

WHAT GOD WANTS

for rockypc, rockhampton & the world

VISION 2023



*growing
disciples*
sacrifice. serve. speak



Recently a bunch of people were asked “What would make the God of the Bible worth believing in?”

While there were a number of attempts to be humorous and just as many offensive dismissals of God, a bunch of responses were along the lines of this: “I would believe in the God of the Bible if He was more fun.”

For many people, Christianity, God, Jesus and the Bible are all associated with a lack of freedom and a heap of rules that keep us from doing what we really want to do. Another way we might express this feeling is: “I’d believe in God if he was good for ME (but he isn’t, so I won’t)”.

This expresses the selfish, consumerist attitude of our cultural moment. An attitude that is all about what’s in it for me. A heart that desires what is best for me and me alone. Sadly, no one is immune. This desire is embedded in each and every heart, because it’s the air we breathe. It’s what we’re taught from birth. You do you! Be what you want to be!

Sadly, it affects how we think about what God wants from us and for us, and affects our expectations of how he will work in our lives. Is God good for us? How do we know?

In this series, we’re going to take some time to reflect, not on what we want from God, but on what he wants for us — what his desire is for his people at **rockypc**. What we’ll see is that God is good for us because Jesus, the just and righteous king reigns, because he’s rich in mercy, and because he gathers us together to learn to love each other and to be loved in return.

Over the next few weeks, we’re going to see that what God wants for us, is what he wants for everyone, whether they live in Rockhampton & Gracemere, or in other places around the world. God wants to grow disciples who love Jesus together, and we’ll be challenged to think and pray about how we’ll grow in the weeks, months and years ahead.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS SERIES COMPANION

ON YOUR OWN—Take your time reading through the entire book of EPHESIANS. You’d benefit from reading through multiple times before focusing in on the passages for each week. Consider how each chapter and verse tells us something about what God wants for his people. If you have time, work through the questions before your GROWTH GROUP so that you’ve started thinking about the topic before you arrive and particularly think about the CORE VALUE QUESTIONS at the end.

WITH YOUR GROWTH GROUP—Don’t be afraid to stop and talk about things that grab your attention or raise questions for you. The study questions are there as a guide. Feel free to explore other Bible passages too, as time allows.

ON SUNDAY—Make sure you bring your series companion along with you, so that you can keep track of any questions you have and record the way that God’s Spirit is helping you to understand His Word and grow in your love for Jesus.

These series companions are designed to be used as either a print version, or interactively on a device. Use whichever method is most helpful for you.

EXALTING CHRIST

EPHESIANS 1v13-23; 5v15-20

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GROWTH GROUP STUDY

IN THE SPACES BELOW YOU CAN RECORD YOUR ANSWERS. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

GETTING STARTED

What times/circumstances in your life have helped you get to know God better?

READ EPHESIANS 1v13-14

1. How are we included in Christ?

2. What blessings flow from being included in Christ?

READ EPHESIANS 1v15-19a

3. What causes Paul to pray with continuous thanks?

4. What does he think is important to ask for the Ephesians?

5. How do the Father, Son and Spirit work together in this prayer?

6. What does it show about God that he would want us to know him better?

READ EPHESIANS 1v19-23

7. What is the big deal about Jesus?

8. What power is at work for believers?

READ EPHESIANS 2v4-6 & 6v10-17

9. How is God's power at work among us?

READ EPHESIANS 5v15-20

10. How can we exalt the Son and the Father?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

What can you thank God for, from today's passage?

How often do you pray a prayer like Paul does — for yourself and others to know him better? How have you seen him answer these prayers?

SEEKING GOD

In 2023, how can you reflect God's heart to exalt Jesus — To him? To each other? To the world?

SEEKING GOD

How/Why/When are you tempted to be ashamed, unenthusiastic or distracted instead of exalting Jesus?

If someone asked you why **rockypc** talks so much about Jesus, what would you say?

MISSION

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God for the glorious inheritance we have as we're included in Christ. Thank him for the faith and love you see displayed in our **rockypc** community. Keep asking the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father to give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that we may know him better. Pray that the eyes of our hearts would be enlightened in order that we may know the hope to which he has called us and his incomparably great power for us who believe.
- Exalt and glorify Jesus, the one who has been raised from the dead, seated at the Father's right hand, far above all rule, authority, power, dominion and name. Praise the Father for placing everything under his feet, including his church. Pray that we'd make the most of opportunities to speak to one another, sing and thank him.
- Pray that we'd delight to keep praising Jesus to friends and family who have not yet believed in him. Pray that we wouldn't be ashamed, unenthusiastic or distracted. But that we would want what God wants — to see Jesus exalted in our city.

RICH MERCY

EPHESIANS 2v1-10; 4v31-5v2

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GROWTH GROUP STUDY

IN THE SPACES BELOW YOU CAN RECORD YOUR ANSWERS. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

GETTING STARTED

'You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty' Mahatma Gandhi

What do you think of Gandhi's belief in humanity?

READ EPHESIANS 2v1-3

1. Paul is describing the state of humanity without Jesus. What are we like, who and what do we follow?

2. What does this disobedient state deserve?

3. How do you react to Paul's assessment of you (in the past) and anyone who is not yet included in Christ?

READ EPHESIANS 2v4-7

4. What motivates God to save us? (v4, 7)

5. How does his salvation reverse our former circumstances?

READ EPHESIANS 2v8-10

6. What is the relationship between God's grace, our faith and our works?

7. What was God's purpose in saving us?

READ EPHESIANS 4v31-5v2

8. What good works are described here, in comparison with the disobedient desires we're to get rid of?

9. What reasons does Paul give for why we walk this new way?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

From what we've read today, which precious truths would you like to reflect back to God in prayer? (perhaps about God's character or actions)

SEEKING GOD

How do the temptations to boast in your goodness or to do good in order to be saved, play out in your life? How does today's passage help you in these moments?

In 2023, how can you reflect God's heart of kindness, grace, mercy and love to others at home, work, school, **rockypc** and elsewhere?

SERVE

How does today's passage impact the way you see friends and family who don't yet have faith in Jesus?

What motivates you to keep speaking the good news of Jesus to them and praying for them?

MISSION

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God for his incomparably rich mercy, grace and love towards sinners like us. Praise his lavish kindness that motivated him to send Christ to give himself up for us. Thank him for his gift of salvation and the faith to receive it. Thank him for raising dead, disobedient sinners to life.
- Confess when you've boasted of your goodness and tried to do good works to earn salvation. Ask for forgiveness, knowing that God is always kind and merciful.
- Pray that we'd live out the good works that God has prepared for us — that we'd be kind, compassionate and forgiving, just as we've been forgiven.
- Pray for friends and family who remain dead, following the ways of this world and their own desires. Pray that God would grant them faith and raise them to life in Jesus.

A LOVING COMMUNITY

EPHESIANS 2v19-3v21; 6v18-20

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

IN THE SPACES BELOW YOU CAN RECORD YOUR ANSWERS. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

GETTING STARTED

How did you start coming to **rockypc**? Who invited you? How did you hear about us?

What keeps you as part of the community here?

READ EPHESIANS 2v19-22.

Paul has been describing how God has poured out his grace on both Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews), in order to make a new humanity (2v15)

1. What binds us together as God's people?

READ EPHESIANS 3v1-13

2. What mystery is Paul talking about?

3. What is God's purpose in making the mystery known now?

READ EPHESIANS 3v14-21

4. What do we learn about God here? As Father? Christ? Spirit?

5. What do Paul's prayers for the Ephesian Christians show about his ultimate desires for them (and for us)?

6. How is God's word at work throughout the section we've read?

READ EPHESIANS 6v18-20

7. What is the role of prayer in speaking the gospel?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values - we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

How does your view of church match up with Paul's?

In 2023, how can you press into **rockypc** COMMUNITY — Changing your priorities? Viewing one another as family? Loving and caring for others? Praying for one another? Joining a SERVE team? Something else?



In 2023, how can you get DEEP IN GOD'S WORD — to grow yourself and to grow others?

Do your prayers mirror the way Paul prays for the growth of the gospel? What needs to change?

How can we glorify our Father, as a community, so that our friends and family don't think that church is just a building or an institution that we go to?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise our Father God for bringing our **rockypc** COMMUNITY together from all different walks of life, as we join his bigger family from all places and times. Praise him that we're included in Christ, built together into a dwelling in which he lives by his Spirit.
- Thank God that His Word has come to us — the message of grace which means we can approach him with freedom and confidence. Pray that we'd get DEEP INTO HIS WORD.
- Pray that out of his glorious riches, he'd strengthen us through his Spirit so that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. Pray that we'd be rooted and established in love, having power together to grasp how high, wide and deep Christ's love is, so that he would be glorified forever.
- Confess that we aren't as prayerful as Paul describes. Ask for God's help to pray for one another and for the growth of the gospel — that we'd know what to say and that we'd declare it fearlessly. Pray that God would bring more and more people from being strangers who are far away, to becoming heirs and sharers together in the promise of Christ Jesus.

THE WHOLE BODY

EPHESIANS 4v1-16

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

GROWTH GROUP STUDY

IN THE SPACES BELOW YOU CAN RECORD YOUR ANSWERS. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

GETTING STARTED

What is the best gift you've ever been given? Why was it so special?

READ EPHESIANS 4v1-6

1. As you think back through Ephesians, what do you think Paul means by "the calling we've received"?

2. What will characterise a life worthy of this calling?

3. What unites us? How does this motivate us as we live out our calling?

READ EPHEISANS 4v7-13

Paul is quoting Psalm 68 here. This is a song David wrote that depicts God as a powerful, just, yet gentle king who is returning in victory to ascend his throne in Jerusalem. As he does, the LORD is parading his humiliated enemies and generously bestowing gifts on his people.

4. How does Paul apply this image to Christ?

5. What do the gifts mentioned here have in common? How might they equip the whole body to serve?

6. What is our aim in serving?

READ EPHESIANS 4v14-16

7. What is the contrast between v14 and v15? NOTE: 'Speaking the truth in love' is not about saying difficult truths in a nice way. It is loving to speak the gospel truth to one another. See also 1v13 & 3v17-19

8. Summarise the role of Christ in this whole passage?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

What would you say to someone who says church isn't that important, because you can be a Christian on your own?

What will it mean for you live worthy of your calling — to grow in humility, gentleness, patience, bear with others in love?

COMMUNITY

How have apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers been a gift to you? To the whole of **rockypc**? How have they been equipping us to serve?

DEEP IN THE WORD

In 2023, how can you play a part in building the body of Christ so that we all reach unity in faith and knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ?

SERVE

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that he is the God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Praise him for Christ who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe. Thank him that, in Christ, we are his body, joined and held together, growing and building up in love.
- Pray that we'd see how important we are to one another in God's plans. Pray for unity in the Spirit in hope, and faith. Ask forgiveness for our lack of humility and gentleness with each other. Pray that **rockypc** would be characterised by patience and bearing with each other in love.
- Thank God for those who first preached the gospel to us, and for the many people who have spoken the truth of the gospel to us in love to grow and equip us. Pray that we would all use our gifts to serve Christ's body so that we may all reach unity in faith, knowledge of the Son and become mature.

ON SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER @ 10AM

WE'LL BE JOINING TOGETHER AT SOUTHSIDE FOR OUR ANNUAL

VISION SUNDAY

WE'LL TALK ABOUT OUR PLANS FOR 2023 AND COMMIT THEM TO GOD.

WE'LL ALSO BE HOLDING A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AFTER CHURCH, 1130AM TO DISCUSS STAFFING AND FINANCES FOR 2023.

ALL THE DOCUMENTS YOU NEED WILL BE AVAILABLE SEPARATELY TO THIS SERIES COMPANION & THERE WILL BE TIME FOR DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS DURING THE MEETING.

PLEASE SPEND SOME TIME AS A GROWTH GROUP, DISCUSSING AND PRAYING ABOUT THE YEAR AHEAD.