

# ONE NEW HUMANITY

## SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

June 9, 2024

“One New Humanity”

### OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for accepting us when we didn't deserve to be accepted. We thank you for reconciling us when we didn't deserve to be reconciled. We thank you for creating a church where all can be accepted as they seek to follow you. Help us to consider what it means to create an environment where all are welcome, even those who may think differently and act differently than us. And help us to put you first as we seek to further your church. We pray this in the powerful and matchless name of Jesus. Amen.

### SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

#### Ephesians 2:11-22 (NIV)

*<sup>11</sup>Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—<sup>12</sup>remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

*<sup>14</sup>For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, <sup>15</sup>by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup>and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. <sup>17</sup>He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup>For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*

*<sup>19</sup>Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup>In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

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## “Training for the Games”

### INTRODUCTION

The early churches of Jesus followers weren't without their differences. Coming from different backgrounds, the places they came from were part of what defined who they were – and, consequently, what others weren't. This week we're diving into Ephesians 2 – part of a letter written to the church founded in the city of Ephesus – and seeing how Jesus didn't just act on the behalf of one group... he acted for everyone. Even those we may see as “the other.”

As we look to continue Jesus' church – his “household” as the author of Ephesians called it – we must seek out ways to make others welcome... even “the other” that doesn't look, act, or think the way that we do. Jesus' act of reconciliation on the cross wasn't just to connect us to God after the Fall. It was to connect those who believe in him.

### QUESTIONS

1. When is the last time you intentionally went out of your way to seek a (healthy) interaction with someone who you wouldn't usually interact with... an “other” who you thought would disrupt your peace?
2. When has the fear of “the other” – someone different from you - kept you from accepting someone? What have you learned from that experience?
3. When were you accepted into a group to which you, yourself, were an outsider? What did that acceptance mean to you?
4. What does it mean to you that Jesus' death connected you to both Jesus and a wider community? What does it mean to you that it took an act as extreme as death for that connection to be made?
5. What does it mean to you that there are so many others who have gone before you in building Jesus' church? How do we continue to build this “household” of Jesus to accept others in the future?

### FINAL APPLICATION

Take time this week to consider how you can help to make Asbury a place that is welcoming to those who may be different from you.