

MITCHELTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Who  
do you  
think  
you  
are?

9 WEEK SERIES IN EPHESIANS





WEEK 1

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## WELCOME TO THE SAINTS

PAGE 3

WEEK 2

---

## GRACE IN RELATIONSHIPS

PAGE 7

WEEK 3

---

## UNITED WE STAND

PAGE 11

WEEK 4

---

## WHO ARE WE TOGETHER?

PAGE 15

WEEK 5

---

## STUDY BREAK

WEEK 6

---

## LIVING LIKE SAINTS

PAGE 19

WEEK 7

---

## WHO ARE YOU AT HOME AND WORK?

PAGE 23

WEEK 8

---

## STUDY BREAK

WEEK 9

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## CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

PAGE 27

## Who are you?

Who are you? When you stop and think about your identity, what comes to mind? What makes you, you?

I'm a software support guy? I'm a teacher? I'm Bob and Cheryl's daughter? I'm a mum? I'm a golfer? But are you simply somehow just the sum of your career, your talents, your hobbies and your family connections? Or is there a deeper and more fundamental answer to who you are?

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul is helping a rag-tag collection of Jewish Messiah-followers work out how to welcome a bunch of newcomer non-Jewish believers who don't have the first clue about how to behave in the family of God. At the same time, he's helping the new guys work out how to fit in. To open the letter Paul goes back to basics, reminding each group of who they are, and who they were.

Everything else will follow from that.

*Phil Campbell*

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WEEK 1 || *EPHESIANS 1 & 2*

## WELCOME TO THE SAINTS

Who are you, really? How do you describe and define yourself when people ask?

What problems can you see with your own definition of yourself? Does it sometimes lead to *insecurity*? Or *self satisfaction*?

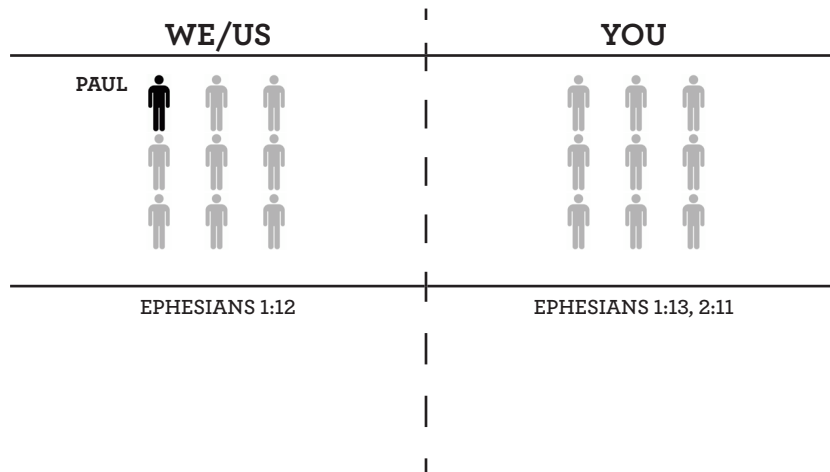


## GETTING STARTED

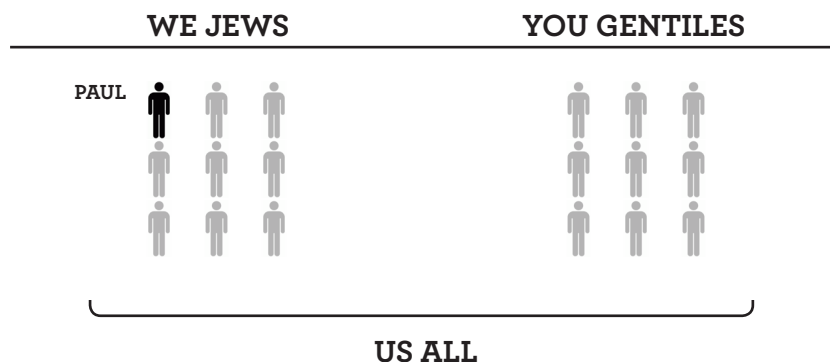
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A quick reading of Ephesians 1 and 2 shows an interesting detail that’s often overlooked. Paul regularly switches his focus between “we” (or “us”) and “you”. Different commentators have different ideas about who he means by “we” and “you”. The most common option is to simply ignore the distinction. But maybe that misses Paul’s point! Who are the two groups he’s thinking of? Let’s investigate.

1. Read through the two chapters, making a note of any hints Paul gives about the identity of each group.



Paul is a Jewish Christian. When he’s talking about himself and other Jewish Christians, he’ll generally use “we”. But when he’s specifically referring to those (like us) who are “Gentile by birth” (2:11) he’ll use “you”. Here’s where it gets tricky. His point, over and over again, is that these two groups have been joined together by our common faith in Jesus Christ. The dividing boundary is gone, so “we” and “you” are joined together as “us all”.



## WHAT ABOUT YOU?

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2. What answer would people from the “YOU” column give if you asked them: “Who are you?”
  
3. What advantages do people in the “WE/US” column have according to 1:4-12?
  
4. What good news is there for “you who are Gentiles by birth” in 1:13-14 and 2:11-13?

## MEET THE SAINTS

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We need one more thing to properly understand Ephesians and what it’s saying about who we really are: we need to meet “the saints”. Who are they? Some use the word “saints” to mean a kind of “super-Christian”. But Paul’s use of the term is different. Unfortunately, in our NIV translations, the word is sometimes replaced with phrases like “God’s people”.

5. Read Ephesians 1:15, 1:18, 3:18 and 6:18 and the hidden references in 2:19 and 3:8. Fill in the gaps:

Paul is pleased that his readers \_\_\_\_\_ the saints. He wants them to know the rich \_\_\_\_\_ of the saints. He wants them, together with the saints to \_\_\_\_\_ the depths of Christ’s love. He wants them to keep on \_\_\_\_\_ for the saints.


In the Old Testament the people of Israel were God’s “saints”, a word that simply means “set-apart-ones”. Ultimately, the New Testament calls all Christians “saints”. Here in Ephesians Paul is using the term knowing that it originally referred to Jewish Christians, the “founding members” of the church. But the great news is, he’s constantly stretching the definition because people like you and me have been invited to join them! The backgrounds of the Jews and Gentiles are vastly different, but there are some big similarities too.

6. Read Ephesians 2:1-3. What did the Jews and the Gentiles have in common before they came to faith in Christ?
  
7. In the original language, each verb in 2:5-6 has a prefix that means “together”. What have these Jewish and Gentile Christians experienced together?

## SO WHO ARE YOU?

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8. Pause at this point to summarise who you are as a Gentile Christian according to Paul.
  
9. Summarise the situation of a Gentile non-Christian according to Paul.
  
10. According to 2:8-10, what has brought about this change?
  
11. Read Paul’s words in 1:15-23 again. Can you catch a glimpse of the reason for his excitement about people like you? Do you share the same excitement?



In Jesus, the privilege of being part of God's Holy People is extended to people like us. Once strangers and aliens, we're now included among the people of God. United in a world of divisions, hopeful in a world that's hopeless, we've have been invited to be "fellow citizens with God's saints" (2:19). This is **God's church**. Who are you? You're part of it!

12. Reflect on the benefits Paul has described for anyone who puts their faith in Jesus Christ. Which of these have you consciously enjoyed in the past week?

13. Who are you? If you are a person who had no hope, and now has hope, what difference does this make in your daily life?

14. How might owning this as your identity affect the issues of insecurity and self satisfaction we talked about earlier?



For an example of what this new identity can look like in practice, watch Latechurch member Hannah share her story at [mpc.org.au/whoareyou](https://mpc.org.au/whoareyou).