

Facilitator

1. Open with Prayer

2. Welcome any newcomers

3. Read Ephesians 5:18-21 and give a five-minute review of the sermon using Peppy's sermon notes.

Facilitator: Please don't feel you have to cover every question. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

CONNECT Group study questions, Ephesians 5:18-21 November 30, 2014

Title: Getting a Better Perspective of God

A Roseville, California, woman hit on a money-making enterprise: She's a professional cuddler. Do you need to be cuddled? Apparently lots of people do. The demand is so great, customers are traveling from far away and paying \$60 an hour to be comforted with hugs and understanding words—a brief respite from their burdens, heartaches, depression and loneliness. A warm embrace, a held hand, someone to talk to has attracted so many customers that she plans to expand the Cuddle Connection in the Sacramento area to Southern California and perhaps Atlanta.

God knows we all need to be comforted. Jesus told us in John 14:16, 26; John 15:26 and John 16:7 that although He was going away, He would send the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit. As people who have placed our trust in Jesus Christ, we have the Holy Spirit—the Comforter—to comfort us and for us to comfort others. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted"* (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Question: Ephesians 5:18 refers to drunkenness and filling of the Holy Spirit in the same verse. How are they different? How are they similar?

Question: If drunkenness leads to debauchery, which is a change from normal behavior, what sort of changed behavior is the result of being continually filled with the Holy Spirit? **Facilitator:** Let your group offer their own thoughts from observation or personal experience, then point out verses 19-21 of Ephesians 5.

Question: Drunkenness—or alcoholism—can be a huge problem for some people. Do you suppose continual filling of the Holy Spirit can replace alcohol's control of a person's life? If so, how?

Question: How can our salvation become hard work—like pushing a car without filling the gas tank and turning on the engine? Describe how working out our salvation with the filling of the Holy Spirit is different. **Facilitator:** Lead the discussion toward Philippians 2:12-13, which describes how we and God in us—the Holy Spirit—work together to accomplish the salvation God has in mind for us.

Question: Being continually filled with the Holy Spirit is a command, so it is important that we know when we are filled. Peppy told us about our attitude and behavior toward God, our circumstances, and other people. Are these attitudes and behaviors something we should work hard for, or are they attitudes and behaviors that we want because the Holy Spirit fills us?

Meditation: Your salvation is permanent from the moment you place your faith in Jesus Christ and make a conscious decision to follow Him. It is also a continuing process of total submission to the Holy Spirit's control of your life. In Revelation 3:20, Jesus says, *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”* Listen for the knock, open the door, and let the Holy Spirit take control of even the most secret room in your life.