

FACES

FACES AND PLACES
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WEEK 2: LIVE WHERE YOU ARE

Connect

Each week there will be a Faces and Places assignment, an opportunity to be agents of change in the world, pointing everyone we encounter to more and more life in Jesus.

- ◆ Did you go to any of the places or connect with any of the faces you shared with the group last week?
- ◆ When you were in elementary school and gym class was choosing sides, were you first pick? Or last pick? Or somewhere in between? How did it make you feel?

Discover

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to a young church in Ephesus, the second largest city in the world in the first century. Known for its pursuit of beauty and perfection, the culture of Ephesus made it acceptable, even expected to push imperfection to the fringes of society.

Think about Paul's words to the Ephesian church, crowded with its cross-section of society (single, married, masters, slaves, young and old):

“Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5 God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. 6 So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. 7 He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. 8 He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.”

—Ephesians 1:4-8 New Living Translation

- ◆ As you think about these words from Paul's letter, what do you think stood out to the first century Christians who heard them first?
- ◆ What do you think it felt like to hear that God chose you? That, God adopted you because of His love for you?

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♥ How does it feel to know that God “decided in advance” to adopt us into His own family? That, in advance, “He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave all our sins”?

Consider the following statement from the book, *This Invitational Life*, by Steve Carter:

“By adopting you into His family, God passed a heritage of acceptance and love on to you. Your entire life is now devoted to living as He does—wholeheartedly and unabashedly searching for ways to extend unconditional love to others. This invitational life is all about sharing with those you meet the good news that there is a God who loves them, pursues them, and believes in them.”

♥ If this is true, what does it say about our assignments in life?

♥ How does this God-sized assignment make you feel (scared, excited, nervous, etc.)?

♥ How expectant are you?

Every place you enter is brimming with opportunity to keep this story of transformation happening.

Respond

During our time together, what we are learning should be accompanied by an active response to what God is doing in our hearts. How we respond to God shows our willingness to let God direct our daily lives.

♥ What places will you go this week that require greater intentionality?

♥ Which faces come to mind that require a little extra unconditional love?

Write an “I will” statement that reflects your goal for the week:

I will _____

Pray Together

Praying for one another is an essential part of following Jesus. How can we pray for you as you follow Jesus?