

# MYSTERY

## LIFE GROUPS DISCUSSION GUIDE

### **WITNESS, Ephesians 3:1-13** December 2, 2018

#### **CONNECT**

1. Do you love mysteries? How would you feel if God decided to reveal to you a mystery He had kept hidden for thousands of years?

#### **CELEBRATE**

2. We often say that we are moving toward Jesus and taking others with us. If we all move toward Jesus, it will bring us closer together. What does this look like practically? How have you experienced growing in unity with someone at church as you've pursued Christ together?
3. What is the divine mystery of Christ that was not disclosed to previous generations? See Ephesians 3:1-6 & Colossians 1:24-29. How was this hidden in the past?
4. Paul is writing Ephesians from prison. He was jailed for preaching that God will save Gentiles as well as Jews (see the story in Acts 21:17-36). Why do you think Paul refers to this in Ephesians 3:1? What does Paul mean by saying "for this reason"? See Ephesians 2:11-22.
5. Gentiles could always be saved in the Old Testament by adhering to the Jewish faith and practices. But now Paul declares that Gentiles could be saved without becoming Jews—they can simply become Christians. Why was this such a hard teaching for many to accept? Why did it land Paul in jail? What feelings would this stir up in those who trusted their faithful law-keeping for their salvation?
6. When two groups who hate each other (such as Jews and Gentiles) come together in harmony and unity, what message does it proclaim to a watching world? Why is Paul so eager to proclaim this message (see Ephesians 3:10-13)? How does this apply to our struggles today over racial and ethnic divisions?
7. The gospel of Jesus Christ saves lost souls and creates a new community among these souls. Based on Ephesians 3:1-13, what did God design this community to look like?
8. To live out God's gospel-shaped vision for our lives, we need boldness and confident access to God. According to Ephesians 3:12, where do we get these? How do we take hold of these and use them in our lives?
9. Read Ephesians 3:10. How does a diverse Christ-centered community demonstrate God's multifaceted wisdom? How does a diverse church reflect this in a way a homogenous church cannot?
10. Cosmic rulers and authorities are watching the church to learn about God's multifaceted wisdom (Ephesians 3:10). How do your actions personally contribute to this? What are these rulers and authorities learning about who God is by watching how you live your life?
11. While God kept the mystery hidden, He dropped plenty of clues. What hints can you recall from the Old Testament that indicate God's heart has always been for Gentiles and Jews to be fellow heirs?

#### **CONTRIBUTE**

12. Look at your personal life. What divisions exist between groups of people? What are the "us" and "them" separations? Focus on one of these divisions. Pray over it. Then ask God what He wants you to do to pursue harmony across that divide.
13. Search your heart. How do you feel when you read a passage so devoted to closing racial and ethnic divides? Does it feel like an intrinsic part of the gospel or a distraction from the heart of the gospel? If you've never shared your feelings about this openly before, take the time to do so in your group. As others share, focus on listening and understanding why they feel the way they do. Then praise God that He brings such a diverse group of people together as one.