

DON'T SETTLE FOR BARE MINIMUM SPIRITUALITY

EPHESIANS 3:14-17

CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE - JANUARY 11, 2026

SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians 3:14-17 (ESV)

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love...

Note: This week's focus is on verses 14-17a. Over the coming weeks, we'll continue through verse 21.

ICE BREAKER QUESTION

What's something in your life where you've learned that "good enough" really isn't good enough? (Could be something at work, at hobby, in your hobbies, etc.)

SERMON RECAP

- **Bare minimum spirituality** is a posture toward God that aims for spiritual maintenance rather than spiritual fullness. This is when we fit God in where convenient, rather than arranging our lives around intimacy with him.
- **The Bible never divorces theology and experience.** Paul doesn't just teach doctrine; he prays that believers would actually experience the realities Scripture reveals.
- **There are no orphans in God's family.** Every believer—regardless of background, credentials, or past sin—has full access to the Father through Christ. Our status before God is based on Jesus' status, not our own efforts.
- **Paul prays for supernatural power.** This is power that we cannot generate on our own. It's the same power that raised Christ from the dead. This power works through the Holy Spirit to transform us from the inside out.
- **Christ "dwelling" in our hearts** means more than his presence being there. The Greek word *katoikeō* means to settle in, move in permanently, and transform a space into a home. Christ dwells in our hearts in such a way that our desires, instincts, and priorities begin to reflect his own.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Observation: What does this passage say?

1. In verse 14, Paul says "For this reason I bow my knees." According to the sermon, what is the "reason" Paul is referring to, and why does that context matter for understanding this prayer?
2. Look at verse 16. From what source does Paul expect God to answer this prayer? What does this tell us about God's ability and willingness to strengthen us?
3. The sermon explained that the word "dwell" (*katoikeō*) means "to completely dwell" or "to settle down permanently." How is this different from simply saying Christ "lives in" our hearts?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. The sermon contrasted "bare minimum spirituality" with "biblical spirituality." The first asks merely "What is required of me?" while the other asks "What's possible in Christ?" Why is this distinction so important for the Christian life?
2. Paul describes this supernatural power as working "in your inner being" (v. 16). What is the "inner being," and why does transformation need to happen there first before it shows up in our external behavior?
3. Verse 17 says Christ dwells in our hearts "through faith." What does the sermon suggest this means for how we access God's power? Why isn't this something we can simply muster up on our own?

Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?

1. The sermon mentioned several signs of bare minimum spirituality: minimal engagement with spiritual disciplines, tolerating a "sin of choice," sporadic quiet times, and semi-regular church attendance. Without comparing yourself to others, where do you see bare minimum tendencies in your own spiritual life?

2. Pastor Mike shared that we often pit theology against experience. We either emphasize doctrine while minimizing experience, or chase experiences while minimizing sound teaching. Which tendency do you lean toward, and how might God be inviting you toward greater balance?
3. The sermon offered three action steps: Make a decision (refuse to settle), Ask for it (pray for God's power), and Act on it (exercise faith). Which of these three do you most need to focus on this week? What specific step will you take?
4. As we enter these 21 Days of Prayer together, consider: In what area of your life do you most need God's transforming power right now? How can this group support you in prayer?

MEMORY VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...” –Ephesians 3:14-17a (ESV)