

NE MN SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2022

GOD'S BOUNDLESS LOVE:

DWELLING IN THE WORD

EPHESIANS 3:15-21 (CEV)

Dwelling in the Word Instructions

Leader: For this Bible Study Session, we will deeply root ourselves in God's Word using a process of reading scripture called "Dwelling in God's Word." I will read the passage three times. The first time, simply let the words wash over you, followed by brief silence for reflection. The second time you will be invited to listen to the scripture passage and listen to a word or phrase that sticks out to you. The reading will again be followed by brief silence for reflection. You will then hear the passage a third time and consider why that word or phrase stuck out to you, and what God might be saying. After a brief silence for reflection, we will break into table groups or Zoom breakout rooms to share what you heard and to listen to how God is speaking to you through what others hear.

Leader: This Bible study method reminds us that God's Word speaks to and through each of us. There are no wrong answers! And you cannot do this wrong. We grow in our faith and understanding when we listen to God, when we hear how God is speaking to others. Likewise, others grow in their faith and understanding when they hear what you have to share. So we invite you to open yourselves to the process, to listen, and to let the Holy Spirit be at work among you.

Dwelling in the Word

Leader: I invite you to take a deep breath in (*pause*) and breathe it out. You are invited into this space and this time with a daring vision to experience God's boundless love, which is so much wider, deeper, stronger, and more powerful than you could possibly imagine.

Leader: Please pray with me. Ever-loving God, help us as we try to comprehend the vastness of your love for us and for others. Help us to love one another and ourselves through a lens of kindness, compassion and abundance. Guide our time together, open our hearts and minds that we might catch a glimpse of God's enormous love in this world. Remind us of how precious we are to you and help us to see ourselves in the same loving way. Amen.

Leader: I invite you to listen to God's Word from Ephesians 3:15-21. This first time, simply listen to the words, breathe deeply, and let the Word of God fill you.

Reader 1: Ephesians 3:15-21 (CEV)
All beings in heaven and on earth receive their life from (God). God is wonderful and glorious. I pray that (God's) Spirit will make you become strong followers and that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. Stand firm and be deeply rooted in (God's) love. I pray that you and all God's people will understand what is called wide or long or high or deep. I want you to know all about Christ's love, although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives will be filled with all that God is. I pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. (God's) power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.

(Pause 30 seconds for silent reflection.)

Leader: This second time, I invite you to listen for what stands out to you. It might be a word, a phrase, or an entire section.

Reader 2: Ephesians 3:15-21 (CEV)
All beings in heaven and on earth receive their life from (God). God is wonderful and glorious. I pray that (God's) Spirit will make you become strong followers and that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. Stand firm and be deeply rooted in (God's) love. I pray that you and all God's people will understand what is called wide or long or high or deep. I want you to know all about Christ's love, although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives will be filled with all that God is. I pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. (God's) power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.

(Pause 30 seconds for silent reflection.)

Leader: This last time, I invite you to listen and consider why that word, phrase, or section stands out to you. What might God be trying to say? After the reading, you will share in your table groups or breakout rooms what stood out to you and why. It is always ok to pass, but remember that God has something to say through you that the community may need to hear. We hear God's Word not only as we listen to what God has to say in the text, but also through what we hear from the Spirit speaking through others.

Reader 3: Ephesians 3:15-21 (CEV)
All beings in heaven and on earth receive their life from (God). God is wonderful and glorious. I pray that (God's) Spirit will make you become strong followers and that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. Stand firm and be deeply rooted in (God's) love. I pray that you and all God's people will understand what is called wide or long or high or deep. I want you to know all about Christ's love, although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives will be filled with all that God is. I pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. (God's) power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.

(Pause 30 seconds for silent reflection.)

Leader: I now invite you to share at your tables or breakout rooms what stood out to you and why. You will have 10 minutes, be sure to give everyone a chance to share.

Leader: *(With two minutes remaining)*
You have two minutes remaining. Please make sure everyone has had a chance to share.

Leader: Let us pray. Boundless God, teach us to see what your love looks like in this world. Show us love. Remind us that we are loved beyond measure or comprehension, more than we could ever dare to dream. Help us experience your love, be your love, and share your love with everyone we meet. We pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. May God's power be at work in us, helping us to break down barriers, so that through us God's love can do far more than we ask or imagine. Amen.

These resources were developed for the 2022 Northeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly by Pastor Shivon Miller (Trinity Lutheran Church, Duluth, MN), Catherine Anderson (Synod Minister, NE MN Synod, ELCA) and Pastor Erika Nilsen (Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Baxter, MN). They are based on the [2022 NE MN Synod Journey Resources](#) and [2022 ELCA Youth Gathering Getting Ready Materials](#). You are welcome to adapt this text to meet the needs of your context. For more resources, visit www.nemnsynod.org/Curriculum.