


# BEING THE CHURCH

## 1: THE FATHER'S DESIRE

 *BIG IDEA: The Father's desire is for humanity to be his children — united to God and each other. Christ makes this possible.*

➔ **WELCOME/ICEBREAKER**

➔ **OPENING PRAYER**

➔ **SCRIPTURE READING**

 **Ephesians 1:3-10 (New International Version)**

*(Circle key phrases or verses that stand out to you)*

<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

<sup>4</sup> For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love

<sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

<sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

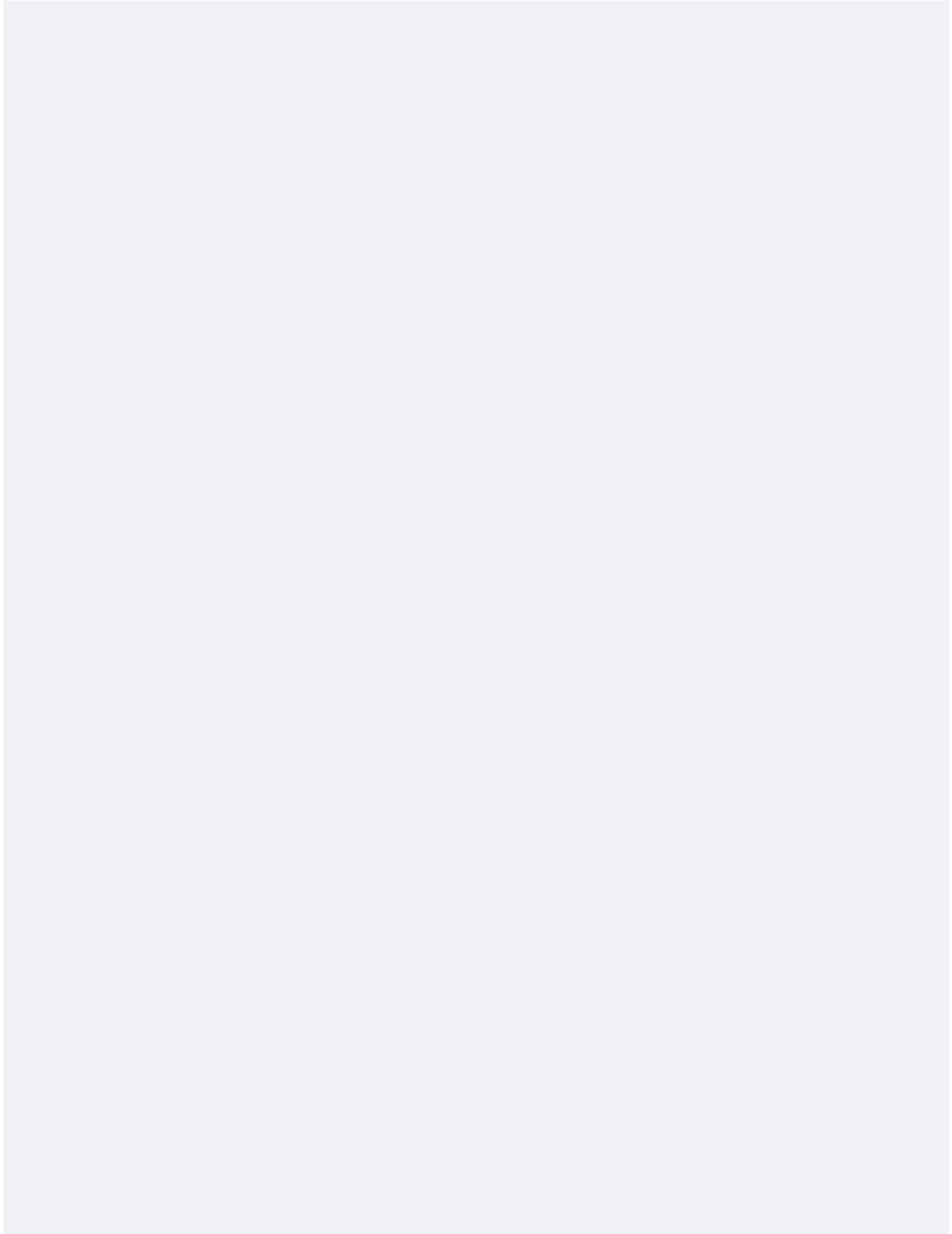
<sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

<sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding,

<sup>9</sup> he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,

<sup>10</sup> to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

➔ **DISCUSSION OF SCRIPTURE**



## ➡ APPLICATION DISCUSSION


## ➡ DIVINE PARTICIPATION

List ways in which God has shown his love for you this week.  
Next time, you can share five things with the group.

## ➡ CLOSING PRAYER

# BEING THE CHURCH

## 2: EVERY BODY NEEDS A HEAD

 *BIG IDEA: God forms those who put their trust in him into a church, which is a metaphorical body with Christ as the head.*

➔ WELCOME/ICEBREAKER

➔ OPENING PRAYER

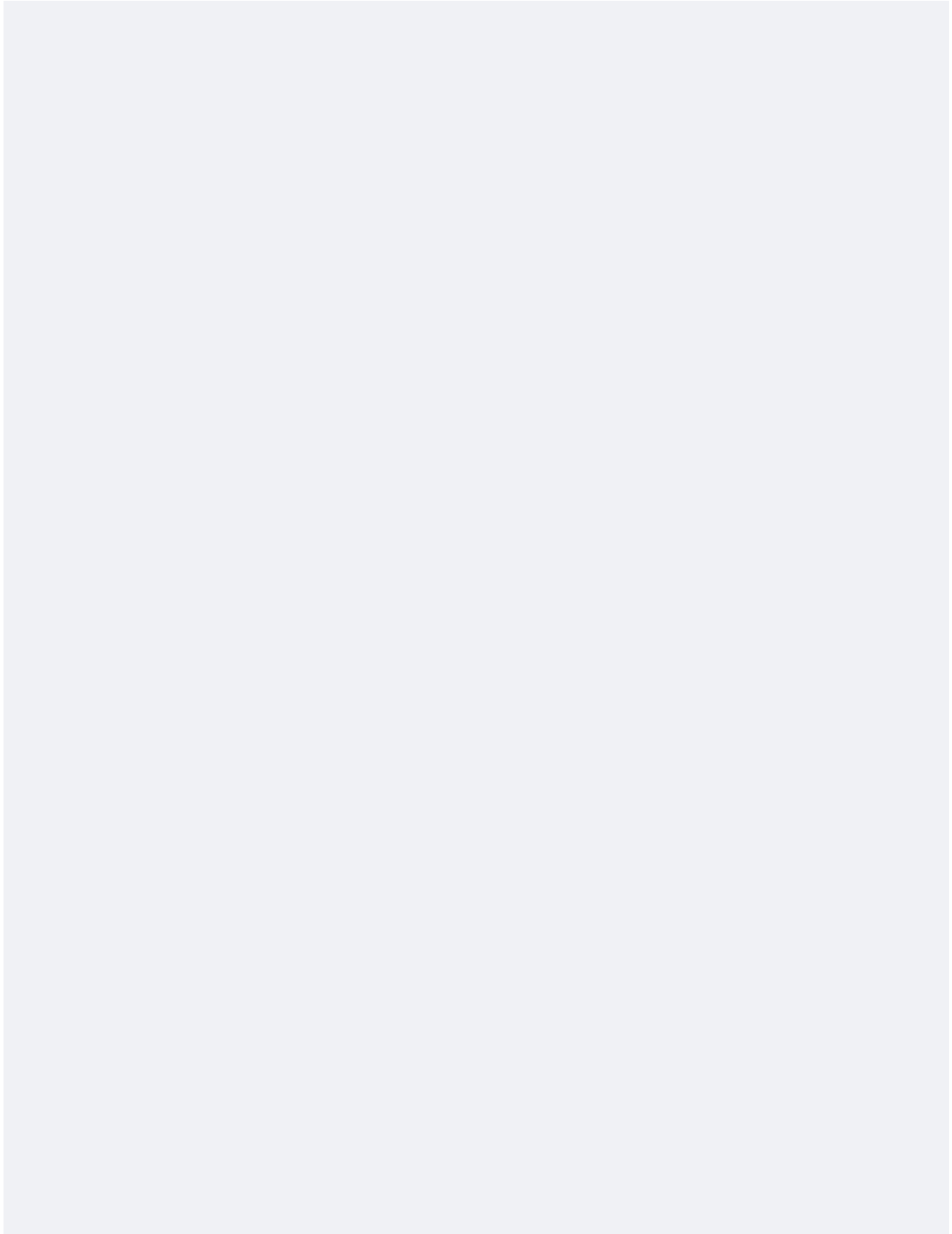
➔ SCRIPTURE READING

 **Ephesians 1:18-23 (New International Version)**

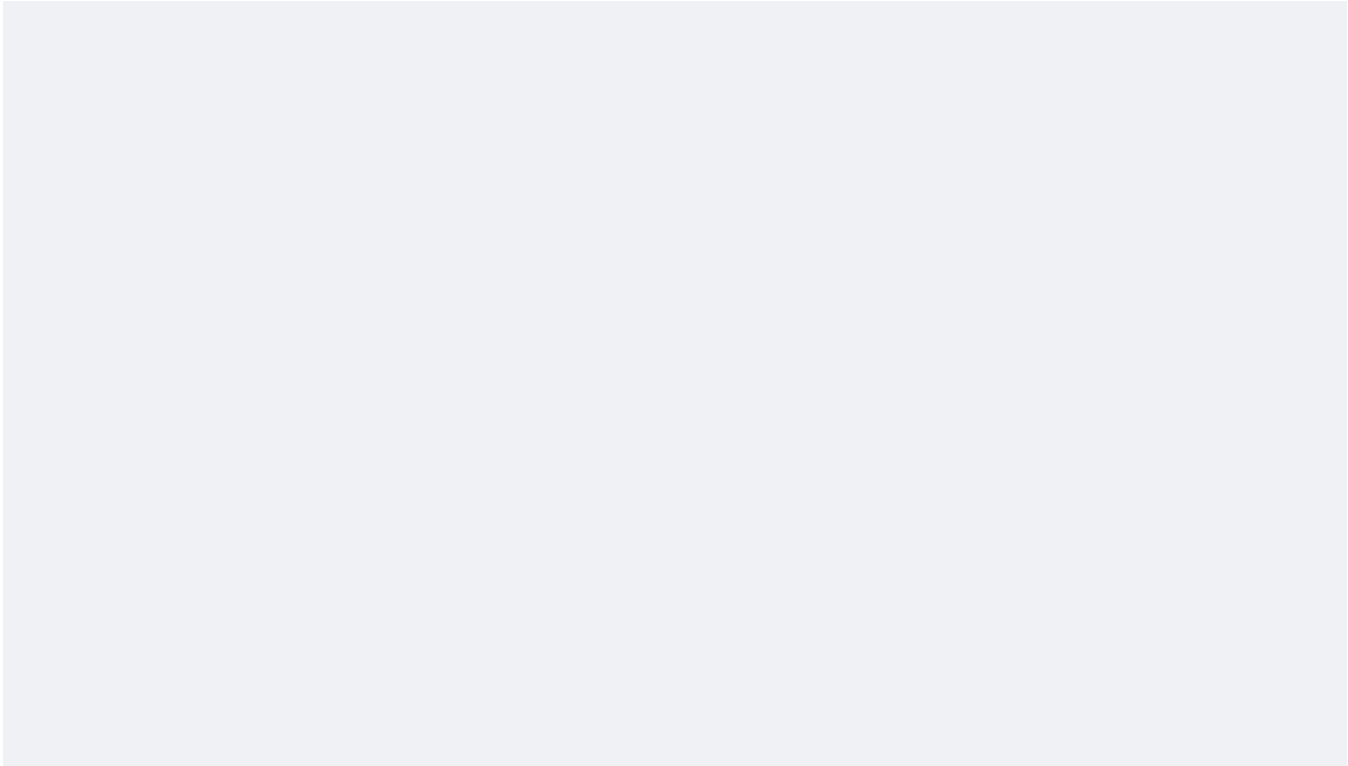
*(Circle key phrases or verses that stand out to you)*

<sup>18</sup> I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,  
<sup>19</sup> and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength  
<sup>20</sup> he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,  
<sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.  
<sup>22</sup> And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,  
<sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

➔ **DISCUSSION OF SCRIPTURE**

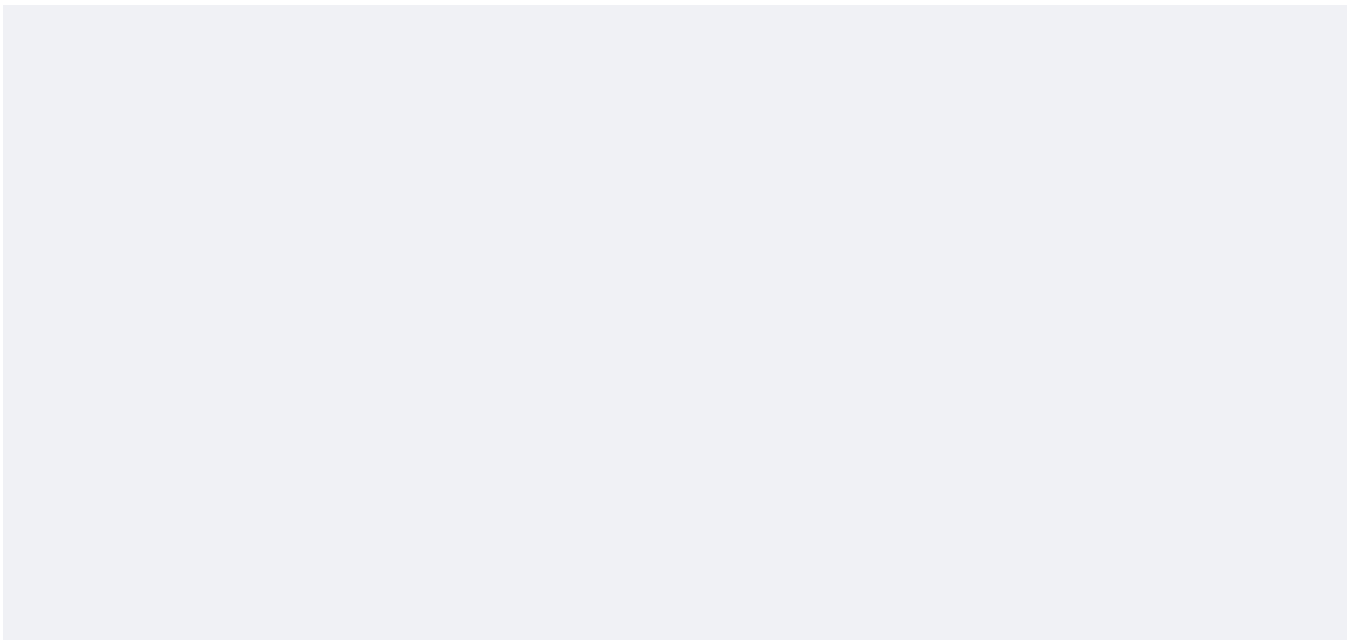


**➡ APPLICATION DISCUSSION**



**➡ DIVINE PARTICIPATION**

Make a list of some of the challenges you are facing. Each day pray for one of those challenges. Ask God for direction and strength. Pay attention to his response(s) and be prepared to discuss your experience next week.



**➡ CLOSING PRAYER**

# BEING THE CHURCH

## 3: DO-GOODERS

 *BIG IDEA: The church is destined and equipped by God for good works.*

➔ WELCOME/ICEBREAKER

➔ OPENING PRAYER

➔ SCRIPTURE READING

 **Ephesians 2:8-10 (New International Version)**

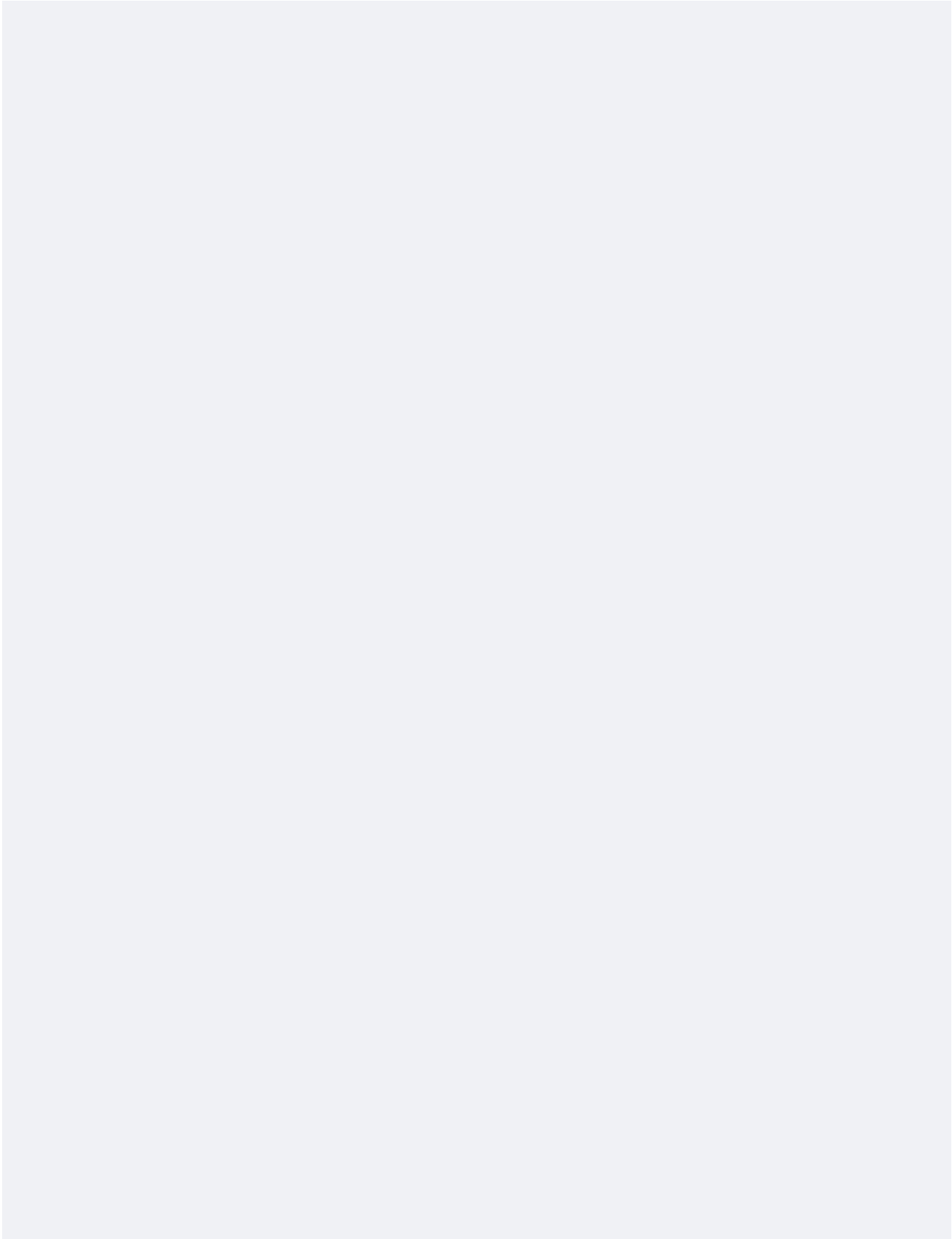
*(Circle key phrases or verses that stand out to you)*

<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—  
and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—

<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.

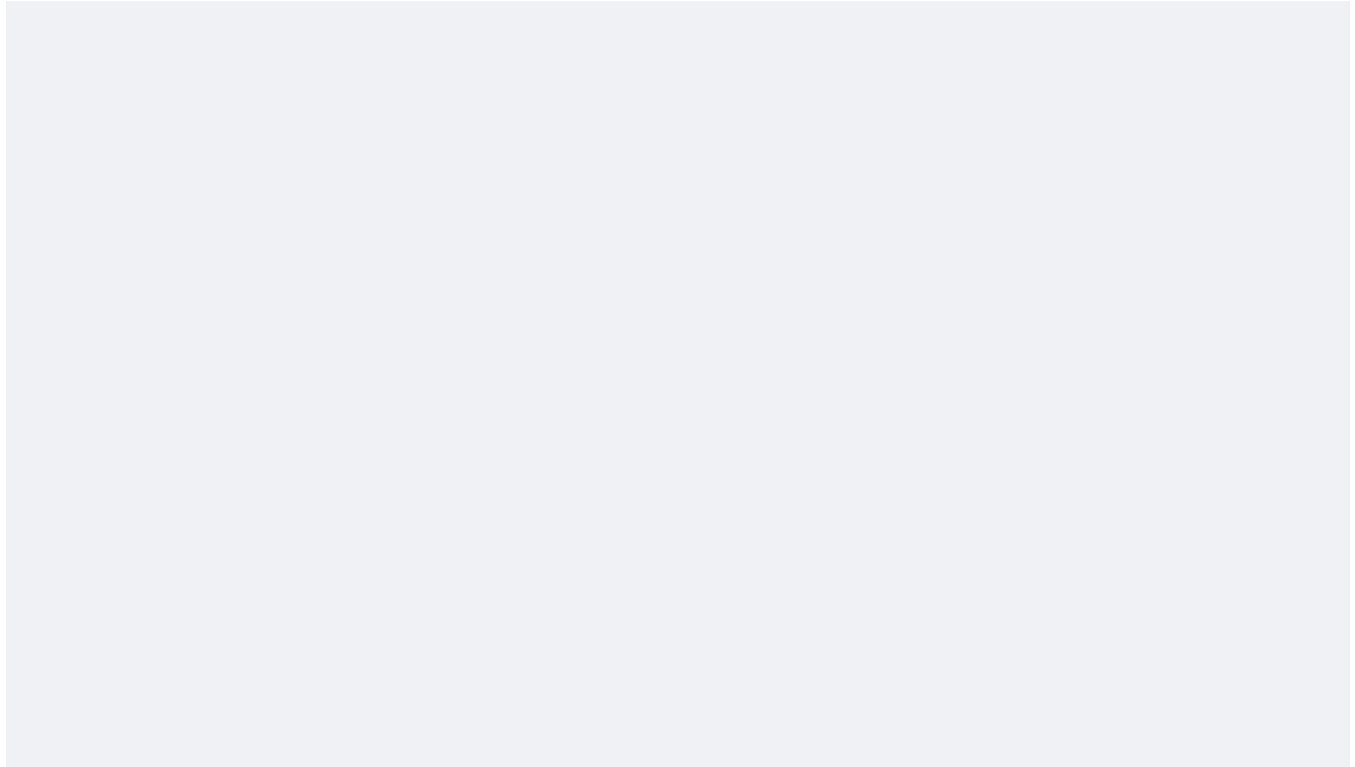
<sup>10</sup> For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus  
to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

➔ **DISCUSSION OF SCRIPTURE**



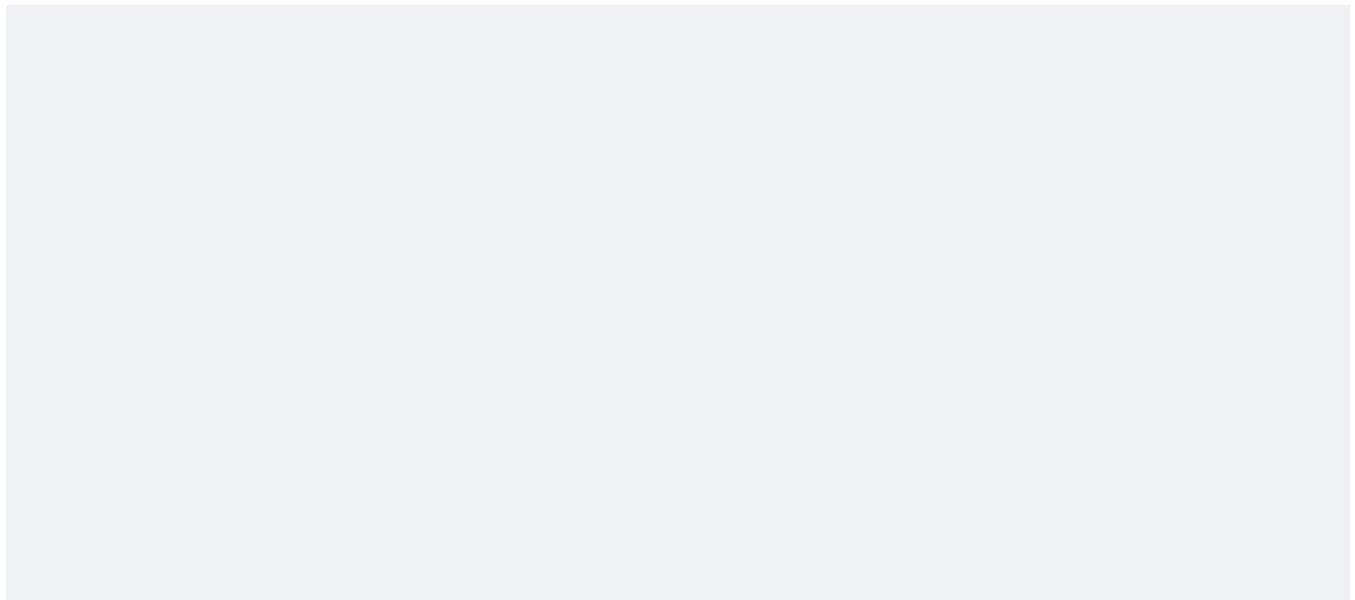


## ➡ APPLICATION DISCUSSION



## ➡ DIVINE PARTICIPATION

Research a missions or community service opportunity that interests you. Ask God whether he wants you to participate. Either way, pray for God to bless the cause. Be prepared to share with the group next time about the opportunity you identified and why.



## ➡ CLOSING PRAYER

# BEING THE CHURCH

## 4: THE GREATEST BUILDING PROJECT

 *BIG IDEA: As the new temple, God fills the church with his presence.*

➔ WELCOME/ICEBREAKER

➔ OPENING PRAYER

➔ SCRIPTURE READING

 **Ephesians 2:19-22 (New International Version)**

*(Circle key phrases or verses that stand out to you)*

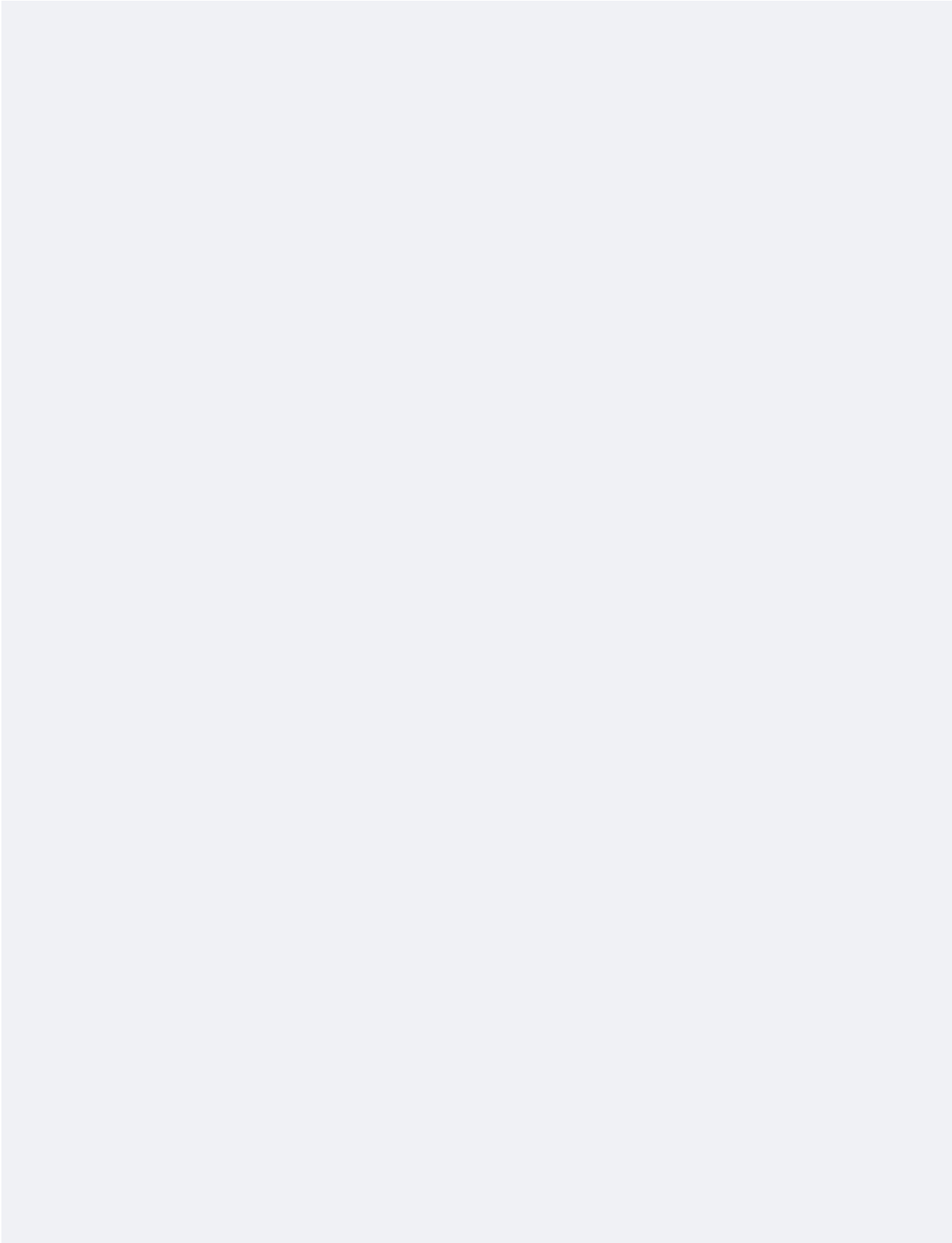
<sup>19</sup> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers,  
but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household,—

<sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,  
with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

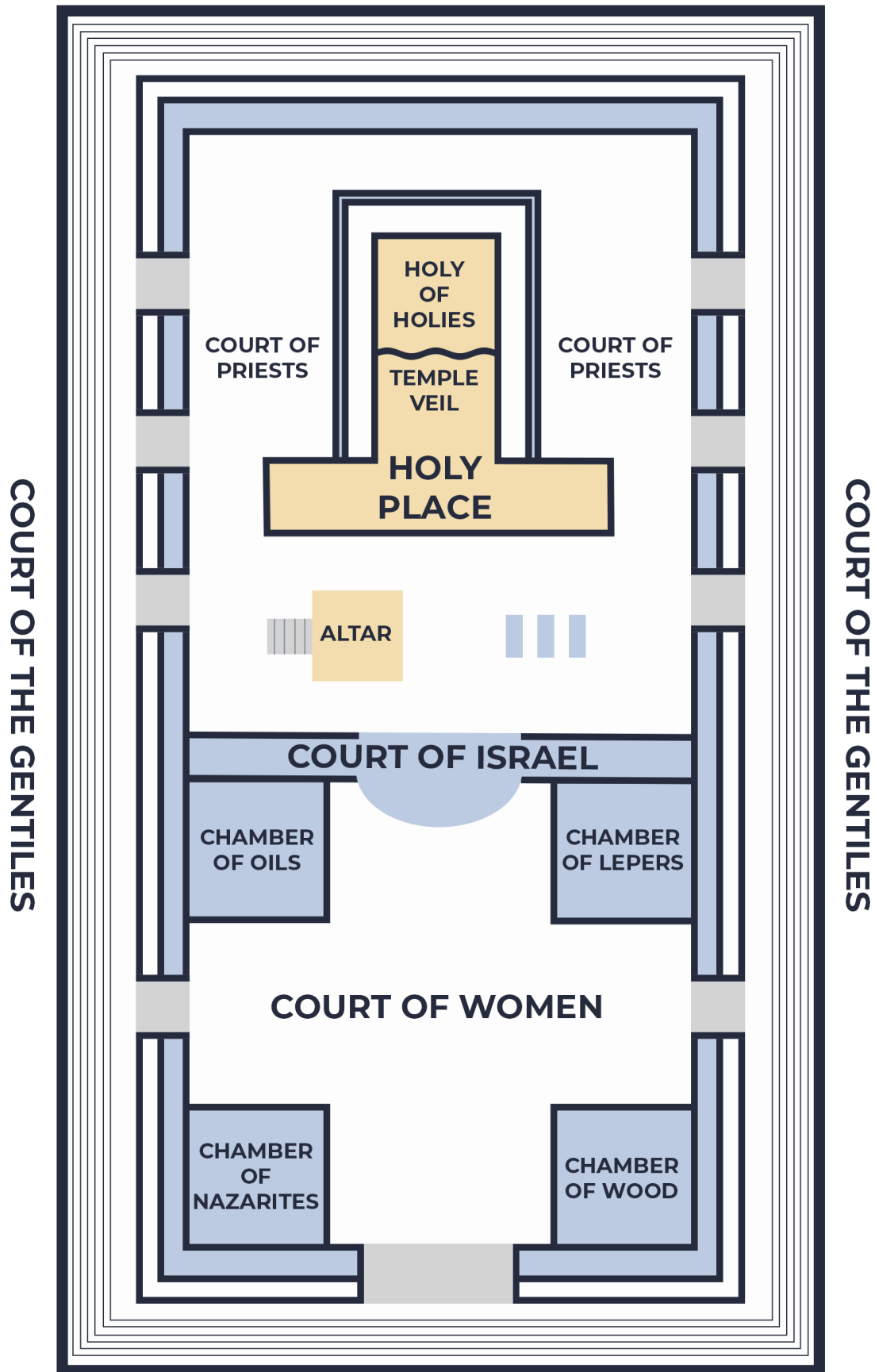
<sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together  
and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

<sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together  
to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

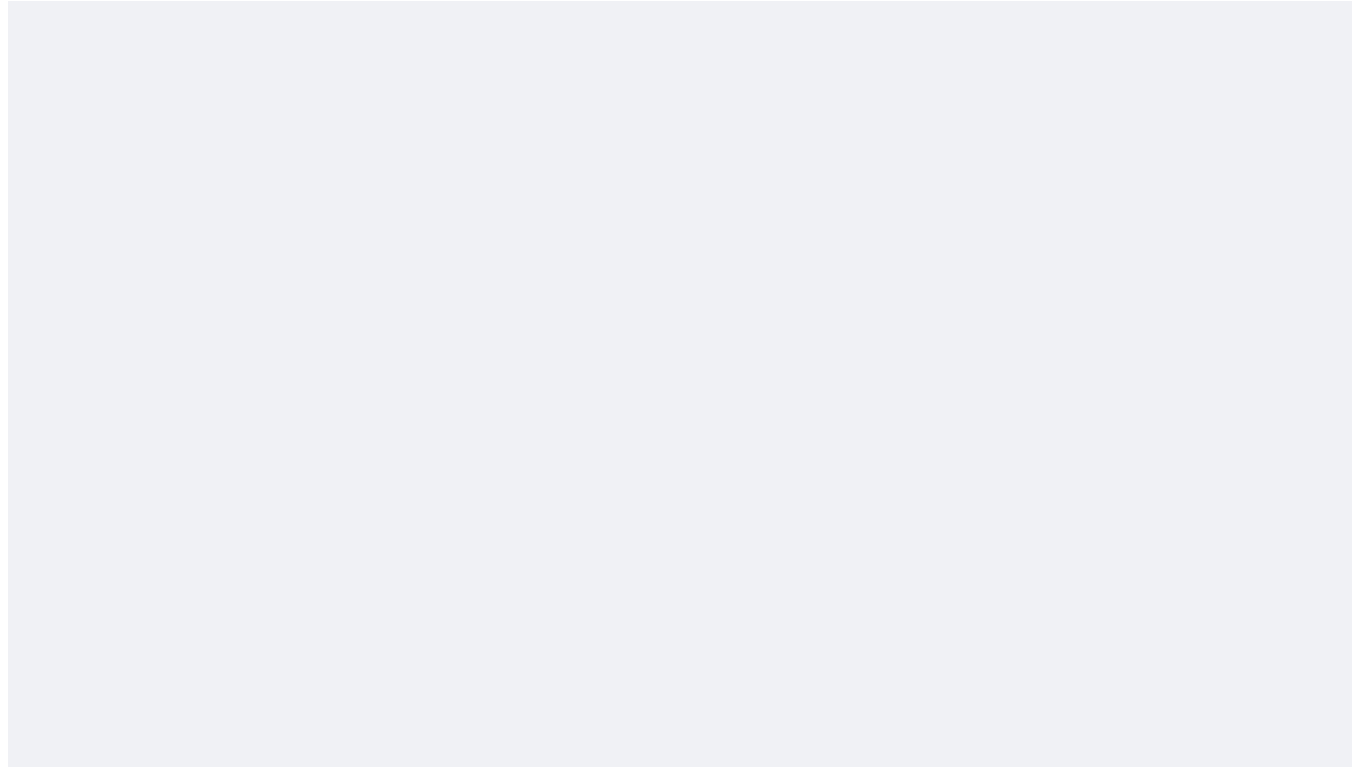
**↻ DISCUSSION OF SCRIPTURE**



# HEROD'S TEMPLE

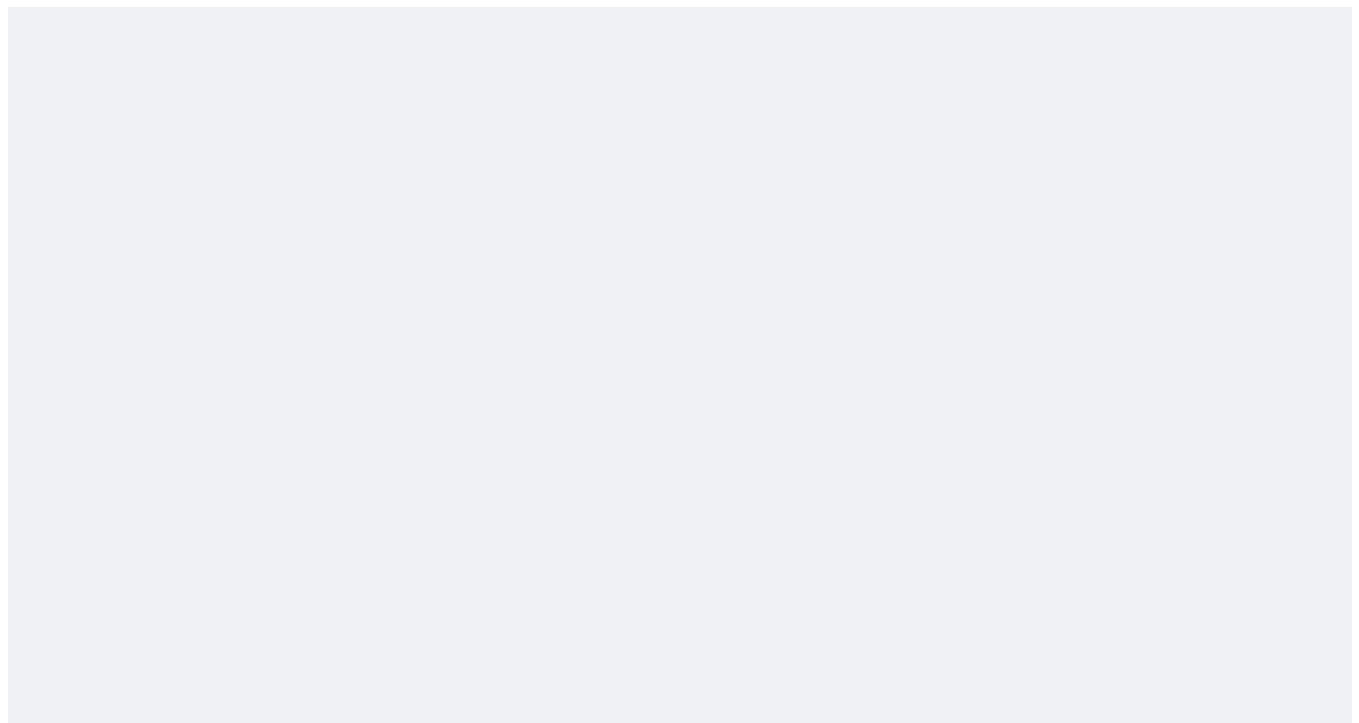


## ➡ APPLICATION DISCUSSION



## ➡ DIVINE PARTICIPATION

Watch the Bible Project's video on [The Temple](#).  
Be prepared to talk about it next time.



## ➡ CLOSING PRAYER

# BEING THE CHURCH

## 5: UNITED WE STAND



*BIG IDEA: The church is supposed to be united in Christ, especially united across man-made divisions.*

➔ WELCOME/ICEBREAKER

➔ OPENING PRAYER

➔ SCRIPTURE READING



**Ephesians 4:1-6 (New International Version)**

*(Circle key phrases or verses that stand out to you)*

<sup>1</sup> As a prisoner for the Lord, then,  
I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

<sup>2</sup> Be completely humble and gentle; be patient,  
bearing with one another in love.

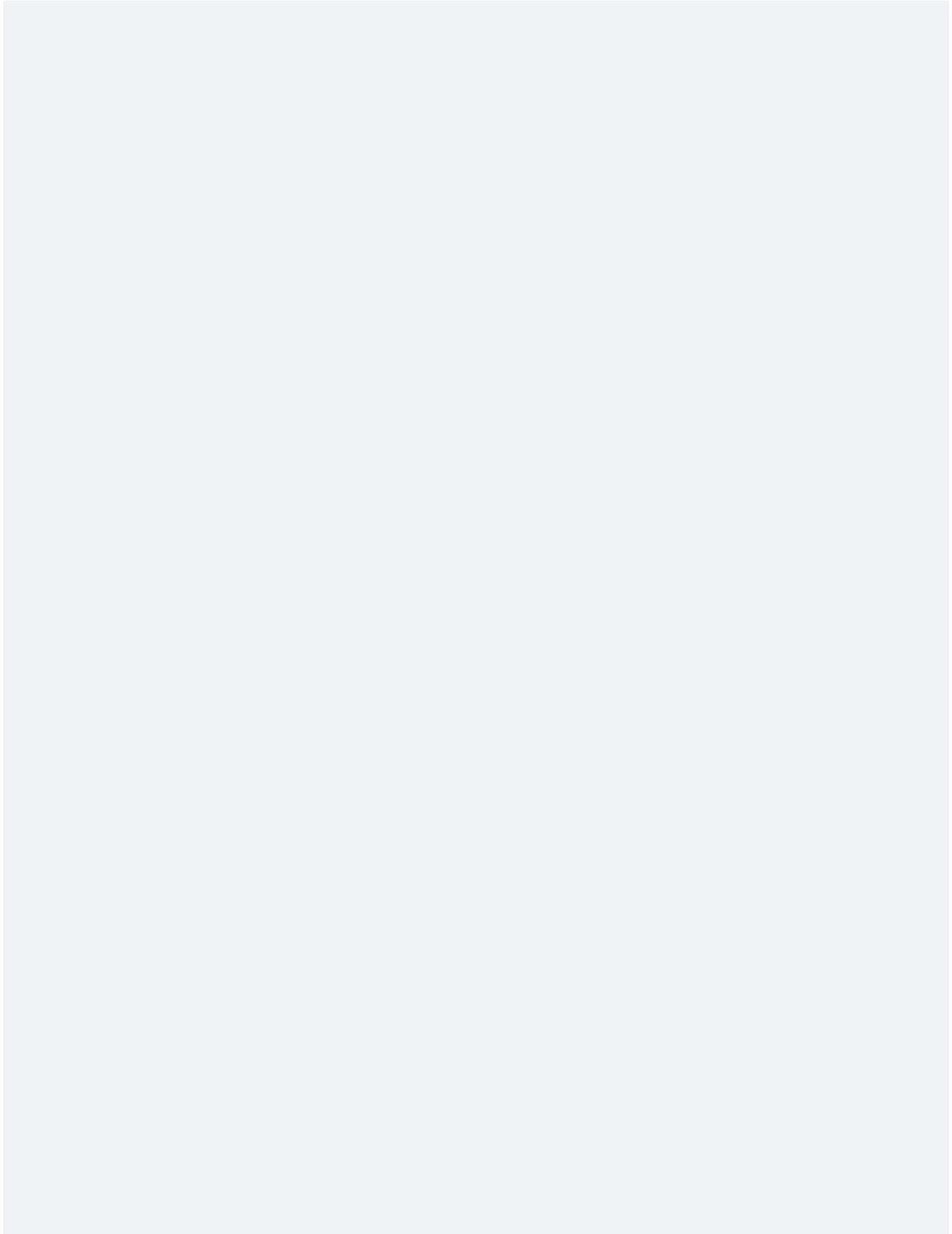
<sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit  
through the bond of peace.

<sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit,  
just as you were called to one hope when you were called;

<sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

<sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all,  
who is over all and through all and in all.

➔ DISCUSSION OF SCRIPTURE



## ➡ APPLICATION DISCUSSION

## ➡ DIVINE PARTICIPATION

Do some research on something that divides the American evangelical church or the Church in your local context (e.g., race, gender, politics, etc.).

Identify a book or documentary that can help you learn more about that topic and how to bridge that divide. If possible, talk to a person who can help you come up with strategies to promote unity. Be prepared to share your thoughts on how to bring more unity to the church.

## ➡ CLOSING PRAYER



# BEING THE CHURCH

## 6: PLAYING OUR PART



*BIG IDEA: Every believer has been given “grace” and has a role to play in bringing about the unity of the church and making the body an extension of Christ.*

➡ WELCOME/ICEBREAKER

➡ OPENING PRAYER

➡ SCRIPTURE READING



**Ephesians 4:7, 11-13 (New International Version)**

*(Circle key phrases or verses that stand out to you)*

<sup>7</sup> But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

<sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,

<sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

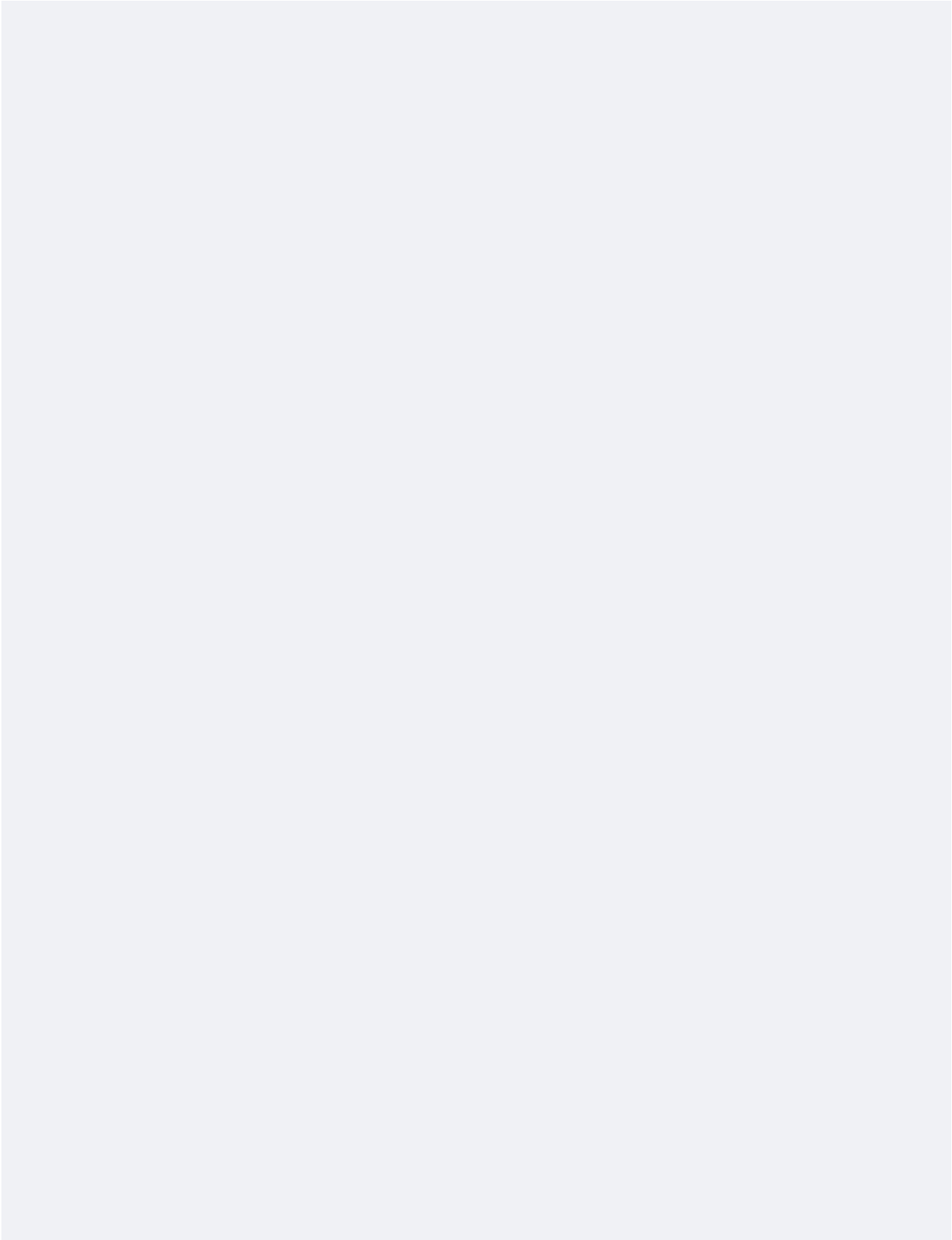
<sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and

in the knowledge of the Son of God

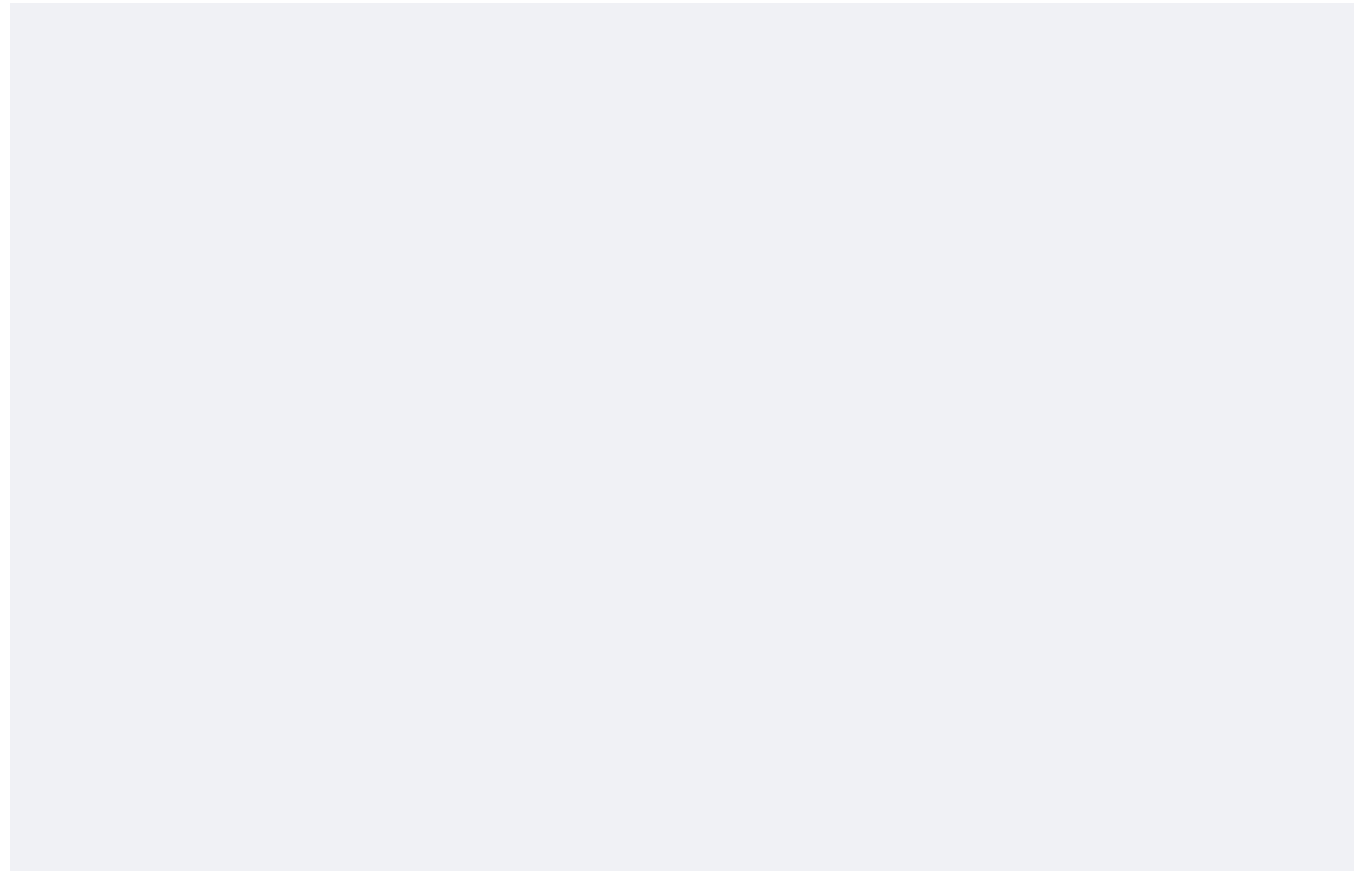
and become mature, attaining to

the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

 **DISCUSSION OF SCRIPTURE**



## ➡ APPLICATION DISCUSSION



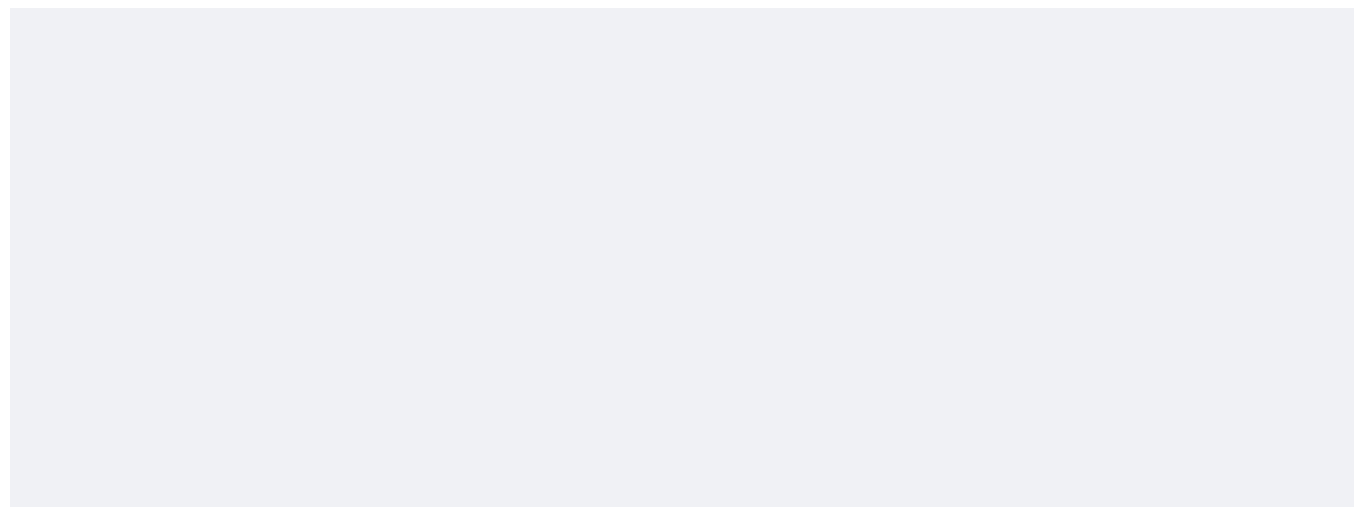
## ➡ DIVINE PARTICIPATION

Take the spiritual gifts survey

([www.faithaliveresources.org/discoveryourgiftssurvey](http://www.faithaliveresources.org/discoveryourgiftssurvey)).

Report your top spiritual gifts next time.

As a warning, the test has 80 questions and takes 30-45 minutes.



## ➡ CLOSING PRAYER

# BEING THE CHURCH

## 7: YOU ARE NEEDED



*BIG IDEA: The body works only if we all do our part and are rightly connected to God and each other.*

➔ WELCOME/ICEBREAKER

➔ OPENING PRAYER

➔ SCRIPTURE READING

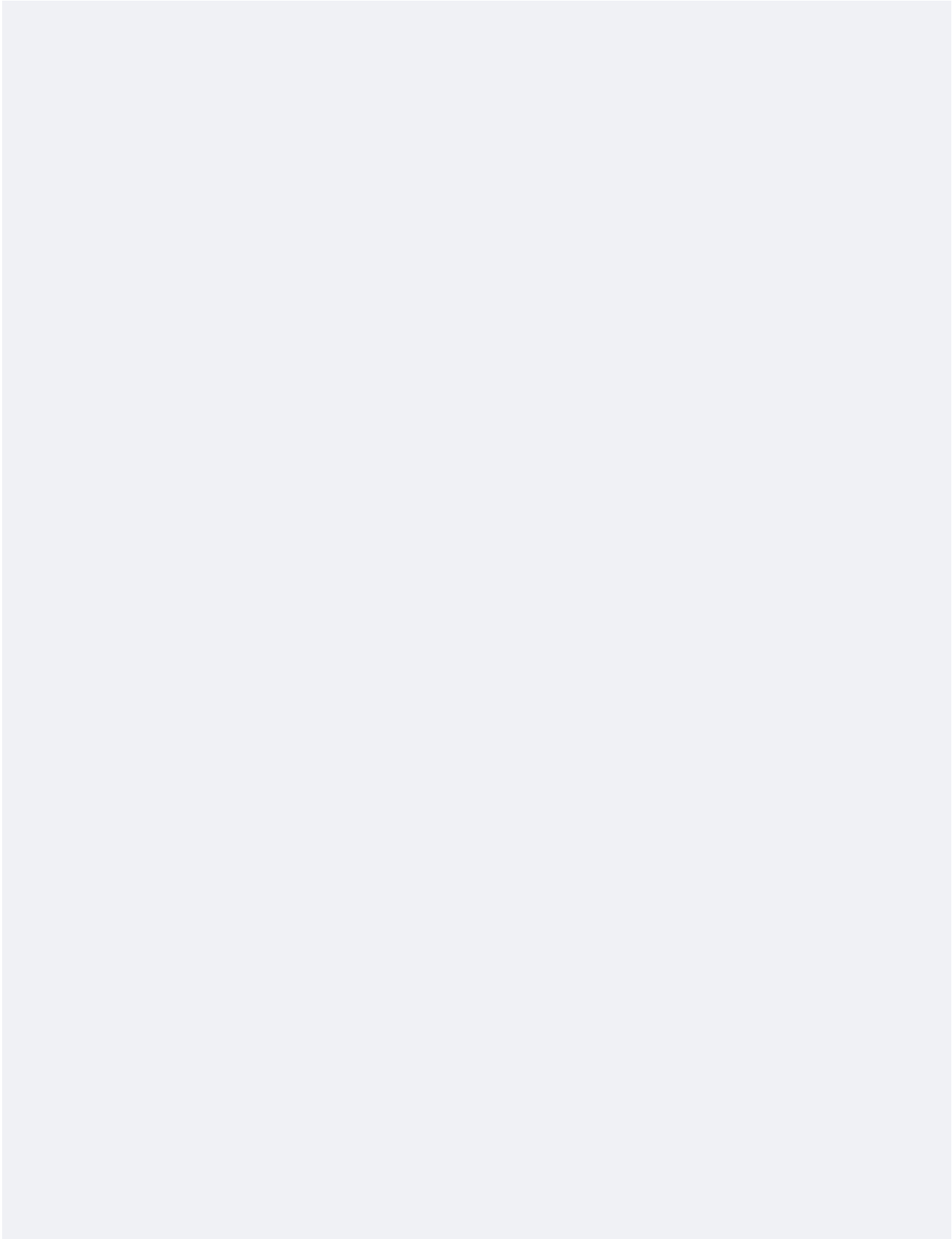


**Ephesians 4:15-16 (New International Version)**

*(Circle key phrases or verses that stand out to you)*

<sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love,  
we will grow to become in every respect  
the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.  
<sup>16</sup> From him the whole body, joined and held together  
by every supporting ligament, grows  
and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

➔ **DISCUSSION OF SCRIPTURE**



## ➔ APPLICATION DISCUSSION

## ➔ DIVINE PARTICIPATION

Find a spiritual gifts accountability partner. Discuss ways in which you can support each other in using your gifts for the benefit of the body. Be prepared to discuss some of the things you are thinking of doing to grow in and use your spiritual gifts.

## ➔ CLOSING PRAYER

# BEING THE CHURCH

## 8: LIVING UNITED



*BIG IDEA: Believers' behavior should reflect our belonging to Christ so that we can live in unity and do good works.*

### ➔ WELCOME/ICEBREAKER

### ➔ OPENING PRAYER

### ➔ SCRIPTURE READING



### Ephesians 4:17-24 (New International Version)

*(Circle key phrases or verses that stand out to you)*

<sup>17</sup> So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.

<sup>18</sup> They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

<sup>19</sup> Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

<sup>20</sup> That, however, is not the way of life you learned

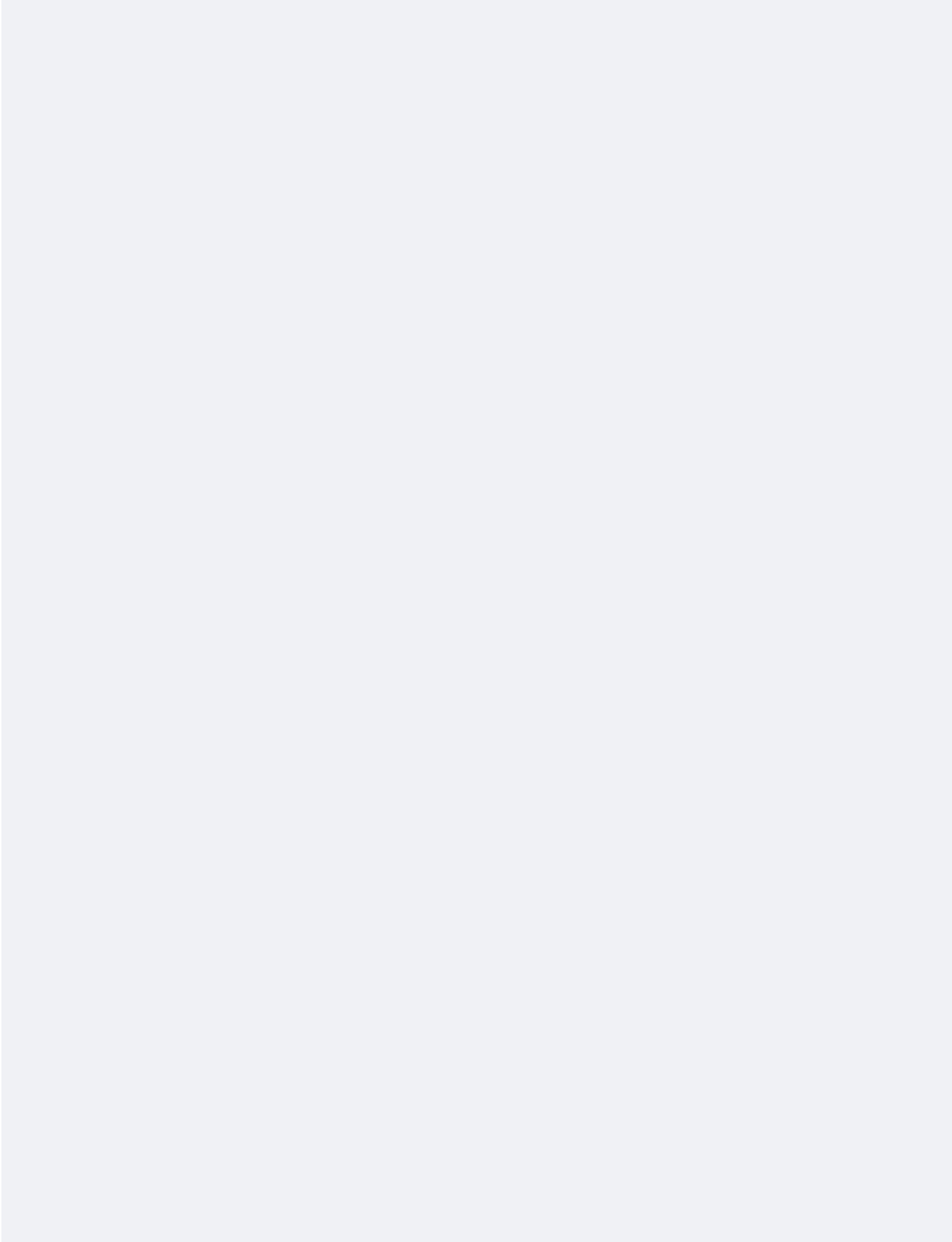
<sup>21</sup> when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.

<sup>22</sup> You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;

<sup>23</sup> to be made new in the attitude of your minds;

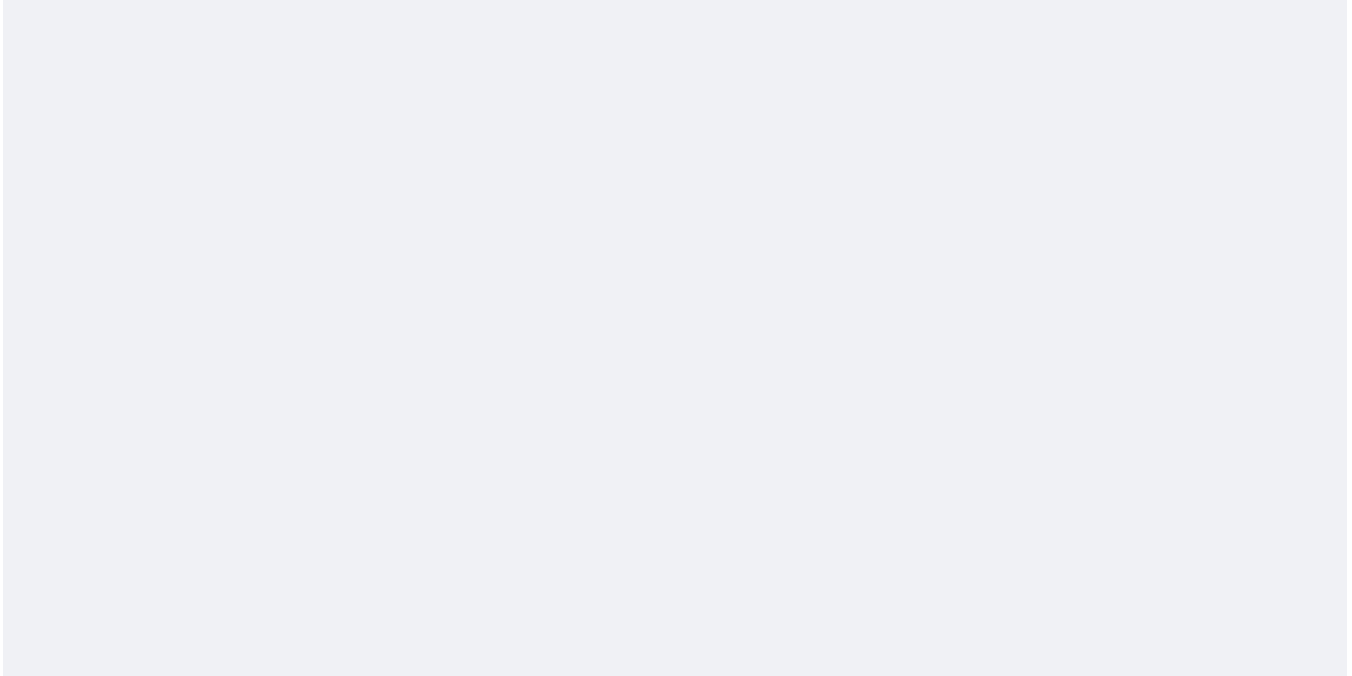
<sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

 **DISCUSSION OF SCRIPTURE**



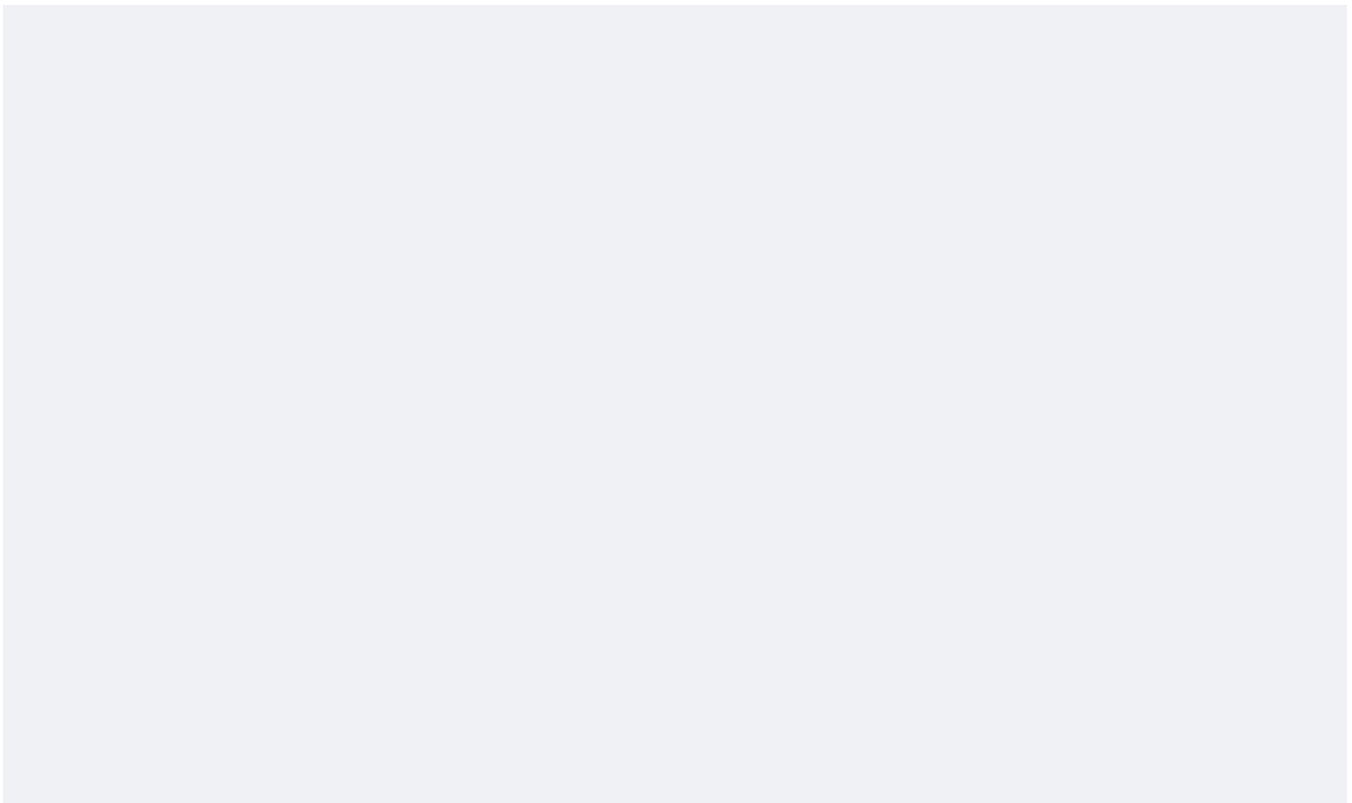


**➡ APPLICATION DISCUSSION**



**➡ DIVINE PARTICIPATION**

Reflect on what you have learned in this study. How have you changed?  
What do you still want to change?



**➡ CLOSING PRAYER**