



Ephesians



THEME VERSES: There is one body and one Spirit- just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call- one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the the measure of Christ's gift.
Ephesians 4:4-7

Author

Ephesians was written by the apostle Paul, a Jew who studied under Gamaliel, a teacher of the Pharisees. He was a tentmaker by trade, and originally persecuted the Christians in his mistaken zeal to please God. Paul wrote 13 of the 27 books in the New Testament.

Date

Paul likely wrote Ephesians around A.D. 60 from Rome where he was imprisoned for his faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 28:16). He also wrote letters, or epistles, to the Colossians and Philemon at that time.

Purpose

While many of Paul's letters were written to confront a problem or heresy in the church, his letter to the Ephesians was intended to encourage and strengthen believers by clarifying God's revealed will, which had previously been a mystery. His plan from the beginning of time was to unite all things in Christ by redeeming mankind (both Jews and Gentiles) from sin, giving them an eternal inheritance, and making them one body in Christ- the church- to God's glory.

Method

Paul first informs the Gentile believers of the incredible blessings God has bestowed on them, including the promised Holy Spirit as a guarantee of their eternal inheritance. He prays they can fully realize all they have in Christ as members of His household. He then exhorts them to be unified as one body in Christ by living in obedience to God, and standing firm against evil by putting on the armor of God.

Outline

- Chapter 1 Spiritual Blessings in Christ
- Chapter 2 God's Gift of Grace
- Chapter 3 God's Eternal Purpose Revealed
- Chapter 4 Unity in the Body of Christ, New Life in Christ
- Chapter 5 Walking in Love and Wisdom
- Chapter 6 Walking in Obedience, Having Victory over Evil



Intro Letter

Ephesians

Welcome to the INTRUTH Bible Study of Ephesians.

Studying the Word of God transforms lives!

The Bible is God's message of redemption. God speaks to us through His Word so we can understand the TRUTH of His character, our need for Him and His desire for us. Ephesians gives one of the most clear explanations of God's previously mysterious plan for redemption, which is now revealed in Christ Jesus. God, speaking through Paul, makes it clear that salvation can come only through faith in God's mercy and grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He describes our position in Christ, and in the body of Christ- the church- and tells us how to live in a way that helps maintain unity with believers in Christ to the glory of God and the benefit of mankind.

This 6 week study covers the entire book of Ephesians and is geared toward adults or young adults. It is written using the English Standard Version (ESV), but any translation will enhance your experience and enrich your group discussion. The language in the NIV and NLT translations of the Bible are especially helpful for understanding difficult passages. Each lesson has a memory verse and around 25 questions to help you learn what the Bible says, understand what it means and how it applies to life and God's bigger picture. Included are encouragements to Learn, Love and Walk in Truth, as well as a short summary of the Scripture covered. To get the most out of this study, first do the lesson on your own, asking God to give you insight. Then you will gain further understanding by discussing the questions in a small group and learning from other people. Relationships are deep and rich when the Bible is the topic of discussion!

The Book of Ephesians is encouraging to believers because it not only makes clear our position in Christ, but tells us how to live the new life in Christ. It addresses relationships and exhorts us to put on the full armor of God to defend ourselves against the powers of evil we face in life.

May the Lord use this study of Ephesians to help you grow in your knowledge and love for God, and develop a life-long love for the Bible. May you come to fully grasp the good news of grace by faith in Christ. May you also connect in a community that prays, supports and shares life together. And may you stand firm against evil by arming yourself with God's Truth.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Ephesians 2:8-10

Enjoy!

Spiritual Blessings in Christ – Ephesians 1



MEMORY VERSE: “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us...”
Ephesians 1:7,8a

DAY 1 EPHESIANS 1:1-6 — Chosen by God

1. Who are “saints?” v. 1 See also Romans 1:6-7
2. Paul wanted God to give the believers “grace and peace.” vv. 1-2 Why do you think these are especially needed or desired?
3. For what does Paul bless or praise God? v. 3
4. Describe God’s plan before He even made the world. vv. 4-6
5. How is it possible to be “holy and blameless” in His sight when we are sinners? Colossians 1:21-22
6. Which of the concepts in verses 4-6 especially resonate with you, and why?

LEARN THE TRUTH

Some attributes of God seem mysterious to us because His greatness, power and goodness are bigger than our comprehension. But He wants us to understand His plan for our salvation through Jesus Christ. As you study Ephesians, open your eyes and heart to His marvelous plan for you.

DAY 2 EPHESIANS 1:7-10 — Redeemed by Christ

7. Define the word, “redemption.” How is it possible to be redeemed?

8. What important details does Paul give regarding our redemption in Christ? vv. 7-9

9. What do the words, “riches” and “lavished” tell you about God’s desire to redeem mankind?

John 3:16-17

2 Peter 3:9

10. How do verses 9-10 help explain God’s plan and purpose?

DAY 3 EPHESIANS 1:11-14 — Inheritance in Christ

11. What does God give those who hope in Christ and what do they give Him in return? vv.11-14

12. If we are “predestined” and “chosen” by God, where do you think free will and personal responsibility enter in?

Romans 6:12-19

Philippians 2:12-13

13. Why is it so important that we are “sealed by the Holy Spirit,” both for today and for the future?

Romans 8:15-17, 26

Romans 15:13

14. Are you experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit in your life? How might you experience more?

15. What differences can you think of between an earthly and a spiritual inheritance?

DAY 4 EPHESIANS 1:15-19 — Paul's Prayer

16. What had Paul heard about the Ephesians, and how did he respond to this news? vv.15-16
17. How did Paul specifically pray for the Ephesian believers?
v.17
- v. 18
- v. 19
18. Who are you thankful for that would benefit from your prayers?
19. Which of these prayers do you yourself especially need right now?

DAY 5 EPHESIANS 1:20-23 – God's Great Power

20. Describe the immeasurable greatness of God's power. vv. 19-20
21. Describe Christ's position right now. vv. 20-23
22. What do these verses tell you about "the church?"
23. How do you think God intended for individuals and the church to benefit from Christ's position?
24. How has God spoken to you personally about your position in Him through this Scripture?

LOVE THE TRUTH

Are you aware of the incredible spiritual blessings you have if you are in Christ? Are there areas of your life where you are perhaps unaware? If you lack wisdom or understanding or God's power, just ask. He is ready to give you what you need. But first, you must believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior.

Ephesians 1

Spiritual Blessings In Christ

Do you ever wonder why God does what He does, or why He does not do something you would expect Him to do? We know that He is infinitely good, loving and sovereign, but because he is so much bigger than we can imagine, parts of Him will be a mystery to us until we meet Him face to face one day in eternity. While we don't fully understand Him, we can still believe and trust Him in faith. This is what the Ephesians did.

People in Paul's time knew that the Jews were God's chosen people, but they were only beginning to grasp the bigger picture of God's plan of redemption. While many of Paul's letters were written to correct false teaching or solve a problem among the followers of Christ, his letter to the Ephesians was not. He wrote to encourage them because they had been faithful in spite of their limited understanding. Paul wanted to explain what had been a mystery- God's plan to unite all things in Jesus Christ. Paul spoke of the incredible blessings the Gentiles now, as well as the Jews, have in Christ.

The terms "Christian" and "church" began at Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2) after Christ had ascended to heaven. This is when the promised Holy Spirit was given to the followers of Christ who then began to minister in the power given to them. At that time, Saul (later named Paul) was zealously persecuting Christians, as he did not understand that Jesus was the Messiah. He had a miraculous conversion experience when Jesus Christ appeared to him (Acts 9) and told him he was chosen to be His apostle and carry His Name before the Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel.

Paul was especially fond of the Ephesians, having spent 3 years with them after they received the truth of Jesus Christ. This letter was encouraging to them all those years ago and also to us today as we begin to understand the mysteries of God. Paul wanted the church to know that God had blessed them with every

spiritual blessing imaginable. They were chosen by God to be His before time began. He loved them, adopted them and purchased their freedom. Christ paid the price of redemption with His own blood. This is true for us too when we trust in Christ, believing that we are His own children. Our sins are forgiven! We are not only free from the power and penalty of sin, but our sins are washed away and we are clean and holy, set apart for God. Our Father showered us with kindness, wisdom and understanding. He gives us His Holy Spirit to live in us when we believe, as a guarantee that we are indeed saved. This is the most encouraging news ever if we embrace it!

WALK IN TRUTH



Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers, and because we too are part of the church, his prayer is also for us. Do you realize that you can have spiritual wisdom and understanding? Do you want to grow in knowledge of God? Do you desire that your heart be flooded with light so that you can understand the promises of God? Do you grasp how rich and glorious your inheritance is because of Christ? God is immeasurably great! In truth, the same great power, which raised Jesus from the dead, is available to us. Jesus Christ is far above any ruler, authority, power or leader, and yet He is for us and loves us. Do you recognize that all things are under His authority, including those that hate you and threaten your life? If you do not know whether you are part of the church, the body of people who believe in and follow Christ, you can ask Him right now to forgive your sin and move into your heart as your Lord and Savior. If you do this, you will be filled with the Spirit of God and you will have new life.

Notes

God's Gift of Grace – Ephesians 2



MEMORY VERSE: For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8,9

DAY 1 EPHESIANS 2:1-3—Human Nature

1. Describe the human condition without Jesus Christ.
2. To what do you think “the course of this world” refers?
3. Who is the “prince of the power of the air,” and what does he do?
John 8:44

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

1 Peter 5:8-9

4. Why do you think living solely to fulfill the passions of fleshly desires makes us “children of wrath?”

DAY 2 EPHESIANS 2:4-7— God's Nature

5. What words describe God's character in this passage?
6. What actions did God take on our behalf?

LEARN THE TRUTH

The truth is that without Christ we are dead in our sins. But do not despair! The GOOD NEWS is that not only can we be saved by grace because of Christ's death on the cross, but we can then fulfill the purpose for which we were created. We are meant to be part of God's bigger picture!

7. Think about these verses. How would you define “mercy” and “grace” within this context?
8. How do you see grace and mercy as being similar, and how do you see them as different?
9. What reason is given for God’s generosity toward people who were dead in sin? v. 7
10. Do you think it is possible to be “alive in Christ,” and yet feel dead in sin? Why or why not?

Romans 6:5-12

DAY 3 EPHESIANS 2:8-10 — God’s Gift of Grace

11. How are we saved? Why are “grace” and “faith” both crucial elements in our salvation?

John 1:12-13

12. Why is it wrong to boast about our salvation?
13. What do you think it looks like to boast about our salvation?
14. How does verse 10 describe us?
15. How does this affect your thoughts and goals? How can we know what works God has prepared for us?

DAY 4 EPHESIANS 2:11-18 — Reconciliation

16. Describe the state of the Gentiles (non-Jews) before Christ. vv. 11-12
17. What did Christ first do for individuals- Gentiles or anyone else who was separated from God? v. 13

Galatians 3:28-29

18. Why did this act of Christ also make peace between the Jews and Gentiles? vv. 14-15

1 Corinthians 12:13

19. What did Christ then do for this one body of Jews and Gentiles? vv. 16-18

20. What do you think it means to be “far off,” or “near” to God, both in this context and in life today?

DAY 5 EPHESIANS 2:19-22 – Citizens and Saints

21. How is this new body of believers described *relationally* before and after the cross? v. 19
Before:

After:

22. Verses 20-22 paint a picture of the body of believers *structurally*, a spiritual version of the temple of God. What do the definitions of each of these terms mean in the context of these verses?
Foundation

Cornerstone

Holy temple

23. What further insight do these verses give you about your place in the body of Christ?
1 Corinthians 3:10-16

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

24. How does Ephesians 2 challenge or encourage you regarding your place in the body of Christ?

LOVE THE TRUTH

Do you realize that you are God's workmanship? Are you part of His unique family of believers? If so, the Holy Spirit dwells in you and will enable you to do the things God planned for you before you were even born. Look for opportunities to serve Him and your life will be successful and satisfying.

Ephesians 2

God's Gift of Grace

No matter how impressive anyone might seem, God's Word tells us that we are by nature evil, dead in sin and actually under the influence of Satan, who would have us live according to our own sinful and selfish desires rather than how God commands us to live. The human condition is quite hopeless! We cannot fully appreciate God's gift of grace until we recognize just how lost we are without Him. Yet, God loved us, even those who did not love nor care about Him, so much that He made a way for us by sending sinless Jesus Christ to pay our debt for sin on the cross.

Ephesians 2:1-10 is a powerful passage of Scripture because it proclaims the way of salvation. It might be called the "Gospel in a nutshell."

To be saved by grace through faith rather than works and good deeds is so very freeing. It is good to earn something by our own efforts like a paycheck, favor with people, or an award, but it is truly amazing to be saved from eternal damnation because of grace alone. There is simply no greater gift. God not only saved us *from* death, but He saved us *for* the actual good works He prepared for us before we knew Him. The purpose of the good works He planned for us is to help others find God. "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us." 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Every one of us knows what it is like to be an outsider, no matter what our life experiences have been. The Gentiles were outsiders because they were not the original "chosen" ones like the Jews. They did not know God or His law, and believed in false gods or in nothing at all. They were without hope. At the same time, the

Jews were also outsiders because, while they knew they were God's chosen people through whom the truth about God could be known, many were far from Him in their hearts because they had a sense of entitlement rather than gratitude. Because they took inordinate pride in their bloodline instead of God's love, they failed to recognize Jesus Christ as Savior. Instead they wanted a Messiah who better fit their idea of a conquering king.

But God brought peace, drawing both Jews and Gentiles near to Himself because of His love for everyone He created.

WALK IN TRUTH



God went to great lengths to make peace between very different kinds of people. In spite of our differences, God unites those who realize their own depravity and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. Only God's power can unite people like this. This body of believers is God's family, the church. If you feel like an outsider, there is a place for you in the body of Christ. When you believe, His Spirit will live in you and help you. "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" 1 Corinthians 3:16

God has good works planned for each of us, all to help others be reconciled with Himself. But we cannot effectively do this until realize how lost we are/were because of sin and know what it means to be found and reconciled to God. When we grasp this truth we begin to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and are used by God to help other people find and experience His love and saving grace.

Notes

God's Eternal Purpose– Ephesians 3



MEMORY VERSE: I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:17b-20 (NIV)

DAY 1 EPHESIANS 3:1-6—The Mystery Revealed

1. Chapter 3 begins with, “for this reason.” How does this passage flow from the main ideas from chapter 2?
2. Compare Paul’s description of himself in 3:1 to 1:1. What do the combined descriptions tell you about God’s plan for Paul’s life?
3. Using a dictionary and the NIV and/or NLT, how would you define “stewardship” in the context of this passage?
4. What do you learn about the “mystery” or “secret plan” from these verses?
1-3

4-5
5. What is the mystery that is now revealed? v.6

DAY 2 EPHESIANS 3:7-10— God’s Plan for Paul

6. How did Paul become a minister of this gospel? v.7
7. Why did Paul find it ironic that he was given this ministry? v. 8

LEARN THE TRUTH

God had an eternal plan before He even created the world, and you are part of it! As you learn about the unfolding of His plan, listen to His voice, trust Him, and ask Him to help you see your place in His body, the church. Even the worst sinner is invited, no matter how they have failed in the past.

8. Originally Paul, named Saul, was a zealous Jew and a Pharisee who hated the followers of Christ. Jot down the highlights of his conversion to Christianity. Acts 9:1-19 (stay in in Acts 9)
9. Describe God's immediate **plan** for the ministry He entrusted to Paul. vv. 8b-9 and Acts 9:15,16
10. Describe God's ultimate **purpose** for the ministry He entrusted to Paul. v. 10
11. Who are the "rulers and authorities in the heavenly places?" Ephesians 6:12

DAY 3 EPHESIANS 3:10-13 — God's Plan for His Church

12. What is your understanding of the "church" from Ephesians so far and 1 Corinthians 1:1-2?
13. Could people be saved from sin before Christ came to earth? If so, how? Hebrews 11
14. What do you think "the manifold wisdom of God" is?
15. In what ways do you think the church makes God's manifold wisdom known?
16. "Because of Christ and our faith in Him, we can now come fearlessly into God's presence, assured of His glad welcome." (3:12 New Living Translation) Is this a reality in your life? Why or why not?
17. How can you explain Paul's reasoning behind his statement in verse 13?

DAY 4 EPHESIANS 3:14-19 — Prayer for Spiritual Empowering

18. Paul wrote, "For this reason I bow my knees..." What is the "reason" for his prayer?
19. What traits of God does Paul count on in his prayer? vv.14-16a

20. What does Paul ask God to do for His people, and why is each request so needed?

v. 16

v. 17

v. 18

v. 19

DAY 5

EPHESIANS 3:20-21 – God’s Mysterious, Yet Revealed, Ways

21. Of what can we be certain about God? vv. 20-21

22. God’s character and plan are certain, but does anything about Him still seem mysterious to you?

23. The words, “mystery” or “secret,” are used 4 times in this chapter. What reasons can you think of about why God waited so long to reveal His eternal plan for Jews and Gentiles? Romans 4:13

24. Is there anything in your life that seems like a mystery- you know God is in control, but don’t see His bigger picture or understand His timing?

25. What helps you trust God during times of mystery or uncertainty?

LOVE THE TRUTH

God’s ways can seem mysterious. When you don’t understand Scripture or what God appears to be doing, or not doing, remember His character. He is all good, all loving and all powerful. He cares more about your life and what happens here than you do! Shift your focus from the problem to the Provider.

Ephesians 3

God's Eternal Purpose

Paul was under house arrest when he wrote to his beloved Ephesians, yet he had only praise for the Lord and no self-pity. This is because he truly understood the wonderful grace of God, and felt such gratitude that God extended His grace to his undeserving self. Paul wrote, "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-- of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason, I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life." 1 Timothy 1:15-16 NIV Paul certainly was not the "worst of sinners," but humbly acknowledged his past sin, while not letting it define him.

Because Paul grasped the enormity of his salvation through Christ, he was honored to serve God and was undaunted by his imprisonment. He recognized that he had a high calling from God and saw himself as a steward of God's grace. God revealed to him what had previously been a mystery, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs with the Jews, that they were part of God's family, with the same inheritance as the Jews. This concept was simply unheard of before Christ. It meant that salvation was available to the whole world! Perhaps God waited until the time of Christ to reveal His eternal plan because, by that time, any truth-seeking person had to realize they were without hope on their own. The "chosen" status of the Jews was not enough to save them because they were sinners deserving of death, just like the Gentiles. The whole world needs a Savior.

The word, "mystery," does not mean something cannot be known or understood, but that it is currently unknown or hidden until the right time for it to be revealed. There are pagan religions or practices that emphasize a "special knowledge" given only to a select few, but our Father wants to be known by everyone.

When God revealed truth to His people, they wrote it down and passed it on so all could hear and believe. All believers are one in Christ, and a part of His body, the church. God reveals Himself and His will through His Word, the Bible and through the church.

Every believer and the church as a whole needs what Paul prayed. While his prayer in chapter 1 focused on the initial understanding of the power of God for salvation, his prayer in this chapter was for believers to have the depth of faith and the power needed to stand firm in the midst of persecution, which was sure to come.

WALK IN TRUTH



Paul realized that his soul was not forfeited because of his horrific sins. He could have wallowed in guilt and disqualified himself because of his past, but instead he rejoiced in salvation through Christ, and trusted God to use him to His glory. If you think you are disqualified because of your past, you are wrong. Accept the gift of grace through faith in Jesus Christ and let God work in and through you.

If you are stumped as to what God is doing in your life, ask Him for what you really need-- strength with power through His Spirit in your inner being-- Christ dwelling in your heart through faith-- bring rooted and grounded in love-- the strength to comprehend just how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love really is. We will not fully grasp how great God's love and power are until heaven, but we can know now that He is able to do more in our lives than we ever imagined possible when we trust in Him.

Notes

New Life in Christ – Ephesians 4



MEMORY VERSE: Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:32

DAY 1 Ephesians 4:1-6 — The Body of Christ

1. What is the “worthy manner” in which Christians are to walk? vv. 1-3
2. Why might these particular character traits have been mentioned?
3. What positive or negative results have you seen when these traits have, or have not, been practiced?
4. What “ones” are the essentials of faith in Jesus Christ? vv. 4-6
5. How do these essential beliefs of our faith unite people from different churches and walks of life?

LEARN THE TRUTH

God’s plan for salvation is revealed. Now we are told how to mature in our faith personally and grow in unity in the body of Christ. God uniquely created and gifted each of us so we can be an effective part of His church. He has a purpose for you that will bring you great joy and benefit others!

DAY 2 Ephesians 4:7-14 — Spiritual Gifts in the Church

6. While we are united in the “ones,” the essential truths of the Bible, we are still unique as individuals. What did Jesus do individually for each of us? v. 7 (read the NIV if it helps clarify)
7. How do verses 8-10 depict Jesus as fully able to bestow gifts on people?
8. What gifts did Christ give believers? v. 11

9. What is the purpose of these gifts of grace? vv. 11-14

10. What other spiritual gifts has Christ given, and how are we cautioned regarding them?
Romans 12:3-8

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

11. Why do you think these are called, gifts of “grace?”

DAY 3 Ephesians 4:14-16 — Gifts, Maturity and Unity

12. What is implied about the result of failing to mature and exercise our God-given gifts? v. 14

13. Why do you think “speaking the truth in love” leads to maturity- both for the one speaking and for the one listening? vv. 15-16

14. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26. What do these verses teach about:

Unity

Pride

Value

Love

15. Do you know how God has gifted you, or do any of these gifts seem to describe or inspire you?

DAY 4 Ephesians 4:17-24 — New Life in Christ

16. What must God’s people no longer do? v.17

17. Describe the life of one with a “futile mind.” vv.18-19

18. What is the root cause of such ungodliness? Do you see a progression of sin in this kind of life?

19. Describe the life of those who know Christ, both in their mindset and behavior. vv. 20-24

20. How do these verses help clarify what it means to put off the old self and put on the new self?
Romans 6:11-14

Romans 12:1-2

DAY 5 Ephesians 4:25-32 — Old Life vs. New Life

21. List what we must take off from the old life, put on in the new life, and the reason/motive for each.

OLD LIFE	NEW LIFE	REASON/MOTIVE
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22. In your opinion, what is the difference between healthy and sinful anger? What kind of foothold or opportunity might uncontrolled anger give the devil? What might healthy anger accomplish?

23. Using dictionary, write a short definition and a few appropriate antonyms for the following sins:

	DEFINITION	ANTONYM
Bitterness	antagonism, hostility, resentfulness	comfort, geniality, sweetness, joy

Wrath

Anger

Clamor

Slander

Malice

24. Are there any particular sins you need to put off and new ways of living you want to put on?

25. Why is verse 32 the key to maturity, unity and peace in the body of Christ?

LOVE THE TRUTH

It is a joy to be a useful part of the body of Christ. We each influence it for better or worse. While only God's Spirit can transform us from the inside out, we can grasp the benefit of living the new life and choose to get rid of the old and put on the new. Then we will thrive personally and bless others.

Ephesians 4

New Life in Christ

What does it mean to live a worthy life? It means living in a way that glorifies God. It hinges on two things, our belief and our behavior. These are essential beliefs: one body- the church, consisting of every follower of Christ; one Spirit- the Holy Spirit of God who indwells, seals, guides, empowers and is our guarantee of our inheritance; one hope- of salvation and eternal life through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; one Lord and one faith-trusting in God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit, the triune God for redemption; one baptism- dying to self with Christ and being raised to new life in Him; one God and Father of all- the only true all-loving, perfect God who is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent.

Many behaviors are part of the worthy life, but here we are specifically told to walk in humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The emphasis here is on unity in the church, and these traits are key to unity. People are difficult. Every one of us can be difficult! It takes humility and patience to keep peace and unity in God's family because of our different personalities, experiences, and maturity. While we are united in our essential beliefs, we are also uniquely gifted. It can take time to discover and operate in our God-given spiritual gift, so we must bear with each other as we grow. Sometimes we even have to bear with ourselves!

The body of Christ is compared to the human body. Every part is important for health, and when one part is not working properly, the whole body is affected, even sick. Just as one failing body part triggers problems in other parts of our bodies, so it is with the church. Part of being mature is not only finding our gifts and exercising them, but knowing our place in the body of Christ. We are each needed and valuable, and we really need each other and must value others. It is a wonderful

thing to put God in His place as Lord, and then to know our own place. We must guard against thinking we are insignificant, but also against thinking we are overly important. We need each other. When one fails to do what God has gifted them to do, there is a hole, an unmet need. Perhaps then others jump in to meet that need and then neglect the need God intended them to meet. It is freeing to know that we each only have a part in the church rather than having the whole thing resting on one person's shoulders. When the body of Christ operates in their giftedness, the burdens are divided, but the victory is shared. And there is a lot more victory!

WALK IN TRUTH



Paul uses another analogy, that of garments to compare the old life with our new life in Christ. Some people make their own clothes, but most don't. We just pick them up and put them on. But before we put on our nice new garments, we must take off the old dirty ripped ones. We must get rid of them! Some even need to be burned! While we are not able to transform ourselves from the inside out- that is the work of the Holy Spirit- we can definitely decide what needs to go. We can choose take off or put away sin and all that goes with our old life. And we can decide what to put on in place of the old garments- beautiful new ones that feel good, smell good and fit much better.

We can take off lying, stealing, sinful anger, corrupt talk, bitterness, wrath, clamor, slander and malice, and put on truth, fulfilling labor, constructive anger, uplifting speech, kindness, goodwill, calm, commendation, respect, goodwill and forgiveness. After all, God, in Christ, forgave us!

Notes

Walking in the Love of Christ– Ephesians 5



MEMORY VERSE: Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:1-2

DAY 1 Ephesians 5:1-7 — Walk in Love

1. Remember that Paul is speaking to believers, the church, in this letter. How does he describe them and what must they do? vv.1-2
2. What behaviors must never be found among God's children and what should be there instead? vv. 3-5
3. What insight does 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 give you about sin in the church among believers vs. sin outside of the church among unbelievers?
4. Why are verses 6 and 7 vital for God's beloved children to grasp?

Isaiah 5:20

Hebrews 10:26-27

5. What core differences do you see between Christ's actions (v. 2) and the sinful behaviors that are out of place for believers?

DAY 2 Ephesians 5:8-14 — Walk in Light

6. Think about qualities of light and darkness. Why do you think evil is characterized as darkness?

John 3:19-21

LEARN THE TRUTH

After exhorting followers of Christ to put off the old life and walk in the new life, Paul now explains the importance of walking in the love and wisdom of Christ as God's beloved children. The lifestyle of God's people is crucial for the unbelieving world to see. God's design is what everyone needs!

7. What qualities of physical light do you see in the description of those who are “light in the Lord?”
8. Believers are told to take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead to expose them. How can one expose sin when it is shameful to even speak of such things?
9. What insight does 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 give you regarding the old life and the new life in Christ?
10. In the context of this Ephesians passage, what do you think God’s immediate concern is for: Those who are redeemed by Christ?

People living in darkness?

DAY 3 Ephesians 5:15-21 — Walking in Wisdom

11. How did Paul exhort believers to live? Why is this so important? vv. 15-17
12. What do you think it means to make the best use of time?
13. What did Paul say about God’s will? Why do you think each quality is important? vv. 18-21
14. Have you seen benefits, or disfunction, because these qualities were, or were not, part of a group?
15. How can we know God’s will, and how can we then fulfill it?
Psalm 119:105

Galatians 5:16

John 15:5

DAY 4 Ephesians 5:21-33 — Wives and Husbands

16. What is the definition of “submit” or “submission?”
17. Is your initial reaction to the word, “submission” positive or negative? Why do you think this is?

18. Why do you think mutual submission (v. 21) benefits relationships?
19. God's design for marriage resembles His design for the church. What is the relationship between Christ and the church? vv. 23-25
20. What did Christ do for the men and women who are the church ? vv. 25-27
21. What insight does Christ's relationship with the church give you regarding marriage?

DAY 5 Ephesians 5:21-33 — Wives and Husbands (continued)

22. What instructions about marriage did Paul give to the Ephesian believers for:
Wives vv.22-24, 33

Husbands vv.25, 28-33

23. What specific instructions did Peter give about marriage in his letter to persecuted Christians?
Wives 1 Peter 3:1-4

Husbands 1 Peter 3:7

24. How has this study challenged, comforted or inspired you regarding walking in the light of love and/or submission?
25. What blessings have you seen when you, or someone you know, embrace these truths?

LOVE THE TRUTH

Sin destroys lives, relationships and marriages. But God's commands are for our benefit, leading to blessing, victory and fulfillment. Men and women are equal valuable members of God's family, the church, and each are called to submit. When we submit to God, relationships thrive and we are all blessed.

Ephesians 5

Walking in Love

God wants His beloved children to imitate Him by walking in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us. This kind of sacrificial love is a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. This lifestyle not only glorifies God and benefits us, but is appealing to people who don't know God, yet need and want Him.

Part of walking in love means getting rid of sin in our lives, not to insure our salvation, which is by grace alone, but so that we can enjoy God's best for us. When a person claims to be a believer but continues practicing sin as a habit, they are actually rejecting Christ. "No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God." (1 John 3:9) We are told not to become partners with people who accept, excuse and even celebrate their sin.

And yet, no matter how much we love God, we still live in the flesh and still battle sin. Salvation in Christ means we are free from the power and penalty of sin, but we will not be free from the presence of sin until heaven. Paul said, "For I do not understand my own actions... For I do not do what I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing... Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:15-25) We are in a battle, and as God's beloved children, we must call sin sin and, rather than justifying it, we confess and repent, and are forgiven.

Remember that God loves everyone and wants none to perish but all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9), so our lifestyles are crucial for drawing others to Christ. Some prefer darkness and will hate us for our holiness, but others will see our lives and recognize their own sin and need for a Savior. How can people understand why Christ had to die for sin if our lifestyles give the impression that it is ok to keep on sinning?

While we are not to partner with evil, we are indeed to partner with the body of Christ. Fellowship and unity in the church is an incredible blessing. When we walk by the power of the spirit, singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with other believers, and make melody to the Lord in our hearts, giving thanks to the Lord, life takes on new meaning. When we assign proper value to God and to His people, we experience joy and purpose. We are also then free to be our unique selves as we serve God. He tells us to submit to one another out of reverence to Christ. When we grasp the purpose and benefit of mutual submission, God can do anything through us.

WALK IN TRUTH



Marriage is one of the most beautiful pictures of Christ and the church. A strong marriage is a powerful witness for Christ. It is natural to rebel against the idea of "submission" because sin has tainted the whole idea. Submission in marriage is about value and purpose, rather than power and subservience. When a wife yields to her husband and respects him, he is empowered to be the man God intends him to be. When a husband cherishes his wife, living sacrificially with understanding, loving his wife as himself, it empowers her to be the woman God intended her to be.

We are selfish and flawed people, surrounded by bad examples of marriage. But we can have good marriages. Aside from cases of adultery or abuse, what is most often needed is mutual submission, committed leadership from the husband and supportive honesty from the wife. God honors marriages where both are strong, equal and effective partners for life whose marriages then impact others.

Notes

Standing in Victory- Ephesians 6



MEMORY VERSE: Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. Ephesians 6:10-11

DAY 1 Ephesians 6:1-4 — Obedience and Honor

1. In keeping with the idea of submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ, what two instructions, and promises, did Paul give to children?
2. How might rebellion towards one's parents affect other areas of life?
3. Why are Paul's instructions to fathers so important for the child? Describe traits you have seen in someone who is an exceptional father.
4. What insight do these verses in Proverbs give parents and children?
3:11-12

13:1, 24

19:18

20:7,11

23:22-25

LEARN THE TRUTH

Paul began this letter by essentially telling people to **SIT** in salvation as it is a gift of grace that cannot be earned. He then instructed God's beloved children to **WALK** in the power of the Holy Spirit as members of the body of Christ. He now exhorts us to **STAND** firm in the midst of a raging battle.

DAY 2 Ephesians 6:5-9 — Willing Obedience and Service

5. Describe the heart and attitude one should have in serving someone in authority over them.

6. Why is a good attitude and work ethic important for every believer? What traits do you notice in people with a good work ethic?
7. What do you think verse 8 means?
8. What appears to be an unhealthy temptation for the one in authority? Why must this trait go?
9. What qualities of God are evident in His instructions to people both in, and under, authority? v. 9

Colossians 3:18-25

10. Is God convicting you about an attitude problem you might have regarding authority?

DAY 3 Ephesians 6:10-13 — Preparing for Battle

11. Where might we naturally look for strength? Where does God want us to get our strength? v. 10
12. Who is our battle really against? v. 12
13. Why should we put on the whole armor of God? v. 11,13
14. Compare what God desires for us to what our spiritual enemy, the devil, plans for us.
John 10:10

1 Peter 5:8-11

15. How does this truth affect your view of conflict you might have with people in your life?

DAY 4 Ephesians 6:14-18 — The Armor of God

16. What is the definition and purpose of “armor?”

17. Think about each piece of the armor of God. What part of the body does each protect? What spiritual purpose might each piece serve?

18. Which of these pieces of armor are defensive, and which are offensive? Why do you think this is?

19. What is our part in this battle and what is God's?

20. The word "stand," or a variation of it, is repeated 4 times in verses 11-14. Why do you think this word is used instead of something like "conquer" or "defeat?"

21. What do you think it means to pray in the Spirit? Why is this crucial to the armor of God?

Romans 8:26-28

DAY 5 Ephesians 6:18-24 — Grace and Peace through Love and Prayer

22. What do Paul's requests for prayer tell you about what he truly values? vv. 18-20

23. Given Paul's final words to the Ephesian believers, how do you think he felt about them?

24. From your study of Ephesians, what has surprised, encouraged, challenged or inspired you?

25. Is there a verse that you will especially remember from this study?

LOVE THE TRUTH

In closing, Paul said "Grace and peace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible."(v.24) Imagine love being "incorruptible!" Apart from Jesus, everything is corruptible. But God can make even our love for Him incorruptible. Put on the whole Armor of God and live safely in Him.

Ephesians 6

Standing in Victory

The more time you spend in the Bible, the more evident God's splendor and creativity become. He is a God of order, having a definite plan from the very beginning of time, and into eternity. And yet He wants us to be part of His plan. He moved heaven and earth to bring us salvation through the blood of Christ. We can rest or **sit** in peace, knowing that salvation is a gift, because of God's love rather than our good works.

God wants us to thrive by walking according to His will. Submission to authority is a vital part of living in His will. Submission does not mean abandoning one's own thoughts or opinions, becoming subservient. Likewise, being in a position of authority does not give one the right to dictate or dominate. Selfishness and sin have twisted God's intent for submission and authority. Look to God and Jesus in this. No one will ever be asked to submit as Christ did, and yet He did so willingly out of love and respect for His father and His love for us. No father will ever have to hand his beloved son over to the enemy in order to offer salvation to a sinful world. This is our example for submission and love, and we will thrive if we **walk** in it.

Our walk is especially important because we are in the midst of an unseen spiritual battle. We will come across people who seem to be our enemies, but the truth is that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." (6:12) Let this sink in. We have a serious enemy who wants to destroy us and any semblance of Jesus Christ in our lives. We are not strong enough on our own to fight this battle, not even close. We do not need to seek out this battle because it will find us. Beware of those who seek to "do battle with the devil," as they are borrowing trouble. Our job is to **walk** in Christ and then put on the whole armor of God so we can **Stand**.

It can be helpful to picture the various pieces of the armor of God as protecting aspects of our lives such as our appetites, hearts, thoughts, beliefs, where we go... and this is true. But there is so much more to the armor of God. Every piece of the armor of God is a picture of Jesus Christ, both prophetically in the Old Testament and practically in the New Testament. We can only **sit** in righteousness because of Jesus Christ. We can only **walk** in truth because Christ is the source of our salvation. There is no peace but through Christ. He is the Living Word of God and the source of our faith. (John 14:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Luke 2:30, Ephesians 2:14, John 1:1,14, John 1:12)

WALK IN TRUTH



God's goal in our lives is for us to **STAND** firm in the midst of spiritual opposition. This is our victory- to remain standing when the enemy has tried to destroy us. Our job is to put on the whole armor of God. His job is to fight the battle. It was prophesied in Isaiah that Christ Himself would put on similar armor, which, in His case, is also referred to as "garments of vengeance." Revelation then depicts Christ ultimately defeating evil in judgement, by the Word of His Mouth, the Sword of the Spirit. (Isaiah 11:5, 59:15-21, Revelation 19:11-21) What does it actually look like to stand? It involves recognizing our own weaknesses and fleeing temptation as we pursue God. We stand when we submit to God and resist the devil, who must flee from us when we resist him. Satan's only tool against us is lies, so our offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit is crucial. We cannot defeat enemies we cannot see, but we sure can put on God's armor and we sure can know His Word, the Sword of the Spirit. (James 4:7-8, 2 Tim. 3:16)

Notes