

Welcome to Table Talk



Table Talk helps children and adults explore the Bible together. Each day provides a short family Bible time which, with your own adaptation, could work for ages 4 to 12. It includes optional follow-on material which takes the passage further for older children. There are also suggestions for linking **Table Talk** with **XTB** children's notes.

Who can use Table Talk?



Table Talk

A short family Bible time for daily use. **Table Talk** takes about five minutes, maybe at breakfast, or after an evening meal. Choose whatever time and place suits you best as a family. **Table Talk** includes a simple discussion starter or activity that leads into a short Bible reading. This is followed by a few questions.

- **Families**
- **One adult with one child**
- **A teenager with a younger brother or sister**
- **Children's leaders with their groups**
- **Any other mix that works for you!**

XTB

XTB children's notes help 7-11 year olds to get into the Bible for themselves. They are based on the same Bible passages as **Table Talk**. You will find suggestions for how **XTB** can be used alongside **Table Talk** on the next page.

In the next three pages you'll find suggestions for how to use **Table Talk**, along with hints and tips for adapting it to your own situation. If you've never done anything like this before, check out our web page for further help (go to www.thegoodbook.co.uk and click on Daily Reading) or write in for a fact sheet.

THE SMALL PRINT

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HOW TO USE Table Talk

Table Talk is designed to last for up to three months. How you use it depends on what works for you. We have included 65 full days of material in this issue, plus some more low-key suggestions for another 26 days (at the back of the book). We would like to encourage you to work at establishing a pattern of family reading. The first two weeks are the hardest!

DAY 1 What shall we do?

KEYPOINT
When the people heard Peter's speech, they asked, "What shall we do?" **Read Acts 2:38-39**

Today's passages are:
Table Talk - Acts 2:38-39
XTB - Acts 2:37-40

TABLE TALK

Recap: Look again at yesterday's five points from Peter's speech.

HEAR

When the people heard Peter's speech, they asked, "What shall we do?" **Read Acts 2:38-39**

TALK

Peter told them to **repent**. What does that mean? (To **repent** doesn't just mean saying sorry. It means asking God to help you to **change**, and to do what He says.) What two things did Peter say would happen? (Their sins will be forgiven, they'll be given the gift of the Holy Spirit.)

DO

Use the illustration in **Notes for Parents** [on the previous page] to show how Jesus rescues us from our sins.

PRAY

Verse 39 means that this promise is for us too—even though we live 2000 years after Peter! Thank God for sending Jesus so that you can be forgiven.

Building up

The apostles had lots of helping others about Jesus. Some of them also wrote the books that make up the New T. But what if they forgot some of what they had seen or heard? Or didn't understand it? **Read John 14:25-26** to see how the Holy Spirit helped them. Thank God for making sure that what the apostles taught and wrote down about Jesus was true and accurate.

Table Talk is based on the same Bible passages as **XTB**, but usually only asks for two or three verses to be read out loud. The full **XTB** passage is listed at the top of each **Table Talk** page. If you are using **Table Talk** with older children, read the full **XTB** passage rather than the shorter version.

The main part of **Table Talk** is designed to be suitable for younger children. **Building Up** includes more difficult questions designed for older children, or those with more Bible knowledge.

As far as possible, if your children are old enough to read the Bible verses for themselves, encourage them to find the answers in the passage and to tell you which verse the answer is in. This will help them to get used to handling the Bible for themselves.

The **Building Up** section is optional. It is designed to build on the passage studied in **Table Talk** (and **XTB**). **Building Up** includes some additional questions which reinforce the main teaching point, apply the teaching more directly, or follow up any difficult issues raised by the passage.

KEYPOINT

This is the main point you should be trying to convey. Don't read this out—it often gives away the end of the story!

Linking with XTB

The **XTB** children's notes are based on the same passages as **Table Talk**. There are a number of ways in which you can link the two together:

- Children do **XTB** on their own. Parents then follow these up later (see suggestions below).
- A child and adult work through **XTB** together.
- A family uses **Table Talk** together at breakfast. Older children then use **XTB** on their own later.
- You use **Table Talk** on its own, with no link to **XTB**.



FOLLOWING UP XTB

If your child uses **XTB** on their own it can be helpful to ask them later to show you (or tell you) what they've done. Some useful starter questions are:

- Can you tell me what the reading was about?
- Is there anything you didn't understand or want to ask about?
- Did anything surprise you in the reading? Was there anything that would have surprised the people who first saw it or read about it?
- What did you learn about God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?
- Is there anything you're going to do as a result of reading this passage?

Have an adventure!

Table Talk is deliberately not too ambitious. Most families find it quite hard to set up a regular pattern of reading the Bible together—and when they do meet, time is often short. So **Table Talk** is designed to be quick and easy to use, needing little in the way of extra materials, apart from pen and paper now and then.

BUT!!

Most families have special times when they **can** be more ambitious, or do have some extra time available. Here are some suggestions for how you can use **Table Talk** as the basis for a special family adventure...



PICNIC

Take **Table Talk** with you on a family picnic. Thank God for His beautiful Creation.



WALK

Go for a walk together. Stop somewhere with a good view and read Genesis 1v1—2v4.

GETTING TOGETHER

Invite another family for a meal, and to read the Bible together. The children could make a poster based on the passage.

MUSEUM

Visit a museum to see a display from Bible times. Use it to remind yourselves that the Bible tells us about real people and real history.

HOLIDAYS

Set aside a special time each day while on holiday. Choose some unusual places to read the Bible together—on the beach, up a mountain, in a boat... Take some photos to put on your **Table Talk** display when you get back from holiday.

You could try one of the special holiday editions of **XTB** and **Table Talk**—**Christmas Unpacked**, **Easter Unscrambled** and **Summer Signposts**.



FOOD!

Eat some food linked with the passage you are studying. For example Manna (biscuits made with honey, Exodus 16v31), Unleavened bread or Honeycomb (Matthew 3v4—



but don't try the locusts!)



DISPLAY AREA

We find it easier to remember and understand what we learn when we have something to look at. Make a **Table Talk** display area, for pictures, Bible verses and prayers. Add to it regularly.

VIDEO

A wide range of Bible videos are available—from simple cartoon stories, to whole Gospels filmed with real life actors. (Your local Christian bookshop should have a range.) Choose one that ties in with the passages you are reading together. **Note:** Use the video **in addition** to the Bible passage, not **instead** of it!

PRAYER DIARY

As a special project, make a family prayer diary. Use it to keep a note of things you pray for—and the answers God gives you. This can be a tremendous help to children (and parents!) to learn to trust God in prayer as we see how He answers over time.



Go on—try it!

DRAMA OR PUPPETS

Take time to dramatise a Bible story. Maybe act it out (with costumes if possible) or make some simple puppets to retell the story.

Enough of the introduction, let's get going...

DAYS 36-50

Notes for Parents

EXPLORING EPHESIANS

Over the next 15 days, we are taking a look at Paul's letter to the Christians in Ephesus.

When we write letters today, they tend to be much shorter than this one. In Paul's time, there were no telephones, or email and even the transport was very different from today. It is probably true to say that letters were sent less often, but were longer. They would have been delivered by hand and taken a long time to arrive.

When Paul wrote a letter to his friends or a specific church, he always had a purpose in mind. It may have been to:

- Encourage them
- Put them right about something
- Discipline them (correct and train them)
- Warn them
- Teach them something specific about Jesus or God
- Remind them about something important

His letters often included several of these.

Paul's letter to the **Ephesians** contains many very big ideas, which could get you a bit 'bogged' down. It is very important that you concentrate on some of the overall themes of the letter, rather than every bit of detail. Don't be distracted.

In this series we are going to look at the first half of Ephesians, chapters 1-3. They help us to see the importance of unity in the church through what Jesus has done on the cross. Paul explains what God has done through Jesus in bringing together Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) in His church, for His praise and glory.



EPHESUS FACT FILE

This city was the most important one in the region (now known as Turkey). It was a harbour and the centre of the major, thriving, trade route. The city was made up of a diverse group of people from all over the region.

Look at an atlas and find Izmir (Smyrna) in Turkey. The ruins of Ephesus are near here.

DAY 36

1,2,3, Go!



KEYPOINT

Paul wants to tell others about what Jesus has given to those who believe in Him.

Today's passages are:

Table Talk: Ephesians 1v1-3

XTB: Ephesians 1v1-3



TABLE TALK

What kinds of post can you get? (*Letters, postcards, parcels, bills, leaflets.*) How does it feel when you get post? Over the next 15 days we are looking at a letter written by Paul to a church at Ephesus. (See **Notes for Parents** to find out about it.)

READ

When you write a letter to someone, how do you start it? How do you end it? Paul's letter is a little different.

Read Ephesians 1v1-3

TALK

How was Paul's letter different? (v1) (*Starts with who it is from; addressed to God's people.*) Your Bible may say 'Saints' in v1. This means everyone who believes and trusts in Jesus. Why did Paul write letters to God's people? (*Check out some reasons in Notes for Parents.*)

THINK

What are some reasons why you write letters? (*Encourage someone, remind them of something, thank them...*) Paul was so excited about God's kindness in what Jesus had done, that he had to write about it! What does Paul say God has given us? (v3) (*Every spiritual blessing—that's the good things God gives us because of Jesus.*) We'll find out more about exactly what those blessings are in the next few days.

PRAY

Dear God, thank you for loving us so much and sending Jesus so we can be in your family. Help us to tell others about you. Amen



Building up

Read the **Ephesus Fact File** in **Notes for Parents** to find out more about Ephesus.

DAY 37

Chosen children



KEYPOINT

God chose us to be His followers, before we were even born.

Today's passages are:

Table Talk: Ephesians 1v4-6

XTB: Ephesians 1v4-6

TABLE TALK

If you could choose anyone to be your best friend, who would you choose? (It could be someone famous.) Why would you choose them? Draw a picture of them (or cut one out and stick it). Around the picture, write why you would choose them. (*Keep this for Day 41.*)

READ

Read Ephesians 1v4-6



TALK

Who chose us and when? (v4) (*God, before the world was made!*) What did He choose us to be? (v4) (*Holy and without fault—see **Notes for Parents**, Day 38.*) What else are we? (v5) (*His sons/children, through Jesus.*)

THINK

Spend a minute thinking about your friends and why they are your friends. Is it because they are nice, good, kind, friendly, clever, or for other reasons?

God has NOT chosen us because we are really nice or good—but because He WANTED to!

Being God's children is one of the amazing spiritual blessings we have because of Jesus.

Dear God, you're wonderful. You've given us every spiritual blessing because of Jesus. Thank you. Amen

PRAY

Building up

How do we know that God has chosen us?—because we believe in Jesus. **Read John 1v12-13.** Have you been chosen by God to be one of His children? (*If you have put your trust in Jesus—you have!*)

DAY 38

Notes for Parents

GREAT NEW WORDS

As you work through Ephesians together, you will come across some Great New Words. Below is an explanation for each, together with a symbol to help you. Understanding these words will be a big help in getting to grips with God and His great plan.

GRACE



- When God gives us what we don't deserve.
- Grace is God's HUGE kindness to people who don't deserve it.
- An undeserved gift. (*Throughout Days 36-50*)

MERCY



- When God does not give us what we deserve.
- God's decision to help us and not treat us the way we deserve. (*Day 44*)

SALVATION



- To be saved, by Jesus, through His death and resurrection. (*Throughout Days 36-50*)

HOLY (and BLAMELESS) 100%

- To be seen as special in God's eyes, perfect and as if you had NEVER done anything wrong. (*Day 37*)

REDEEM / REDEMPTION



- The price to pay for someone's freedom or rescue.
- To pay for something, which used to belong to you, so you can own it again. (*Day 38*)

GOSPEL



- The good news about Jesus and what He has done. (*Day 40*)

RECONCILE



- To bring people back together again.
- To mend a relationship, which has been broken. (*Day 45*)

REVELATION / REVEAL



- To make sense of something.
- For God to make something understood, about Himself. (*Day 41*)

DAY 38

Free and forgiven



KEYPOINT

Jesus' death on the cross was the payment needed to give us freedom and forgiveness.

Today's passages are:

Table Talk: Ephesians 1v7-8

XTB: Ephesians 1v7-8

TABLE TALK

Get two pieces of string three feet long with loops at each end. One piece for each person. Put your hands through the loops (like handcuffs) but make sure your string comes between your partners string and his/her body so that you're connected. Now get separated without a) taking the string off or b) breaking the string!



Explain that being tied together is like being a slave. Being set free can only happen if you have the answer.

Answer: Take your piece of string through your partner's **loop** and over his/her **wrist**.

The answer to the game was quite easy. But God says we are trapped by sin so that we are separated from God. This is like being a **slave**. **Read Ephesians 1v7-8** to see how we can be set free.

Use **Notes for Parents** to check the meaning of another great word—**Redemption**. What was the price for us to be set free? (v7) (*Jesus' sacrificial death—this means His death on the cross*). Just like the game, we can't work out how to get free of sin. We can't free ourselves. But **God** has done it for us.

Paul loves to praise God for the things He has done. It's a good pattern to follow, so praise God for Jesus dying on the cross and giving us freedom and forgiveness.

Building up

Think about the difference between being a slave and being free. Make a list of these differences. Which is the best way to live?

DAY 39

A grand plan



KEYPOINT

God's rescue plan will eventually result in a whole new world with Jesus in charge.

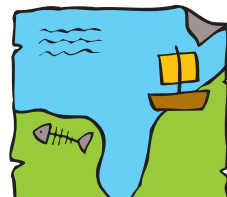
Today's passages are:

Table Talk: Ephesians 1v9-10

XTB: Ephesians 1v9-10

TABLE TALK

Draw a treasure map and put a cross (X) where the treasure is buried. (*Keep it for later.*) If it was a real map you wouldn't find the treasure until you found the X. The map becomes the secret plan.



READ

In our passage today we can see another plan, which involves a mystery and a fantastic end result. To get to that end result involves a cross as well.

Read Ephesians 1v9-10

THINK

God wants you to know His secret plan! It will be completed because God has dealt with sin already. How did He do it?

(Solve the mystery)



Jesus + (†) _____

= (NIS) _____ Forgiven

The final plan will come true in the future, when God makes a new world, where **no sin** will exist! Who will be in charge at the centre of everything? (v10—*Jesus*)

DO

On the bottom of your treasure map write, "God's plans always happen!"

PRAY

Thank you Father that your plans always come true. Thank you that one day Jesus will be in charge of everyone and everything in a perfect world. Amen.

Building up

The worst thing about a mystery or secret plan is not being able to work it out. But God's Secret plan isn't a mystery. **Read Ephesians 1 v 10 again** to remind yourself what it is.

DAY 40

It's for you



KEYPOINT

God keeps His promises, and to prove it He's given His Holy Spirit to those who believe in Jesus.

Today's passages are:

Table Talk: Ephesians 1v13-14

XTB: Ephesians 1v11-14

DO

(You need paper, pencil, a candle, matches and a small coin, e.g. 5p.)

Write a short letter, making a promise to do something (e.g. help make your bed, wash the car). Melt some candle wax onto the bottom of the letter and push the coin into it before it goes hard. Then remove the coin.



This is called **sealing** a letter and it confirms that what is said will happen. In the past, families had their own seal so others would know who had made the promise. It was a stamp of ownership.

READ

Our passage today talks about God's promise and His stamp of ownership—His seal. **Read Ephesians 1v13-14**

TALK

Who did we hear about saving us? (v13) (*Jesus*) What kind of news is this? (v13) (Good news. Some Bibles use the word "Gospel"—which means Good News.) Having believed, what was given? (v13) (The Holy Spirit.) He is a stamp of ownership/seal, to make sure we know God will keep His promises.

PRAY

Having God's stamp of ownership in your life, the Holy Spirit, is the best thing in the world. If you are a Christian thank God for giving you His Holy Spirit to help you and to guarantee His promises.

Building up

Can you think of any promises God has made in the Bible? Try looking up some of these: **John 1v12; John 3v15; Hebrews 13v5**. What's the difference between God's promises and any we might make?

DAY 41

More to explore



KEYPOINT

Paul sets an example of thanks and prayer for others.

Today's passages are:

Table Talk: Ephesians 1v15-17

XTB: Ephesians 1v15-19

TABLE TALK

Get together some of the symbols and objects to do with the last five days and recap some of the things learnt. (E.g. *best friends picture; a wrapped present; two pieces of string; treasure map; a cross; a sealed letter.*)

READ

Paul starts this next part of Ephesians, "For this reason ...". He is saying that because of all the things we've learnt over the last five days, he does something...

Read Ephesians 1v15-17 (Check out Day 38 for what 'revelation' means.)

TALK

Paul gave thanks for the Christians at Ephesus. What exactly does he thank God for? (v15) (*Their faith and their love.*) What does he pray for them? (v17) (*That the Spirit will make them wise and reveal God to them.*) Why does he pray for this for them? (v17) (*So they will know God better.*)

THINK

The things Paul has written are true for all Christians. Think of two friends who you could thank God for because of their faith in Jesus and love for others. Think of two friends who you could pray for, so they would know God better.

PRAY

Pray for your friends.



Building up

Sometimes it is hard being a Christian but **Ephesians 1v19-20** tells us how and why we can keep going. What do we have? (v19) (*God's power*) And what is it the same as? (v20) (*It is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.*) How does that make you feel?

DAY 42

Power trip



KEYPOINT

God used His power for the benefit of everyone who believes and trusts in Jesus.

Today's passages are:

Table Talk: Ephesians 1v19-23

XTB: Ephesians 1v19-23

TABLE TALK

(You need paper and pencil.) Imagine you have the power to do anything (the same power as God) for one day. What would you do? Make a chart, headed "Power", with two columns. Title the first column, "My Power", and list the things you would do.

Most of us would be quite selfish if we had God's power for a day, but God is very different. He is unselfish. He uses His power to help us.

Read Ephesians 1v19-23

(Some hard ideas here—we'll just pick out a few key ones.)

- How did God show His great power in Jesus? (v20—*raised Him from the dead.*)
- Who does Jesus rule over? (v21—*all powers in heaven and earth.*)
- What does Jesus rule over? (v22—*everything.*)
- Who does Jesus help? (v22—*the church, us.*)

Put these answers in your "Power" chart in the second column, titled, "God's Power".

Praise God for the power He's given Jesus for our benefit.



PRAY

Building up

In v23, Paul says the church (Christians) is Christ's body. **Read 1 Corinthians 12v12-27**, to see how important every part of the body of Jesus is. That's all of us who believe and trust in Jesus!

DAY 43

Notes for Parents

BEFORE AND AFTER

Below is a short summary of the situation each of us is in before and after accepting what Jesus has done through His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. The Bible makes each of these clear.

BEFORE We are:

- Dead in sin – This is the situation EVERYONE is in, relating to God.
- Facing God's anger – God cannot stand sin. He gets angry because it separates people, whom He loves, from Him. He MUST punish those who won't deal with their sin and rebellion.
- Following the ways of the world – We rebel against God's instructions and standards and instead, are influenced by the standards and ways of living set by those around us.
- God's enemy – If we are not FOR God, we are AGAINST Him. There is no in-between.
- Slaves to the devil – If we are not in God's family, the devil is our master, whether we realise it or not.
- Selfish in doing what we want – We think we are rulers of our own lives, making our own decisions. But although some things may work out, many things will go wrong.



AFTER We are:

- Alive in Jesus – This means we are alive spiritually and have a relationship with God, as members of His family.
- Shown God's mercy and saved by God – We will no longer have to be punished, as we deserve.
- Able to stand up for Jesus and follow His example – Realising all that God has done for us through Jesus, we live our lives to please Him.
- God's children – This is the promise that we have from God. It is not a 'maybe', but a 'definitely'.
- Free in Jesus to love and serve – Instead of being slaves and tied up, we are free to do all the things God wants us to, especially to love and serve other people.

DAY 43

Before...



KEYPOINT

Paul reminds the Ephesians what they were like before they followed Jesus.

Today's passages are:

Table Talk: Ephesians 2v1-3

XTB: Ephesians 2v1-3

DO

Dress up as **scruffy** as you can. Put on clothes that don't match and even mess up your hair (if you've got some!). How would you feel going to meet the Queen like this? Would they let you in?

READ

Today's passage is a bit like you dressing scruffy for the Queen—but it's to do with your life stopping you being God's friend. **Read Ephesians 2v1-3**

TALK

What were the Ephesians like because of their sins? (v1) (*Dead*) They weren't physically dead, but it means they were separated from God and the eternal life He gives. Whose ways did they follow? (v2) (*The world's and the devil's.*)

THINK

What kind of things do we do which are not God's ways? These things make us God's enemies. What will we face? (v3) (*God's anger/wrath.*)

But remember that Jesus came to save us from God's anger at sin. *More about that tomorrow.*

PRAY

Ask God to help you to live His way and say sorry for the things which you know you have done wrong.



Building up

Think of some things which you could do to show people that you follow God's way and not the world's. Make sure that you do some of these over the next few days.

DAY 44

Amazing grace



KEYPOINT

God's love has saved us even though we don't deserve it.

Today's passages are:

Table Talk: Ephesians 2v4-6

XTB: Ephesians 2v4-10

TABLE TALK

Dress as **smart** as you can—we will say why later. *Look back to Day 38 and Notes to Parents to check out the explanation for **Grace** and **Mercy**.*



READ

Remember how we left the Ephesians yesterday... dead in their sins, following the devil's and the world's ways, and being separated from God. Today we see how things can change.

Read Ephesians 2v4-6

TALK

What does Paul say we are? (v5) (*Alive in Christ.*) That sounds much better than being dead in our sins! What three things have made this possible? (v4-5) (*God's love, mercy and grace.*) Where does God raise us to? (v6) (*Sits us with Jesus.*)

THINK

Today, wearing our smartest clothes, gives us a picture of what God does for us. God loves us so much that He makes us clean from all the wrong things in us and makes us a new person. The picture of us sitting with Jesus in heaven means we will go to heaven and live with Him forever.

PRAY

It's God who deserves the praise! If you are a Christian, thank Him for saving you.

Building up

Read Ephesians 2v8-10 What do the verses say being saved is? (v8) (*God's gift*) So, what can't we do? (v9) (*boast*)

Verse 10 says we are created like Jesus to do good things. Think of some of the things you could do for others and plan to do them.

DAY 45 Wallbreaker, peacemaker



KEYPOINT

Jesus' death has broken the barrier between people, and also between people and God.

Today's passages are:

Table Talk: Ephesians 2v14-16

XTB: Ephesians 2v14-18

TABLE TALK

Get two chairs and a blanket and make a barrier between you. Crouch down and without speaking try to communicate through the barrier.

READ

This passage is talking about a barrier between Jews and Gentiles (everyone who isn't a Jew). It wasn't like a physical wall. It was a barrier caused by the hate they had for each other.

Read Ephesians 2v14-16

TALK

Who brought peace between Jews and Gentiles? (v14) (*Jesus*) What has happened to the barrier? (v14) (*Destroyed.*) How has Jesus brought peace? (v16) (*By dying on the cross.*) What was His purpose? (v15) (*To bring them together as a new people and to bring them peace with God.*)



DO

Pull the blanket down and lay a picture of the cross (or your Bible) over the blanket to show what Jesus has done.

PRAY

Thank God for breaking all barriers down through Jesus and bringing peace. Ask Him to help you keep peace with others.

Building up

Read Ephesians 2v17-18. It says Jesus preached peace to the Jews (those near) and the Gentiles (those far away). What has this given us? (v18) (*Access to God. We have this especially through prayer.*) What could you pray to God about?

DAY 46 You belong



KEYPOINT

Gentiles (non-Jews) can now belong as members of God's family.

Today's passages are:

Table Talk: Ephesians 2v19-22

XTB: Ephesians 2v19-22

TABLE TALK

Talk about being on holiday in another country. What is it like? What are the good things and the bad things?



READ

Being in another country is strange and can be difficult to cope with. Paul says the Ephesians were like foreigners in another country. But now, because of all that Jesus has done, the Ephesians are no longer foreigners, but members of God's family. **Read Ephesians 2v19-22**

TALK

Because of Jesus, those who believe in Him belong in God's family, rather than being strangers or foreigners. How does Paul describe them? (v21) (*A building becoming a temple.*) Paul says we are like a building where the Holy Spirit lives. (v22).

DO

(*Optional*) Draw a church building using big bricks. Now draw a different face on each brick. Across the bottom write out verse 22.

If we are being built together, how should we treat each other? What can you do to help others in God's family?

PRAY

Thank God that Jesus makes us part of God's new people. Ask him to help you to treat others in his family with kindness.

Building up

Read **Ephesians 2v20** again. What is the foundation built of? (*Built on apostles and prophets teaching with Jesus as the cornerstone.*) Remember you are like a brick in God's building, the church. If Jesus is the cornerstone—the most important part of God's people—we won't fall apart.