

# ENEMIES NO MORE

## SESSION 4

Knocking Down the Dividing Walls of Hostility  
*Relational*

### Sharing Life

(20 minutes)

**Gather:** Welcome your Life Group partners. As you gather, each take time to add your note of encouragement and signature to the card that has been prepared for your neighboring congregation. Try to express your prayers, support and appreciation of their ministry and partnership in the Gospel.

**Discuss:** Your *Personal Life Application Challenge* this past week was to work on the “Memory Verse Challenge” verses for the first three weeks of the Enemies No More Life Group series. How did you do?

Turn back to the verses from *Eph. 2:8-10*, *Eph. 2:14* and *Eph. 4:3-6* on page 57 if you are still working on them. Otherwise, join your voices together and recite these three memory verses as a Life Group. Your Life Group Leader will get you started. (Recite)

Just as with the discipline of Daily Devotions and Prayer, it takes some time and effort to memorize scripture. You’ll find that as you work at it, Bible memory becomes easier. Don’t defeat yourself with words like, “I’m no good at memorizing things” or “I have a terrible memory.”

Be encouraged that God has given you a tremendous mind and heart to know his Word and recall it throughout your day. Remember the words from *II Timothy 3:16-17* that speak of the great value of God’s Word:

***“All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”***

Growing in knowledge and application of the Word of God is a vital component in being prepared for the ***“works of service”*** we discussed during last week’s lesson. (*Eph. 4:12*)

Your *Group* Life Application Challenge involved the card of encouragement to another congregation. If it isn't fully completed, please do so during your refreshment break or before you leave today. Who will mail or deliver your card to this neighboring congregation?

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Take a few more minutes to share what you learned through their website as well as other opportunities you may have had to interact with some of their members. What are some points of commonality that could lead to greater cooperation in the future?

Your *City-Transformation* Life Application Challenge was to complete reading the book "Prayer Evangelism" by Ed Silvoso (Regal Books, 2000) and take some notes of ideas for breaking down the **denominational** "*dividing walls of hostility*" in your city or region.

Share any ideas or insights that you feel led to pass along. Describe a "next step" in implementing one of these ideas.

**Pray Together:** Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for this Life Group and the opportunity to meet again this week. Bless this gathering and those who are hosting this session. Please continue to teach us and open our eyes to see that we have more in common with other Christians than we do things that divide us. Help us continue to reach-out and build relationships of trust and common mission that bring your name glory. May your Holy Spirit go with our card of encouragement as it is delivered to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Be with us now as we turn our attention to the divisions that can affect relationships in our world, especially those between "men and women" and "husbands and wives." Teach us to love one another as you have first loved us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# Transformed Thinking

(30 minutes)

## Review: (This brief review can be read by Life Group participants prior to Session 4)

As we reach the mid-point of our Enemies No More series, let's be reminded that Paul's letter to the Ephesians is above all a call for "unity" in the Church of Jesus Christ. In the first chapter he describes God's eternal purpose in Christ:

***"And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment – to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ." Eph. 1:9-10***

In chapters two and three of Ephesians, Paul shares the surprising revelation he has received from God that would change the Church forever. He proclaims:

***"This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus." Eph. 3:6***

How could this be? How could both Jews and Gentiles have equal access to the love, forgiveness and grace of God? Paul says,

***"For he himself (Jesus) is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility." Eph. 2:14-16***

This revelation led to a huge "paradigm shift" in the early Christian Church. The Good News of the Gospel is that through faith in Jesus, every person, regardless of their religious and cultural background, is welcomed into the family of God.

Even more, through Christ, we have been given the authority to be "transformation agents" that knock down all the other "***dividing walls of hostility***" that still plague our world today. Paul goes on to describe these walls as **individual, racial, denominational, relational, generational, societal and spiritual**. He declares that because Jesus knocked down the mountainous "***wall of sin***" that is at the root of every "***dividing wall of hostility***," we live with the hope of building greater unity and peace as a testimony to the world.

Today, God is *“making his appeal through us,” (II Corinthians 5:20)* in order that the world would be reconciled to Father and to one another through Christ. We are partners in transformation and it gets even better! As our unity increases, so does our authority to challenge the *“spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12b)* that war against the plans and purposes of God.

**Reflect:** Why would someone take up this “call” when it is so much easier to sit back and do nothing? How about you? Are you in?

#### **(Begin Session 4)**

**Read:** Troubled relationships among human beings are involved in every one of the *“dividing walls of hostility”* addressed by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians. Since the very beginning of time... when Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent, people have been blaming each other for their problems in life. The Old Testament is filled with murder, war and hostilities among people that make for dramatic Hollywood scripts.

The New Testament doesn't miss a beat as the very one who claimed to be *“the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6)* was crucified on a Roman cross. Even the resurrection of Jesus from the dead did not bring humanity together in peace. And consider our so-called “civilized” world: murder, divorce, abuse, rape, suicide, abortion, terrorism, genocide, war... the list of crimes against humanity is too long and painful to recite. How can we ever overcome this brokenness in our world?

**Discuss:** Do you feel “more” or “less” safe in the world today than you did ten years ago? What has changed? How would you describe the path our world is on?

**Read:** Paul was convinced that no amount of human striving could ever bring lasting change. He could see that the human race needed a “makeover” of epic proportions, a new beginning, a spiritual transformation from the “inside-out.” The answer, both then and now, is Christ alone! You see, our God is in the transformation business, and the change that Jesus brings, leads to a completely new view of the world. You'll remember the words of *II Corinthians 5:16-17*:

*“So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”*

Lasting transformation will only come about when we begin to “regard people” in the same way we have come to “regard Christ.” The flip side... then we can begin to treat all people with the love of Christ! As creatures of the “new creation,” God gives us a different set of lenses with which to view ourselves and those around us.

That's why in our book of Ephesians, Paul goes on to teach that relational *“dividing walls of hostility”* can only be overcome as we:

*“... put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”*  
*Eph. 4:24*

Following his eloquent appeal for unity in the Church through his declaration of **“one Lord, one faith, one baptism...”** (Eph. 4:5), Paul launches into a section of teaching intended to challenge this new Christian community to its very foundations. After playing “pastor” for three and a half chapters, Paul exercises his other leadership gifts as “apostle, prophet, evangelist and teacher.” He lays down the gauntlet, as if to say, “Now let’s see what you’re made of!”

From **Ephesians 4:17 - 5:20**, Paul describes in vivid terms the Christian way of life for those who are intent on living as “transformed followers of Jesus.” He incorporates a variety of images to contrast “Life before Christ” with “Life in Christ.” Check out the chart below:

<b><u>Life Before Christ</u></b>	<b><u>Life In Christ</u></b>
Darkness	Light
Separated from God	United with Christ
Living a lie	Living in truth
Self-centered	God-centered
Angry	Peaceful
Lazy	Hard-working
Foul mouthed	Kind and Compassionate
Vengeful	Forgiving
Tearing things down	Building things up
Sexually immoral	Loving and committed
Deceptive	Transparent
Foolish	Purposeful
Drunk on wine	Filled with the Spirit
Resentful	Thankful

**Discuss:** Rest assured... none of us is perfect. We are all somewhere in the middle, on a journey of faith to become more like Jesus. Circle two or three words on the right that represent qualities that you would like to see developed more fully in your Christian life. Choose one of these words to share with your Life Group and explain why it is important to you.

**Read:** In the middle of this challenging section, Paul says:

***“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Eph. 4:32***

Let's consider each of these key words, "kindness, compassion and forgiveness," as a faithful summary of the many "good words" in this section that describe both the character and the actions necessary to break down **relational "dividing walls of hostility."** Take turns reading.

**Relational "dividing walls of hostility"** are knocked down by **kindness**:

*"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy." Titus 3:4-5a*  
(Jesus represents the kindness, love and mercy of God.)

*And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus." Eph. 2:6-7*  
(The kindness of Christ has secured a seat for us in the heavenly realms for all eternity.)

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control... Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." Galatians 5:22a, 25* (The qualities of Christ are intended to be evident in our lives just like good fruit on an apple or orange tree.)

*"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Colossians 3:12*  
(Our Christian clothing includes Christ-like qualities on the inside.)

*For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love." II Peter 1:5-7* (Here is a recipe worth mixing!)

**Discuss:** Pause in your reading and enjoy a minute of silent prayer. Ask the Lord to reveal to you an area of your life where you need to demonstrate greater **kindness**. Write it down.

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**Read:** Continue taking turns reading.

**Relational "dividing walls of hostility"** are knocked down by **compassion**:

*"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." Matthew 9:35-36* (Apart from the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, we are destined to live as lost sheep, harassed and helpless.)

*“When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.” Matthew 14:14 (Compassion reaches-out to touch the needs of others.)*

*“Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him” Matthew 20:34 (When the compassion of Jesus “opens our eyes,” we come to see clearly our calling to follow him.)*

*What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’ It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.” Romans 9:14-16 (God’s compassion does not correlate with our effort!)*

*“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose” Philippians 2:1-2 (Compassion contributes to unity.)*

*“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” Colossians 3:12 (Our Christian clothing includes Christ-like qualities on the inside.)*

**Discuss:** Pause in your reading again for another minute of silent prayer. Ask the Lord to reveal to you an area of your life where you need to demonstrate greater **compassion**. Write it down.

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**Read:** Be kind and compassionate and continue taking turns reading.

**Relational “dividing walls of hostility”** are knocked down by **forgiveness**:

*“He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.’” Luke 24:46-49 (The message of forgiveness is to be shared to the ends of the earth, empowered by the Holy Spirit, starting right where you are.)*

*“When the people heard this, (the Good News of Jesus) they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the for-giveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.’” Acts 2:37-39 (Forgiveness in Christ is available to everyone who will receive it, even those who have been far away from God.)*

*“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.” I John 1:9-10 (Jesus calls us to “come clean” and “be cleaned.”)*

*“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” Colossians 3:13-14 (Forgiveness leads to the kind of love and unity that blesses the heart of God.)*

**Discuss:** Pause in your reading again for one more minute of silent prayer. Ask the Lord to reveal to you an area of your life where you need to demonstrate greater **forgiveness**. Write it down.

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**Read:** This challenge to all Christians to be *“kind, compassionate and forgiving” (Eph. 4:32)* is a vital part of God’s plan in Christ to knock down the relational *“dividing walls of hostility”* that persist in causing such strife in the world today. That’s why we must continually *“put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:24)*

Greater unity among people will never be the result of mandates, quotas, sensitivity training or political correctness. It’s about the heart, and hearts can only be changed by God. Christians must always be willing to take the first step in reaching-out to people whose lives are broken by sin. As you prayed and wrote down some responses, consider your next steps, and “go for it” as the Holy Spirit leads you.

The first two verses of chapter 5 provide an awesome summary:

*“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” Eph. 5:1-2*

**Discuss:** None of us can imitate God’s omnipotence, omniscience or omnipresence. We are not all-powerful, all-knowing or everywhere present in our human strength. But in what ways can we imitate God? What kind of sacrifice will this imitation involve?

**Quote:**

“Preaching the truth without love is like giving someone a good kiss when you have bad breath. No matter how good your kiss is, all the recipient will remember is your bad breath!” (Silvoso, Prayer Evangelism, p.40)

### **Transformation Church Insights:**

- The God of the universe has called us to be partners in transformation.
- Relationships in our world are broken by sin and its consequences.
- Only the love of Jesus can give us the “new heart” we need to truly love others.
- **Relational** “*dividing walls of hostility*” will come crashing down only when we “live up” to our new life in Christ.
- Kindness, compassion and forgiveness are hallmarks of a “life of love” lived for Jesus.



# Transformed Living

(40 minutes)

**Read:** Human relationships never take place in isolation. They are lived-out in community, with groups of people that represent neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, churches, cities and nations. But in a very special way, community is experienced most intimately in the family, where husbands and wives, parents and children try to love each other with the love of Jesus. It is no easy task!

The well-known song, “New York, New York,” announces: “If I can make it there, I’ll make it anywhere.” How true of our families! If we can fully live-out the teachings of our Christian faith in our families, we can do it anywhere! It is in our marriages and families where we often experience the extremes, either the tallest of **relational “dividing walls of hostility”** or the most loving, peaceful and joy-filled relationships in all of life.

Perhaps that’s why Paul now talks about marriage and family? They represent the crucible of faith in action. In *Ephesians 5:21-33*, Paul specifically addresses husbands and wives. In *Ephesians 6:1-4* he speaks to parents and children. (This will be the subject of Session 5.) But whatever your family configuration, the principles set forth in these verses applies to every Christian. Have someone in your Life Group read *Ephesians 5:21-33*.

**Discuss:** Why is it often more challenging to live-out our Christian faith within our marriages and families than in other parts of our lives? List ten major stresses being faced by married couples today:

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |

**Read:** Paul’s teaching on marriage and family is grounded in one amazing verse:

***“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Eph. 5:21***

Did you just cringe a bit? The word “submit” is not popular in the world today. It sounds oppressing... and it can be. Paul, however, is describing something much different. We will learn that “biblical submission” is an attitude that is at the heart of our relationship with God.

To “submit” is to “yield to the power, action and control of another.” Let me be blunt. You cannot be a Christian unless you yield your life through faith to the *power* of God, the *action* of Jesus on the cross, and the daily *control* of the Holy Spirit.

In spite of the amazing promises of scripture, many who call themselves Christians today have never genuinely “submitted” their lives to Jesus Christ. The throne of their heart is still occupied by “self,” not King Jesus. And guess what? “Self” will almost always make “self-centered” decisions. No wonder that half of our marriages end in divorce and so many families are falling apart.

Note that Paul’s challenge is for “mutual submission.” He says, “***Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.***” Close cousins of “submit” are words like love, trust, serve, honor and respect. The meaning of this often misinterpreted text is simply to “love one another the way Jesus loves us!” This is true for our marriages and families. It is also true for every other relationship in life.

The bottom line is this: your marriage should reflect the same character and qualities that describe your relationship with Jesus Christ! Are we not supposed to be “***imitators of God?***” ***Eph. 5:1*** Is not all of life intended to flow out of our relationship with Jesus? How about the myriad of “good words” from the previous section including “***kindness, compassion and forgiveness?***” ***Eph. 4:32*** Yes, everything that is representative of our relationship with Jesus ought to be a part of our marriage relationship, and above all, love!

In ***Colossians 3:14***, Paul says:

***“And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”***

So I’ll say it! Are you ready for the bombshell? Without “mutual submission” in your marriage you will never experience the level of love and intimacy God intends! Marriage is not a 50/50 deal... “let’s both give-in or give-up and meet somewhere in the middle.” No! Marriage is a 100/100% deal... both of you giving yourselves completely, just as Jesus gave his life “completely” for you. Pause with your Life Group and process for a moment.

**Discuss:** What are the negative connotations usually associated with the word “submit?” Why does anything that seems to imply a “loss of control” cause us to get defensive?

**Read:** Here’s what follows in Ephesians.

To the wives, Paul says:

***“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.” Eph. 5:22***

To the husbands, Paul says:

***“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” Eph. 5:25***

And then quoting from the Old Testament, he adds:

***“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24***

As they say, “The rest is just details.”

Now do you see the point about “mutual submission” and “intimacy?” A “self-centered, half-way, we’re each our own person, what’s in it for me” approach to marriage will fall short of the wonderful promise that ***“the two will become one flesh.”*** This level of intimacy requires that both husband and wife love as Jesus loved and are fully committed to one another in body, soul and spirit. If you want intimacy, you must learn to ***“submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Eph. 5:21***

**Discuss:** Be brave and do this experiment in your Life Group. In the chart below, Couple #1 operates out of the old paradigm of “Self-Centered Independence.” Couple #2 operates out of the new paradigm of “Spouse-Centered Mutual Submission.” Try to describe or characterize the differences in approach to the following issues that might be taken by these two mythical couples.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Couple #1 Self-Centered Independence</u>	<u>Couple #2 Spouse-Centered Mutual Submission</u>
Communication		
Values/Faith		
Work		
Sex		
Parenting		
Money		
Future Dreams		

If you are a participating in your Life Group together as a married couple, take it a step farther. When you get home, discuss and evaluate these same categories in light of your own relationship. Be honest. Are you more like Couple #1 or Couple #2? Are you ***“submitted to one another out of reverence for Christ,”*** or are you mostly doing your own thing? This exercise may be affirming or painful. It could also be the starting point of something new!

**Read:** Divisions between men and women, husbands and wives, reflect the very foundations of sin, but of this we can be sure:

***“So God created man (humankind) in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27***

***“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” Genesis 1:31a***

Men and women were created in the very image of God. Marriage was established to be the foundation of family and demonstrate a level of love and unity that reflects the very mystery of the Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We know this to be true because throughout *Ephesians 5:21-33*, Paul parallels the relationship between husband and wife with the relationship between Jesus and the Church.

***“This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.” Eph. 5:32-33***

Mutual submission! Love and Respect! When we live in such a way, out of **“reverence for Christ,”** in our marriages and families, in the Church and in the world, the **relational “dividing walls of hostility”** will come crashing down!

**Quote:**

“Every marriage needs a balance between talking and listening. Carving out twenty minutes a day, whether over coffee in the morning or after dinner at night, will develop a personal relationship with each other. Harmony about family goals and problems comes from spending time fleshing out our differences about them. There can’t be a meeting of the minds if the minds don’t meet!”  
(Morley, “Man in the Mirror” Zonderman Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI 1997, p.124)

**Transformation Church Insights:**

- Community is experienced most intimately in family.
- Marriages are facing many challenges today that are pulling them apart.
- Biblical submission is an attitude that is at the heart of our relationship with God.
- To **“submit to one another”** is to love one another the way Jesus loves us.
- Independence and self-centeredness are marriage breakers.
- God created men and women in his image. He is deeply committed to the success of marriage.

## Life Application Challenges

(10 minutes)

**Read:** Take a few minutes to read this section as a Life Group and discuss any questions that may need clarification. All three of your Life Application Challenges this week are to be completed throughout the week and reported on at the beginning of Session 5. Have fun!

Your *Personal* Life Application Challenge this week is to fully commit yourself to the “good habit” of Daily Devotions and Prayer. You have received a lot of “input” during these first four sessions of Enemies No More. We are now at the half-way point of our study. It is a good time to pause and reflect. I encourage you to follow the example of the Bereans in *Acts 17:11* who **“...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”**

The devotional readings this week build upon our Session 4 theme of breaking down **relational “dividing walls of hostility.”** As we have learned, these barriers may involve our personal relationship with the Lord or our relationships with others including spouse and family, friends and neighbors, co-workers and class-mates, or the pastors and people in our local congregations. So ask yourself some good questions. Pray and seek the wisdom and direction of the Holy Spirit. You will be blessed!

You are also encouraged to continue your commitment to memorizing scripture through the “Memory Verse Challenge” that you will find below.

Your *Group* Life Application Challenge this week is to implement and report on a series of **“intentional acts of kindness”** in Jesus’ name. You’ll notice that I didn’t say “random acts of kindness.” In one of our key verses from *Eph. 4:32*, Paul says,

***“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”***

The love of Jesus is to be shared intentionally in our lives, not accidentally. So your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to demonstrate the love of Christ to others this week through **“intentional acts of kindness.”** You are also encouraged to record your experiences and be prepared to report back to your Life Group next week.

Today you prayed and asked the Lord to reveal areas where you need to demonstrate greater **“kindness, compassion and forgiveness.”** Let this be a starting point for action!

**“Intentional acts of kindness”** could include a phone call, a lunch, a card or letter, a helping hand, a date night, an encouraging word, help with homework, a special meal, a hospital visit, time for conversation, showing up at a game or concert, a prayer... the list of possibilities is endless. Paul says,

***“... live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” Eph. 5:2***

Pray for direction and “go for it!” Ask God to use you this week to knock down some **relational** “*dividing walls of hostility*” in Jesus’ name!

<u>Intentional Act of Kindness</u>	<u>Who Was the Recipient?</u>	<u>What Was the Response</u>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Your *City-Transformation* Life Application Challenge is to phone, text, email or visit someone you know who is in a leadership position in your city and express your appreciation and encouragement.

City leaders can include Mayors and City Council Members, Policeman, Fireman, Emergency Personnel, Superintendents and School Board Members, Principals and Teachers, Businessmen and women, Doctors and Nurses, Pastors and Youth Workers, those who head-up Community Organizations and more. These community leaders usually receive far more criticism than appreciation.

We all know someone in our city/region that serves in one of these leadership capacities. So take the opportunity this week to make a contact and share some appreciation and encouragement that demonstrates the love of Jesus.

In doing so, you will also be implementing the first principle of Prayer Evangelism which is to “Bless and Speak Peace.” This “**Intentional Act of Kindness**” will also foster the second principle of Prayer Evangelism which is to “Build Relationships.” As the Holy Spirit leads, your contact may provide you with additional opportunities to “Respond to Felt Needs” and “Proclaim the Kingdom of God.”

Record your contact here so that you can share it with your Life Group.

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## **Prayer Support**

(15 minutes)

Every week you will be encouraged to take a few moments to share personal prayer requests within your group. Go ahead and do that now. You may write them down here:

Now, close with a group prayer for these needs and continue to include them in your prayers throughout the week.

## **Details**

(5 minutes)

Finalize any details with your Host/Leader and Life Group members. Remember to share responsibilities, especially refreshments and childcare as needed.

Our next Life Group Session is:

Date:

Location:

Time:

Remember to bring:

### **Memory Verse Challenge**

*Ephesians 4:32*

*“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other,  
just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

# Daily Devotions

**Read:** How are you doing with your Daily Devotions? Are you setting aside a regular time each day, or squeezing them in when you can? Don't give up! You are encouraged to continue cultivating a daily routine of personal Bible study, reflection and prayer. Below you will again find some passages of scripture for each day of the coming week, starting with Day One tomorrow. These passages build on the lesson you have just completed. Read the scripture. Reflect on the questions. Pray as God leads you. Enjoy this special time with the Lord!

## **Day One – John 2:1-11**

How much water did Jesus turn into wine? How does it foreshadow what Jesus does in each of our lives by way of transformation? What was the response of the disciples?

## **Day Two – I John 4:7-12**

People certainly claim to love others without loving God. What kind of love is being talked about here? Who makes the first move?

## **Day Three – Matthew 6:5-15**

Where is your “prayer closet?” Where or when are those moments when you have your best conversations with God? Why is it so important to “give” forgiveness if you want to be able to “receive” forgiveness?

## **Day Four – I Peter 3:1-7**

How does it change the equation of a marriage relationship when both husband and wife are growing together in the Lord? If one of the partners is not a believer... what is Peter's advice for leading them to the Lord?

## **Day Five – John 15:1-17**

What are several ways that you try to stay connected to the vine? Which of them provides the most nourishment and growth? Why is it necessary for Jesus to command love? vs.12 In what ways can you “lay down your life for your friends?” vs.13 What does it mean to be called a friend by Jesus? vs.15

## **Day Six – Philippians 2:1-11**

In what ways have you experienced encouragement, comfort, fellowship tenderness and compassion by being united with Christ? Are you willing to express these same qualities to others? What happens when believers become “like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose?” How would “*dividing walls*” come down if we always “considered others better than ourselves?” vs.3

## **Day Seven – Your Life Group meets today!**