

# CHRIST THE CENTER

Staff Training Bible Study



Jesus Christ is our only hope for life and ministry. He Himself says, “apart from me you can do *nothing*.” Therefore, the foundation for all of our staff training in The Navigators is our understanding of who Christ is and who we are in Him.

Christ is and must be, the center.

## WHERE WE’RE GOING:

01	02	03	04	05	06	07
<b>LIFE IN CHRIST</b>	<b>CHRIST</b>	<b>LIFE</b>	<b>ABIDING</b>	<b>LABS</b>	<b>RESPOND</b>	<b>OPTIONAL STUDIES</b>
An overview study of <b>Ephesians</b>	Crucial questions from <b>Ephesians 1-3</b>	Exploring the effect of Christ on our lives from <b>Ephesians 4-6</b>	Reflections in John 15	Deploy what you’ve learned in unique real life activities.	Connect what you’ve discovered to life and ministry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tool: Book Survey</li> <li>• Tool: Chapter Analysis</li> </ul>



## WHERE YOU’VE BEEN:

Take a few minutes to prepare your heart for the study. Read the quote below and consider—am I much occupied with Jesus?

*“A soul filled with large thoughts of the Vine will be a strong branch, and will abide confidently in Him. Be much occupied with Jesus, and believe much in Him, as the True Vine.”*

- Andrew Murray “Abide in Christ”

## **01 LIFE IN CHRIST**

Begin with an overview study of Ephesians. (And give yourself plenty of time/5-10 hours)  
After finishing your study of Ephesians, please answer the additional questions that follow.

**Already studied Ephesians?** If you have previously studied Ephesians, please review your study with your trainer and discuss if any further study is needed.

**First Time?** Please see the attached guides and do a Book Survey and/or a Comprehensive Chapter Analysis of Ephesians. Tools are provided for you in the appendix.

## **02 CHRIST**

Refer to Ephesians 1-3 as you consider the privilege of being in Christ.

### **A. Christ is the Center of Worship**

1. Define worship.
2. What words/phrases that Paul uses in Ephesians 1 encourage you to worship God?
3. Considering your unique design and temperament, what changes could you make to your devotional life that would help you focus more on the greatness of God?

### **B. Christ is the Captain of our Salvation**

1. Describe the various aspects of salvation found in Ephesians 2:1-22.

Between us and God (1-10):

Between people (11-22):

2. How is each member of the trinity involved in salvation (1:3-2:22)?



3. List some benefits of being “in Christ” found in Ephesians 1.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Take some time to reflect on your life. What changes have you seen as a result of Christ’s work in your life? In what ways is the Holy Spirit making you more like Christ? How are these being reflected in your testimony as you share with unbelievers?

**C. Christ is the Chief Cornerstone of the Church**

1. Define the Church using references from Ephesians and other Scriptures. (*You may want to consult a Bible dictionary*).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Describe Christ’s relationship to the Church (*list verses that apply*).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What is/are the purpose(s) of the Church (*see: Ephesians 3:20-21 and 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 3:15; Isaiah 2:2; 1 Corinthians 1:2*)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. In what ways does your current ministry on campus help fulfill these purposes?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What is your emotional response to the truth that you as an individual are part of the global, historic, eternal church?

#### **D. Christ is the Cause for our Evangelism**

1. What is the gospel of Christ we are to proclaim, based on Ephesians 1-3?
2. How does Paul describe the lost in Ephesians 2?
3. Summarize Paul's view of his calling in Ephesians 3. What aspects apply to your ministry?

#### **E. Christ is the Center of our Prayer Life**

1. What is prayer like most often for you (hard work, obligation, delight, etc)? Why?

Consider Paul's prayers in Ephesians 1 and 3 (on the following page) and answer below.

2. What are some common themes in these two prayers?
3. How is Christ the center of Paul's prayers?
4. What would it look like for you to grow in prayer?

# PRAYERS

## FOR THE EPHESIANS

*15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

1:15-23

*14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

3:14-21



## **03 LIFE**

Refer to Ephesians 4-6 as you consider the privilege of living for Christ

### **A. Christ-Centered Conduct**

1. What different kinds of conduct does Paul address in Ephesians 4:1-5:21?
2. If we're saved by grace, through faith as a gift, why does our manner of life matter?
3. What specific exhortation of Paul's addresses a need you have for displaying godly character? How is God asking you to trust Him in this area?

### **B. Christ-Centered Relationships**

1. What relationships does Paul address in chapters 5 and 6?
2. Which of these most applies to your current situation or needs? How so?



### C. Christ-Centered Warfare

1. List the weapons God has given us to protect ourselves from the enemy's attacks and their importance.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Where are you most vulnerable? Why? How do these verses on our armor speak to your heart?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What memorized verses, actions, attitudes, encouragement and accountability from others have helped you gain victory over sins? How can you grow stronger in experiencing God's victory?



### D. Take it to Campus

1. How are others on your team helping you trust God and live in obedience? How do they need help?

## **04 ABIDING**

We finish our study around the dinner table with Jesus and the disciples on the night He is betrayed. The goal of this section is to read slowly, thoughtfully and expectantly, meeting with God in this familiar passage.

### **A. Setting**

Consider the setting of John 15. Include what you know about the context.

- It's a holiday weekend as everyone prepares to celebrate the Passover
- In a few hours Jesus will be betrayed and arrested.
- Recently, Jesus has been especially poignant about his death
  - On their way to the city he says, *"we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him."* (Mark 10:33-34)
  - After having his feet anointed a few days later he says, *"she has anointed my body beforehand for burial."* (Mark 14:8)
  - At the table tonight he says, *"one of you will betray me,"* (John 13:21) and that Peter will deny him three times tonight! (13:38)

Take a few minutes to envision the setting. Imagine being one of the disciples: see Jesus sipping the wine, dipping his bread, feel your feet still damp from his cleaning. Is there sorrow in his eyes? Joy? What do you feel? What would you want to ask Him?

### **B. Read John 15:1-17**

Read John 15:1-17 aloud a time or two, listening for the portion that grabs your attention. It may be a single word, a phrase or a surprising description. Don't overthink it, but take note of whatever rises to the surface on this reading.

### **C. Meditate**

Quietly consider the portion that caught your attention. Inwardly asking, *what are you revealing about Yourself? What are you saying to me Holy Spirit?* It may be helpful to again imagine being at the table with Jesus as you listen to the Lord.

### **D. Prayer**

Talk to God about your response? Is your heart full of gratitude, confession, frustration, joy, etc.

### **E. Trust**

How is God inviting you to trust Him? How is He wanting to shape your life out of this passage? End the time quietly resting in God's presence and preparing to enter into the world, abiding.





## **05 Labs**

Labs take learning and put it into practice. These labs seek to infuse Scripture into the campus setting in order to deepen our understanding of Christ the Center. Jesus would often draw upon his surroundings to make spiritual points come to life. So let's give it a shot!

### **A. CORNERSTONE CONSTRUCTION LAB**

#### **Introduction**

Have you ever wondered, what does “Christ the Center” mean anyway? Ephesians gives us a few images to help fill in our understanding. One image is of a building, foundation and cornerstone. This lab is going to help your understanding develop through tactile learning. Yes, we’re going to make a building and think about the significance of Christ, the apostles and us.

First study Ephesians 2:19-22 to prepare yourself for the activity. Think about all of the construction type elements mentioned in the passage. Now look at 1 Peter 2:4-7 and also note the construction language used. Jesus is part of the foundation (sometimes all of the foundation, 1 Cor 3:11) and is identified as the Cornerstone. Now for some tactile learning.

#### **Assignment**

1. Research the concepts of cornerstone, foundation and buildings during Bible times.
2. Now that you’ve completed your research it’s time to build. Pick your materials. It can be Lego’s, actual rocks, sticks, Play-doh, spaghetti or whatever you can find that’s similar to building materials of Bible times.
3. Use the construction knowledge you gained from your research to build a building in accordance with the proper understanding of cornerstone, foundation, and building.
4. As you’re building, refer back to Eph 2:19-22 and 1 Peter 2:4-7 and think about the spiritual significance of the structure you’re building. Contemplate the spiritual significance within the construction process, don’t just rush to finish or get too occupied with building to impress.
5. To complete the assignment: Take a picture of your finished construction project and put it into a Word document.
6. In that Word doc write at least three paragraphs describing the significance of the cornerstone in relation to the foundation and the rest of the building. How do the construction principles spill over into spiritual principles? Get creative and help your audience get a better understanding of what it means to have Christ at the center of your spiritual construction. What deeper understanding did you gain about Christ as the Center?



#### **Take It To Campus**

Share your reflection on this activity with a student, your Bible Study, Staff team or trainer.

## B. Nature & Nutrients Lab

### Introduction

Jesus said: *“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing”* (John 15:4-5).

When a branch abides in the vine it remains in very close proximity, but Jesus is even closer than that. He’s also in us (Jn 15:5), abiding in us by His Spirit (Jn 14:17). Our connection to Christ and His connection to us is of such a nature that Christ is influencing all that we are and all that we do. He’s therefore generating all the fruit that comes out of our lives. Bearing fruit is not the command of John 15, it’s actually an indicative of what will happen when we abide. “Abide” is the command or imperative in Jn 15:4 & 9. This abiding relationship infuses the nature and nutrients of the Vine into the branch so that fruit naturally comes out and glorifies the Vinedresser.

Where else do we see this principle of abiding at work? The vine and branch represent one example, but there are probably a few more examples of abiding in your house, apartment, or campus. For example, fish abide. They’re in the water and the water is in them. Without the water they can do nothing. This principle is at work all around us in nature, appliances, and everything in between.

### Assignment

1. To complete this lab, look for five different physical examples of abiding where something is so connected to something else that the influence of the one infuses its nature and nutrients into the other and thus a desired result is accomplished. You’re basically thinking of vine, branch, fruit type examples of common everyday abiding. Since this is field work, please don't do an internet images search, but actually take pictures of things you can experience in your house and/or campus (5 pictures total).
2. Develop a Word document that includes a picture of each of your five examples. Keep in mind that these illustrations aren’t going to be perfect, so don’t strain too hard on this.
3. Below each picture in your Word doc describe what is pictured and how it depicts an abiding relationship.
4. Make sure to include how nature and nutrients are infused to accomplish the desired result.
5. Conclude your Word doc by describing what you are learning about abiding and what it means to have Christ as the Center of your life.



### Take It To Campus

Share your reflection on this activity with a student, your Bible Study, Staff team or trainer.



## **06 RESPOND**

Take a few minutes to *review* your study and consider the highlights. Then *reflect* on the questions below. DON'T SKIP THIS...*responding* is a key part of being formed through this experience.

What were 1-2 key takeaways or discoveries from the study?

How did what you learned in this study shape your understanding of the significance of Christ and abiding in Him?

What is one way you might need help in this area of ministry?

What questions arose that you are excited pursue and learn more?



### **To Complete Your Study:**

Return to the online course, select Module 06 from the menu, and follow the instructions!

# Book Survey

Staff Training Bible Study



## **BACKGROUND**

AUTHOR	AUDIENCE	DATE
Who was he and what do we know about him? Key Scriptures?	Who is the letter addressed to? Where did they live? What can we discover about them?	When was the book written? What was happening in the world/culture at the time?

## **FAMILIARIZE**

### **BROWSE:**

- Flip through the pages of the book. Read the section titles and skim for words that stick out to you. Move quickly, looking for highlights and what jumps off the page.

Do you sense any themes or key words? Anything else stick out to you?

### **FIRST READ:**

- Read the entire book in one sitting. Read quickly without stopping and look for themes, repetition and general highlights.

What did you notice during this read?

### **VIDEO BREAK:**

- Search youtube for the “Bible Project” video on the book. Add notes below:

### **SECOND READ:**

- Read again more slowly
- If possible, print the text out and assign paragraph titles in the left column.
- As you read, look for and color code repeated words and phrases.

### **IDENTIFY**

- Give a simple title to the book (try to use picturesque words from the text)
- Choose a key verse. Is there one that summarizes the letter, or carries key themes?

### **SUMMARIZE**

- Fill out the chart to track your findings

Title:	Author:	Date:	Purpose:
Key Verses(s):	Audience:		
Visual Summary:			Outline:





# CHAPTER ANALYSIS

Staff Training Bible Study: Tools



God's word is sweeter than honey and more valuable than gold (Psalm 19:10), but it doesn't often "yield its fruit to the lazy.\*" It is hard, spiritual work to dissect, understand, synthesize and embody these truths. The following tools are designed to help!

**PRAY:** This is spiritual work! Ask God to open your eyes to wonderful things in His word.

**READ:** Read the chapter multiple times until you have a sense of the flow of thought. Try reading from different perspectives (sender, receiver, etc).

**QUESTIONS:** Curiosity is a guide toward deeper understanding. Write out some initial questions you have after reading the text. Or try writing 10 questions about the key verse of the chapter.

**MARK THE TEXT:** Marking the text helps key components stand out. It's often helpful to underline key verbs, color code repeated words, and circle connecting words (but, and, because, therefore, if, etc).

**OBSERVATIONS:** The key to good Bible study is slowing down to see and note what the author is actually saying. Even writing down simple observations can help you see what's in the text. It can be helpful to look at verses with a lens of who, what, when, where, why, how and make observations within each category.

**DEFINITIONS:** Look up (English and/or original language) and define words that would be helpful in understanding the author's intent.

**SUMMARY:** Put the chapter into your own words. Try to be as succinct as possible.

**CONNECTION TO THE WHOLE:** Write how the current chapter connects to the rest of the book.

**KEY VERSE:** Choose a key verse that summarizes the main theme of the passage.

**APPLY:** God does intend to change our lives as we encounter His word. Consider how God is inviting you to trust Him, to be changed and to live out His truth in the world.



## **OBSERVATIONS**

## **QUESTIONS**

## **DEFINITIONS**

## **SUMMARY & CONNECTION:**

## **KEY VERSE**

## **APPLY**