared for each of us. Every time you talk about this, take it a step further and help them see how the Lord intends to use the church family as the primary source of helping them move away from sin and toward Christ. Give specific examples of the way the church family encourages one another and prepares together for the return of Christ.