

'Our Adoption: Cosmic yet Close'

Small Group Discussion Guide

September 22, 2019

Series Overview: The Letter to the Ephesians (with accompanying ESV Journal)

- *Our Adoption: Cosmic yet Close (chapter one)*
- *Our Salvation: Received yet Relayed (chapter two)*
- *Our Family: Inlaws yet Outlaws (chapter three)*
- *Our Sending: United yet Unique (chapter four)*
- *Our Love: Personal yet Profound (chapter five)*
- *Our Stance: Submissive yet Strong (chapter six)*

Getting Started:

1. What's your favorite science fiction story? It could be a book, movie, or a personal story (you know, as in, "I was abducted by aliens...")? Share what you like about this story.
2. What comes to mind when you hear the word 'cosmic'?

Digging Deeper:

3. The dictionary defines 'cosmic' as 'relating to the universe or cosmos, especially as distinct from the earth.' Read through Ephesians 1:3-10. What specifically in this section strikes you as being 'other-worldly'?
4. Note the reference made to 'the heavenly places': not only here in 1:3, but also in 1:20, 2:6, 3:10 and 6:12. Far out! In what ways could our adoption by God the Father be called 'cosmic'?
5. A common theme in the stories on outer space is the coldness of the black void surrounding the protective atmosphere of earth. However, our adoption isn't just 'cosmic'; it is 'close'! Read Ephesians 1:11-134. How does the author (Paul) turn a *universal* reality into a highly *personal* one?
6. This past weekend, we underlined all the occurrences (in chapter one) of the phrase, "in Christ" or "through Christ" or "in/through him" or "in/through the Beloved." This phrase, in its various forms, shows up a total of 37 times in the book of Ephesians! What should we make of this? What does it mean to be 'in Christ'? What else has God the Father done 'in Christ'?

Living it Out:

7. God the Father has a plan. Read Ephesians 1:10 to see what it is. How do you see yourself inside of this plan? Does this plan include your local church? Your neighbors? Your enemies?

Lifting it up:

8. The apostle Paul wants so badly for us to comprehend God's plan to unite all things in Christ, that he breaks out into a powerful prayer. Read this petition (which is packed with good theology!) in Ephesians 1:15-23. Discuss high points of this prayer and then use it as the source for your own prayers. Close your group time together by praying one or more of the petitions found in this prayer.