

If we have been chosen before the foundation of the world (see verse 4), when do you think Paul was chosen as an apostle (see Galatians 1:15)? Why, based on Galatians 1:15, was he chosen? These are important questions, for the answers tell us much about Paul's mindset.

These words do not appear in several key manuscripts, leading some scholars to believe they were not in Paul's original letter and thus the letter was not intended for one church but for many.

This verse is the umbrella under which verses four through 14 sit. Verses four through 14 explain how God has "blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places".

This is worth some serious thought. God chose us before we had ever done anything worthy of being chosen (as if we could do something that would make us worthy of being chosen). That said, the reasons behind God's choosing of us lie totally within God. See the study notes at the bottom of page 14 for important information concerning the verb translated "he chose".

This is the standard for the Christian. We are to be "holy and blameless" before God. We must not be fooled into thinking that we can live like the world and consider ourselves, in any sense, as disciples of Christ.

The purpose of God's will is that his grace might be praised. This is why he chose us before the foundation of the world. He wants us to marvel at the graciousness of this choosing. If we think that God primarily acted because of our need, we are mistaken. He primarily acted because of his desire to showcase his glorious grace.

See the study notes regarding this phrase.

This is a stunning statement and worthy of much thought.

We exist so that we "might be to the praise of his glory". This is now the third time we've seen a statement like this. These statements say much about why we have been created.



## HANDS to the PLOW MINISTRIES

### "Seated on High"

#### WEEK ONE: Ephesians 1:1-14

##### DAY ONE

##### Ephesians 1:1-14

**1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

**2** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with

every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4** even as he chose us in him before the

foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love **5** he

predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, **6**

to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. **7** In him we have

redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his

grace, **8** which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight **9** making known to us the mystery

of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ **10** as a plan for the fullness of

time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

**11** In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of

him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, **12** so that we who were the first to

hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. **13** In him you also, when you heard the word

of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy

Spirit, **14** who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise

of his glory.

##### DAY TWO

##### Read Ephesians 1:1-2

##### 1. How does Paul describe himself in the introduction to this letter? *Ephesians 1:1*

As "an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God".

##### 2. Examine the introductions to Paul's other letters (the books in your New Testament from Romans through Philemon). In which of these letters do you find a statement indicating that Paul was an apostle by God's will?

Romans (the fact that he was "called to be an apostle" indicates that God took the initiative in calling and thus it may be inferred that this was God's will), 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians (this may be inferred from the statement "through Jesus Christ and God the Father"),

Colossians, 1 Timothy (again, this is inferred by the fact that he was made an apostle “by command of God our Savior”), 2 Timothy.

**3. What does Paul’s inclusion of this fact tell you about Paul and his understanding of his role?**

The fact that Paul was an apostle “by the will of God” was obviously extremely important to Paul. He knew that he hadn’t put himself in the position of being an apostle. He knew that God had “called [him] by his grace” (Galatians 1:15). Thus, he knew that his own goodness and his own talents had nothing to do with his calling as an apostle. He understood that God wanted him to be an apostle and had taken the actions necessary for that to take place. Paul knew that God was the driving force behind his ministry (one aspect of which was writing letters to churches). Knowledge of this fact kept Paul humble.

**4. What does this fact tell you about God and his manner of working? *See also Ephesians 4:11-12***

It tells me that God is organizing people as he sees fit in order for his purposes to be fulfilled. As Ephesians 4:11 says, “he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints”. It tells me that I should be very careful in how I relate to those in positions over me. David provides us with a great example of how to relate to those whom God has anointed. He would not harm Saul because God had anointed Saul as leader.

**5. Why do you think Paul would tell his readers this fact?**

He was telling them that God had placed him in his position as an apostle, and, thus, his letter should be read and responded to in keeping with this fact.

**6. How does Paul describe his readers? *Ephesians 1:1***

He writes to “**the saints** who are in Ephesus, and are **faithful** in Christ Jesus”. Saints are those who have been set apart by God. They are saints not because of their holy lives but because of God’s actions.

**7. There are indications that this letter was written to more than just the church in Ephesus. Just one indication is the fact that the phrase “in Ephesus” is missing from several important manuscripts of this letter. Thus, it appears that Paul intended this letter to be circulated among many churches. What features might you expect to find in a letter written to just one church (the church in Colossae)?**

In a letter written to just one church, the writer might point out specific problems found within the church (e.g., see Colossians). The writer might include suggestions or commands to deal with the problems in the church (e.g., see Colossians). The writer might greet specific individuals within the church (e.g., see Romans).

**8. What features might you expect to find in a letter written to many churches?**

It would be more “universal” in nature. The writer would write about general truths and not about things specific to one particular church.

### DAY THREE

#### Read Ephesians 1:3-6

**9. Verse three is somewhat of an umbrella under which verses four through 14 fall. Thus, it summarizes the verses that follow. According to this verse, what has God the Father done for the believer?**

He has “blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places”. This is an amazing (yet very broad) statement. Paul fleshes this statement out in verses four through 14.

**10. Paul writes that the Father has blessed us with these blessings “in Christ”. How many times do you find the phrase “in Christ” or “in him” or a similar phrase in verses three through 14?**

10 times.

**11. What do you think this phrase means, and what does it tell you about the importance of Christ?**

Everything we have is “in Christ”. Everything we are is “in Christ”. Without him, we are nothing. Our good deeds do not grant us spiritual standing before God. Only our position “in Christ” grants us standing before God. Watchman Nee, in his book *The Normal Christian Life*, provides a helpful illustration to explain this phrase. Nee writes,

Many a time when preaching in the villages of China one has to use very simple illustrations for deep divine truth. I remember once I took up a small book and put a piece of paper into it, and I said to those very simple folk, “Now look carefully, I take a piece of paper. It has an identity of its own, quite separate from the book. Having no special purpose for it at the moment I put it into the book. Now I do something with the book. I mail it to Shanghai. I do not mail the paper, but the paper has been put into the book. Then where is the paper? Can the book go to Shanghai and the paper remain here? Can the paper have a separate destiny from the book? No! Where the book goes the paper goes. If I drop the book in the river the paper goes too, and if I quickly take it out again I recover the paper also. Whatever experience the book goes through the paper goes through with it, for it is still there in the book.”<sup>1</sup>

Applying Nee’s example to my own life, Christ is the book and I am the paper. I am put into Christ. Thus, I experience the things Christ experiences. Since he has been raised (as we will read in Ephesians 1:20), I have raised (as we will read in Ephesians 2:4-7). Paul’s theology is built around this truth (see, for example, how he applies this truth in Romans 6 and 7). We do not put ourselves into Christ. Rather, God puts us in Christ. The decision to do this was not made based on any actions I had taken. Rather, it was made “before the foundation of the world”.

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<sup>1</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1977), 44.

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**12. When did God choose believers in him? *Ephesians 1:4***

He “chose us in him before the foundation of the world”.

**13. Why did he do this?**

He did this so that we might “be holy and blameless before him”.

**14. Notice, Paul presents this as a reason that God is blessed (worthy of praise). Has the idea that God chose you before the foundation of the world ever led you to praise him? If not, why not?**

This is a very important question for all of us to consider. These truths are not meant to promote controversy (nor are they meant to be ignored because of fears that they might ignite controversy!). Rather, they are intended to promote praise! They must not be ignored, for to do this would be to deny God the praise he is worthy of receiving.

**15. Why did he predestine us for adoption? *Ephesians 1:6***

He did this “to the praise of his glorious grace”. In other words, God predestined us so that we might marvel at his grace. He wants us to see how lovely and good and wide and overwhelming his grace is and to praise him for it. The understanding that God “chose us in him before the foundation of the world” does this. It focuses attention on God as the gracious giver of life. It draws attention away from ourselves and our actions.

It can trouble some people to think that God would do things so that he might be praised. This should not trouble us. God must draw attention to himself. It is right that he does so. If he would put something above himself he would be committing idolatry.

**16. In which verses do you find this phrase repeated in verses three through 14?**

Three times (verses 6, 12, and 14).

**DAY FOUR**

**Read Ephesians 1:7-10**

**17. What does verse seven indicate that we have in him?**

We have “redemption through his blood”. This is another way of saying, we have “the forgiveness of sins”.

**18. This gift has been given us “according to the riches of his grace”. According to verse eight, how has this grace been given to us?**

It has been “lavished upon us”.

**19. What comfort should this give to those who are weighed down by sins that seem too big to be forgiven?**

God doesn't give in a miserly fashion. Rather, he lavishes his grace upon us. It is poured out in great abundance. God's grace is not like a small amount of hard butter being scraped over a large piece of toast. Rather, his grace is lavished upon us. It is like pounds and pounds of soft butter coating every square inch of the toast.

**20. What is the "mystery of his will"?**

It is "to unite all things in him, things in heaven and on earth".

**21. When will this take place?**

It will take place in "the fullness of time". The passage in Ephesians does not indicate when the fullness of time is. However, it seems to be the time to which Romans 8:18-25 refers.

**22. Colossians 1:19-20 is very similar to this passage. Please write out these verses in the space below.**

"For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."

**23. What do these verses tell you about the importance of Christ in the universe?**

Without Christ, there can be no reconciliation between God and man.

**DAY FIVE**

**Read Ephesians 1:11-14**

**24. What does verse 11 indicate that we have in him?**

"In him we have obtained an inheritance". This is not, however, the only possible interpretation of this verse (see the study notes on pages 17-18 for another possible interpretation).

**25. Why has he done this? *Ephesians 1:12***

So that we might be "to the praise of his glory".

**26. What else has God done for us? *Ephesians 1:13***

He sealed us "with the promised Holy Spirit".

**27. What is the purpose of this sealing? *Ephesians 1:14***

The Holy Spirit is "the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it".

**28. Why has he done this? *Ephesians 1:14***

As we have seen two other times in this section, he has done this "to the praise of his glory".

**29. Reread verses three through 14, focusing on the reasons behind God’s actions. Why has he done the things he has done? What is his purpose?**

God has done these things for himself. He has done them to draw attention to his grace and he has done them to draw attention to his glory.

**30. Write out a prayer based on verses three through 14, specifically thanking and praising God for the actions he has taken on your behalf.**

This may be the first time you have ever thanked him for taking some of these actions on your behalf. Be specific here. This is important, for it concerns the glory of God and the praise that is due him. Don’t let those in your small group ignore this question, for it strikes at the heart of who we consider God to be. We must praise him for the things he has done. Perhaps you could begin in the following way, “I thank you God, that you have blessed me in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places . . . .

**DAY SIX**

**Read the study notes for chapter 1:1-14.**

**31. Read the study notes and then complete the following sentence. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

?????

We must see the existence of the saints in any location as grounds to praise God. Apart from his work there would be no saints anywhere! We must thank him for the grace he has poured out on so many.

In the Greek, this word could mean "spirit" or "Spirit" (the Holy Spirit) depending on context. Scholars are not in agreement concerning which word is intended here. This word is capitalized in the NIV.

Paul's prayer is that the saints might understand the following three things. If we understand these three things we will naturally become mature and effective believers.

This is the first thing Paul wants the saints in Ephesus to know.

This is the second thing Paul wants the saints to know. Notice the word "his" here. This is not talking about our inheritance. It is talking about God's inheritance. An understanding of this truth will forever change the way we relate to the church.

This is the third thing Paul wants the saints to know.

The words "according to" are very significant. The greatness of God's power directed toward us is tied to the work he has done in Christ.

Notice the direct connection between Paul's words here and his words in Ephesians 2:6.



## “Seated on High”

### WEEK TWO: Ephesians 1:15-23

#### DAY ONE

##### Ephesians 1:15-23

**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 a 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.

#### DAY TWO

##### Read Ephesians 1:15-17

### 1. Paul typically begins his prayers for the churches with thanksgiving. Why does he give thanks to God for the saints in Ephesus (and the surrounding areas)? *Ephesians 1:15-16*

Because he had “heard of [their] faith in the Lord Jesus and [their] love toward all the saints”. Faith in Jesus and love for the saints is a mark of true Christianity. Our relationship with Christ is expressed in an upward direction (faith), and an outward direction (love toward fellow believers). Obviously, to truly love fellow believers, we must actually be in contact with fellow believers. For this to happen, we must be a part of a local church.

### 2. In the following passages Paul outlines how he prays for the saints. For each passage note the reason(s) why he thanks God for the saints in that particular location.

#### *Romans 1:8*

Paul thanked God because their faith was “proclaimed in all the world”.

#### *1 Corinthians 1:4*

Paul thanked God “because of the grace of God that was given [them] in Christ Jesus”.

***Philippians 1:3-5***

Paul thanked God “because of [their] partnership in the gospel from the first day until [the day he wrote the letter]”.

***Colossians 1:3-5***

This is identical to the thanksgiving found in Ephesians 1:15. Paul and his companions thanked God because they had heard of the Colossian Christians’ faith in Christ and the love they had for one another.

***1 Thessalonians 1:2-3***

Paul and his companions thanked God always, “remembering before [their] God and Father [their] work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ”.

***2 Thessalonians 1:3***

Paul and his companions thanked God for the Thessalonian church because their faith “was growing abundantly”, and the love they had “for one another [was] increasing”.

***2 Timothy 1:3***

Paul thanked God as he remembered Timothy “constantly in [his] prayers night and day”.

***Philemon 4-5***

He thanked God because he had “[heard] of [their] love and of the faith that [they had] toward the Lord Jesus and all the saints”.

**3. What do these passages tell you about Paul’s prayer life?**

Paul’s prayers were marked by thanksgiving. He was overwhelmed with gratitude toward God because of the work he had done and the work he was doing among the saints. Paul’s thanksgiving demonstrates that he believed God to be the reason behind the faith and growth evidenced in the saints. It is evident that Paul prayed constantly. I don’t take this to mean that he was on his knees 24 hours each day. Rather, I believe prayer was a regular part of his everyday life. I am convinced that he prayed at regular times. He also prayed when he was walking, thinking, talking, etc., etc., etc.. Every time Paul saw evidence of God’s goodness in the spiritual life of the church he saw it as a reason to thank God.

**4. What do they tell you about his view of the church?**

Paul’s prayers demonstrate that he saw the church as evidence of God’s grace. He saw the church as a miracle owing its existence and health to God’s goodness.

**5. What do they tell you about his view of God?**

Paul’s prayers demonstrate a profound belief that God is the source of all spiritual life and health.



**6. What part does thanksgiving play in your prayers for the churches?**

This is an important question. Regular thanksgiving demonstrates that we have an understanding of God's goodness directed toward the church and that we recognize (at least in part) when he has been at work and are grateful for that work. Lack of thanksgiving demonstrates one (or more) of at least three possibilities: (1) that we do not see God as the reason behind the faith and love of the saints, (2) that we do not consider the faith and love of the saints as worthy of thanksgiving, (3) that we are blinded to the work of God.

**7. Why do you think Paul told the saints that he was praying for them? And why did he tell them the content of his prayers? What benefit might this bring to the church?**

The fact that Paul told the saints that he was praying for them would have encouraged the saints. It would have given them hope that God would, indeed, work on their behalf in response to Paul's prayers. When someone tells me that he or she is praying for me, it lets me know that I am not alone. Paul told them the *content* of his prayers because, I believe, it would have opened their eyes to the miracles that God had worked and was working in their lives. Sometimes, we forget that we have anything about which to be grateful. Sometimes we forget that God has done anything good for us. Knowing the content of Paul's prayers would have helped the saints see things from a different perspective. His prayers would have also served to unify the church. The church would have seen that they were a unit and that their growth was essential for their health. Finally, telling the saints that he was praying for them would have given them an example to follow.

**8. After Paul gives thanks to God, we find him making a request of God. What does he ask God to do for the church in Ephesus? *Ephesians 1:17***

That he might "give [them] a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him".

**DAY THREE**

**Read Ephesians 1:18**

**9. What do you think "having the eyes of your hearts enlightened" means? Hearts obviously do not have eyes. What is Paul asking God to do in the lives of the saints?**

This phrase is a restatement of the phrase immediately preceding it. In other words, "a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him" = "the eyes of your hearts enlightened". Paul is asking God to give the saints understanding about certain important spiritual truths. He wants them to know these things in their innermost being. He wants them to believe these things as deeply as they believe anything.

**10. In verses 18 and 19, Paul lists three things he wants the saints to know. What are these three things?**

1. That they might know "what is the hope to which he has called you".
2. That they might know "what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints".
3. That they might know "the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe".

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**11. What is “the hope to which he has called you”? See also Romans 8:18-25**

I believe this speaks of, as Romans 8:18 says, “the glory that is to be revealed to us”. We are to anticipate, with great eagerness, the day of the “revealing of the sons of God” (Romans 8:19). We are waiting for our “adoption as sons, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23). It was “in this hope we were saved” (Romans 8:24).

**12. What influence did a knowledge of this hope play in the lives of the Old Testament saints? What did it help them to do? What did it help them to avoid?**

***Hebrews 11:8-10***

Abraham was “looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God”. The knowledge that he had a heavenly inheritance in the city of God allowed him to live in tents his whole life. It allowed him to persevere even though he did not personally receive the things God had promised to him. Since he had his eyes on the “city that has foundations”, he was able to avoid the trap of falling in love with the earthly cities that have no foundations (i.e., they will not last). His eyes were fixed on what is eternal.

***Hebrews 11:13-16***

The patriarchs did not receive the things God had promised to them. Instead, they saw them “and greeted them from afar”. They knew that they were “strangers and exiles on the earth”. Because of this, their hope and desire was set on their own homeland—“a better country, that is, a heavenly one”. When I anticipate something that is coming, I avoid those things that will keep me from my goal. For instance, when I anticipate enjoying a Thanksgiving dinner, I avoid eating junk food before the meal. I am trading momentary satisfaction (junk food) for greater satisfaction (a Thanksgiving dinner). The patriarchs knew that God had something better prepared for them. They were able to put off their pleasures so that they might obtain a greater pleasure. They didn’t sink their roots into the world, because they knew their was a better place in which to sink their roots. This is not to say that we have no pleasure on earth. Rather, we avoid shallow, temporary pleasures. We trade them for what is satisfying and eternal.

***Hebrews 11:24-27***

Moses chose “rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ (notice—the author says that Moses’ eyes were on Christ!) greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward”. What powerful verses! Sin has its pleasures—but they are fleeting. We are trading treasures of infinite worth when we settle for these fleeting pleasures. The “reproach of Christ” is greater than the greatest treasure this world has to offer. We must recognize this to be true. We must leave the weak and shallow and fight for what is true and lasting. This enables us, like Moses, to endure in difficult circumstances: “By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he

endured as seeing him who is invisible". When our eyes are fixed on God and on his city with foundations, the world's "treasures" are put in their proper perspective.

**13. What specific changes might you see in your life if you had a greater awareness and knowledge of this hope?**

?????

#### **DAY FOUR**

**Read Ephesians 1:18**

**14. In verse 18, Paul tells the saints that he asks God to open the eyes of their hearts concerning "the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints"? Read this verse carefully. Whose inheritance is Paul talking about?**

Paul is not talking about what we will inherit from God. He is talking about God's glorious inheritance.

**15. What is the inheritance?**

The saints are God's glorious inheritance.

**16. What makes this inheritance glorious? See also Ephesians 5:24-33**

Christ makes this inheritance glorious. He sanctified the church (which is, after all, the assembly of the saints), that is, he "cleansed her by the washing of water with the word". He did this "so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing". Jesus makes the church "holy and without blemish".

**17. Do you see this inheritance as glorious? Would others know you see this inheritance as glorious by your behavior?**

We must love the church. We must see her as God's glorious inheritance. If we see her in this fashion, our behavior toward the church will inevitably come in line with this truth. God loves the church. If I love God, I must also love the church. If I treasure God, I must also treasure the church.

**18. What specific changes might you see in your life if you had a greater awareness and knowledge of these truths?**

It is worth spending some time here. How do we relate to God's inheritance? Do we treat it as glorious? Do we treat her leaders as important? Are we overly critical of God's inheritance?

## DAY FIVE

### Read Ephesians 1:19-23

**19. In verse 19, Paul tells the saints that he asks God to open the eyes of their hearts concerning “the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe”. Why do believers need to know the greatness of God’s power working in their behalf? What would this knowledge do for them?**

We need to know the greatness of God’s power “toward us who believe” because we are being called to abandon everything for God. Is he strong enough to keep and protect us from this day forward? We need to know that he is greater than any force that could harm us. We need to know that nothing is above him. If we know these things to be true, we will walk in confidence, not fearing the world or the devil or the future. We will be able to obey because we, like Moses, see him “who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:27), and we know that our invisible God is greater than all the visible “gods” we see on earth.

**20. The greatness of God’s power directed toward the saints is connected to the work he did in Christ. How did God demonstrate his great might in Christ? See also Psalm 110 and Philippians 2:5-11**

He told Jesus to sit at his right hand until he made all his enemies Christ’s footstool. (In ancient times, the position at the right hand of the king was the position of power in the kingdom. Apart from the king himself, no one had more power than the one sitting at the king’s right hand. See Genesis 41:40-45 for an example of the power held by the person at the king’s right hand.) He told Jesus to rule. He took an oath that Jesus is “a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek”. The power God gave to Jesus is so great that “he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth”. These words are similar to those found in Psalm 2. There, God says, “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill” (Psalm 2:6). This Psalm speaks of Jesus and his enthronement at God’s right hand. (The phrase “today I have begotten you”—see verse 7—probably refers to Jesus being elevated to God’s right hand after his resurrection.) At that time, God told Jesus, “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel”. There is nothing outside of Jesus’ control. No one may stand against him. As Paul writes in Philippians 2, “God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”.

**21. God’s power in our lives is “according to” the work he did in Jesus. In other words, it is tied to the work he did in Jesus. What confidence should this give the believer in regard to God’s power that is available to him?**

The work he does in us is tied to the work he did in Jesus. Thus, our faith is placed in the work God accomplished in Jesus, not in our ability to please God or to live a sinless life (although living a holy life is important). I know God has great power at work in me and for me because my life is tied to Christ’s life.

**22. According to verse 22, why did God perform these actions in Christ?**

God “put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church”. Thus, he took these actions for the benefit of the church.

**23. What does this say about the importance of the church?**

The church is the apple of God’s eye. God sent his Son to die for her. Jesus loves and cherishes her. He died for her.

**24. Do you have anything in your life that you have regarded as more powerful than Christ?**

?????

**25. What specific changes might you see in your life if you had a greater awareness of Christ’s power and your connection to that power?**

A Christian with this understanding will not despair over the state of things in this world, because he will know that Christ is in control. A Christian with this understanding will more willingly obey, because he knows that Christ’s purposes cannot be thwarted. A Christian with this understanding will have more joy in his life because of his relation to Christ and his greatness. A Christian with this understanding will never feel insignificant because he will know that all his significance comes from his relationship to Jesus and the work he accomplished on the cross. A Christian with this understanding will look less to his own accomplishments and more to Christ’s accomplishments, recognizing that the things that he has done matter more than anything that we can do. That said, the Christian who understands these things will attempt to do greater things for God, knowing that God is for him.

**DAY SIX**

**Read the study notes for chapter 1:15-23.**

**26. Read the study notes and then complete the following sentence. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

?????

Notice the emphasis on “you” in verses one through three, then look at the first two words of verse four. All the emphasis for your salvation—and all the glory for your salvation—rests on God.

See also Romans 3:9–18.

God pours out his wrath because of our sinfulness. We must not think that God’s kindness means that he will not (or cannot) pour out wrath against sinful mankind. Romans 1 and 2 clearly portray God as a wrathful God. See also God’s description of himself in Exodus 34:6–7.

This contrasts with the “And you” in verse one.

When Christ was made alive you were made alive (if you are a Christian!)

When Christ was raised to heaven you were raised to heaven.

When Christ was seated in the heavenly places you were seated in the heavenly places. These are very significant truths! They must be understood, for they relate to our victory over sin in this present life.

God did these things so that he might display “the immeasurable riches of his grace”. God is always, always looking out for his glory.

Which is not your doing—the grace or the faith? Actually, it appears that Paul is referring to the “grace through faith” process here. The entire process is not our own doing. It is the gift of God. No one, apart from God, may boast about your salvation.

We are not saved by anything we do. However, as verse ten makes clear, we are saved so that we might do good works.

Even our post-salvation good works do not bring glory to us, for God prepared them in advance.



## “Seated on High”

### WEEK THREE: Ephesians 2:1-10

#### DAY ONE

#### Ephesians 2:1-10

**1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins **2** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— **3** among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. **4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— **6** and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, **7** so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast. **10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

#### DAY TWO

#### Read Ephesians 2:1-3

##### 1. How does Paul describe his readers in verses one through three?

They had been (before they received God’s mercy) “dead in the trespasses and sins in which [they] once walked”. They had followed “the course of this world” and “the prince of the power of the air”. They were, at one time, “sons of disobedience”. They “lived in the passions of [their] flesh”; that is, they carried “out the desires of the body and the mind”. They were “by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind”.

##### 2. Whom else does Paul include in the indictments he makes in verses one through three?

He includes himself and “the rest of mankind”.

##### 3. Using these verses as a basis for your answer, complete the following statement: “People sin because ...”

People sin because they are dead in their trespasses and sins. They are not alive to God and to his ways. They naturally follow the ungodly path of the world. Not only this, they follow Satan, who

leads them into disobedience. People do not follow God’s desires. Rather, they follow the passions of their flesh—doing whatever their depraved bodies and minds desire.

**4. Paul uses the phrase “children of wrath” in verse three. Whose wrath is Paul talking about? See *Ephesians 5:6*; *Colossians 3:5-6***

The wrath of God. As *Ephesians 5:6* says, “because of these things, the wrath of God comes on the sons of disobedience”. *Romans 1:18-3:31* provides important information about how God pours out his wrath. The idea that God does not punish people for their sins is a myth. He is currently pouring out wrath and the day of his wrath is coming.

**5. Why would Paul want to remind his readers of these truths? What good would it accomplish?**

His primary purpose is to showcase God’s characteristics of mercy, love, and grace (he turns his attention to these things in verse four). In order to do this, he must reveal the depravity from which we have been saved. Our darkness reveals God’s light in a greater fashion.

**DAY THREE**

**Read *Ephesians 2:4-7***

**6. How does verse four describe God? Why is this verse significant in this passage?**

Verse four describes God as being “rich in mercy”. Paul writes of “the great love with which he loved us”. This verse is important because it is the turning point in this chapter. We are depraved and worldly. God is rich in mercy. God’s richness in mercy and great love toward us triumphs over our wickedness.

**7. Compare those described in verses one through three with those described in verses four through six.**

**1-3**

Dead in trespasses and sins  
Following the course of this world  
Following the prince of the power of the air  
Called a son of disobedience  
Lived in the passions of our flesh  
By nature a child of wrath

**4-6**

Made alive together with Christ  
Saved by grace  
Raised up with Christ  
Seated with Christ in the heavenly places

**8. Are the events in verses five and six portrayed as events that will happen or events that did happen? Why is this significant?**

They are portrayed as events that did happen. In other words, the Christian has already been made alive together with Christ, has already been raised up with him, and has already been seated with him in the heavenly places. This is significant because we do not need to strive for these things to happen. Instead, we need to live in their reality.

**9. What should change in the Christian's life as a result of these things? *Colossians 3:1-3***

Since this is true, we should "seek the things that are above, where Christ is". We should "Set [our] minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth". Instead of living as one looking up to heaven, we should live with the perspective that we are already heavenly people. We are heavenly strangers living on earth. Keeping this perspective greatly impacts our behavior.

**10. Why has God done these things for the believer? *Ephesians 2:7***

Read this carefully. It's important to grasp the meaning of this verse. God has done these things "so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus". Once again, we see that God is doing something because he wants to display his own greatness! God wants to show off "the immeasurable riches of his grace". This is the same truth we saw over and over in Ephesians 1:3-14.

**DAY FOUR**

**Read Ephesians 2:8-9**

**11. Describe the salvation process. How is a person saved?**

A person is saved by grace through faith. This "grace through faith" process is not something the person does. It is God's gift.

**12. What part do a person's good works or actions play in salvation?**

Works play no part in a person's salvation. If they did, that person would be able to boast that salvation was owed to him.

**13. What is grace? (If possible use a Bible dictionary in formulating your answer)**

Grace is "God's goodness toward those who deserve only punishment."<sup>2</sup>

**14. What is faith? (If possible use a Bible dictionary in formulating your answer)**

Faith is "Trust or dependence on God based on the fact that we take him at his word and believe what he has said."<sup>3</sup>

**15. Write Ephesians 2:8-9 in the space below. If you have not already done so, memorize these verses.**

**16. What is the significance of verse nine? Why would God care about this? See also *1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14***

Verse nine indicates that God purposely designed the "salvation plan" so that we would have nothing about which to boast. Works have absolutely nothing to do with salvation. As 1

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<sup>2</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2000), 1243.

<sup>3</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1242.  
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Corinthians 1:26-31 makes clear, God's choosing is what matters. All attention for our salvation must be given to him.

#### **DAY FIVE**

#### **Read Ephesians 2:10**

#### **17. Paul discusses works in verse nine and in verse ten—yet in very different ways. What is the difference between the works described in verse nine and the works described in verse ten?**

In verse nine, we read that our works have nothing to do with our being saved. That is, our works do not cause us to be saved. This does not mean that works play no role in the life of the Christian. On the contrary, we have been “created in Christ Jesus for good works”. In other words, once we are saved, we are to do good works. That is why we are “created in Christ Jesus”. Good works do not save us, however, they are evidence that we are saved.

#### **18. What importance are good works to play in the life of the Christian?**

These verses demonstrate the importance of good works. We must not delude ourselves with the thought that our works do not matter. They do matter! Again, they cannot save us, but they demonstrate that we are saved.

#### ***Matthew 5:16***

Jesus commanded us to let our lights shine before others. He is talking about good works here. When people see our good works, they will give glory to the Father. Again, we see that the glory of God seems to be the ending point of everything we discuss!

#### ***2 Corinthians 5:10***

We will all appear “before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil”. Obviously, good works are essential. They form the basis of our judgment.

#### ***2 Corinthians 9:8***

God's grace allows us to “abound in every good work”. We see that good works don't point attention to our goodness. Rather, they point to God's grace.

#### ***Galatians 5:6***

Christianity is all about “faith working through love”.

#### ***Galatians 6:10***

We are called to “do good to everyone ... especially to those who are of the household of faith”.

#### ***Colossians 1:10***

If we are to be “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him”, we must bear fruit “in every good work”.

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**Titus 3:8**

We are to “be careful to devote [ourselves] to good works”.

**19. God has prepared good works beforehand, that we might walk in them. What does this mean? What confidence does this truth give you in regard to the good works God wants you to do?**

It means that God has a plan for my life—a plan that includes good works. I am not worthless. Rather, the all-knowing Creator has orchestrated my life in such a way that I will be fruitful. In the same way that Paul could have confidence in his preaching ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles because he knew that God had chosen him for that task before he was even born (see Galatians 1:15-16), I can have confidence that God has done the same thing for me. He wants me to succeed and he has worked mightily so that I will succeed!

**20. Using Ephesians 2:1-10 as a starting point, write out a prayer, thanking God for the work he has done for you in your life in regard to your salvation. Be as specific as possible.**

As you listen to the prayers in your small groups, make sure people are grasping the truths of who they were without Christ and who they are with him. Particularly, make sure that they understand what God has done for them with Christ. Christians must see that they have already been made alive with Christ, already been raised with him, and already been seated with him. These truths, if believed, cannot help but change the way we live.

**DAY SIX**

**Read the study notes for chapter 2:1-10.**

**21. Read the study notes and then complete the following sentence. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

?????



We must remember the depths from which we have been saved. This will lead us to praise God. As I mention in the study notes, it is helpful, at least occasionally, to read the Old Testament with this "outsider" viewpoint in mind.

Do you realize how terrible the situation was for the Gentiles before Christ?

Jesus' death ("the blood of Christ" is shorthand for Jesus' death) brought us near. Apart from his death, we would still be without hope and without God.

This is an important verse regarding the Trinity. We see the manner in which they work together here. Through Jesus we come to the Father in (or by) one Spirit. See also John 14:6.

This is surely a reason to praise God. I'm no longer an alien. I am a part of God's family!

We will never outgrow God's word. Here, we see that the teachings of the prophets (Old Testament) and the teachings of the apostles (New Testament) are the foundation upon which we are being built.

In the Old Testament, the temple was the dwelling place of God. In the New Testament, God chooses to reside in a new temple—the church. This must change the way I relate to the church.

## "Seated on High"

### WEEK FOUR: Ephesians 2:11-22

#### DAY ONE

#### Ephesians 2:11-22

**11** Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— **12** remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. **13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. **14** For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility **15** by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, **16** and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. **17** And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. **18** For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. **19** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, **20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, **21** in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. **22** In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

#### DAY TWO

#### Read Ephesians 2:11-12

#### 1. Why does Paul refer to his Gentile readers as "the uncircumcision" in verse 11? What were the Jews saying when they called the Gentiles this? See Genesis 17:1-14

In Genesis 17, God establishes a covenant with Abraham. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham. Thus, in calling the Gentiles "uncircumcised", the Jews were saying that the Gentiles were not in covenant with God.

#### 2. How did David refer to Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:26 and 36? What was he saying when he called Goliath by this name?

He calls him an "uncircumcised Philistine". By saying this, David was stressing the fact that Goliath was not in covenant with the living God. David's confidence was in the fact that Goliath had "defied the armies of the living God". In other words, one who was not in covenant with God was defying those who were in covenant with the living God. This, along with the fact

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that the Spirit of the Lord had “rushed upon David” (see 1 Samuel 16:13) and was moving him to confront Goliath, is why David was so confident of victory. How could someone from outside of the covenant defeat one who was a part of the covenant?

**3. What, specifically, does Paul want his Gentile readers to remember?**

That they were, at one time, “separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world”.

**4. What practical value would there be in remembering these things?**

The value would be in the great thankfulness that this would inspire in the Gentiles. This would result in God being praised and honored for the mercy he had shown to the Gentiles.

**5. Paul says that the Gentiles were “strangers to the covenants of promise”. These covenants were strong agreements made between God and the Israelites. Outlined below are significant covenants from which the Gentiles were separated. For each verse, describe the covenant—specifically, what was promised and to whom it was promised.**

***Genesis 12:1-3***

This is a covenant Yahweh made with Abram. God promised to make of Abram “a great nation”. He said, “I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”.

***Genesis 15:7-21***

This is a covenant Yahweh made with Abram concerning land. He said, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates”.

***Genesis 17:1-21***

This is a covenant God made with Abraham. In this covenant, God promised Abraham that he would be “the father of a multitude of nations”. He promised to make him “exceedingly fruitful”. He promised to bring nations and kings from Abraham. God said that this was “an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you”. As in the covenant outlined in Genesis 15, God promised to give land to Abraham’s descendants. He said this land would be “an everlasting possession”. Circumcision was the sign of this covenant.

***Genesis 26:1-5***

This is a covenant Yahweh made with Isaac. He said, “I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your Father. I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed”.

***Genesis 28:13-15***

This is a covenant Yahweh made with Jacob. He promised to give land to Jacob and his descendants. He said that Jacob's descendants would "be like the dust of the earth" and that all the families of the earth would be blessed in Jacob. He told Jacob that he was with him and that he would keep him and bring him back to the land of his father and that he would not leave him.

***Exodus 24:1-8***

This passage relates to events that took place surrounding the establishment of the covenant between God and the people of Israel.

***2 Samuel 7:1-17***

This covenant is between God and David. It is extremely important because in this covenant, God promises to give David an eternal throne. He says, "your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever". This covenant was fulfilled in Jesus. He sits on David's throne (and because of this covenant, we know that he will rule forever) and this is why he is called "the son of David".

**6. Based on Ephesians 2:11-12, summarize in your own words the condition of those Gentiles who are without Christ.**

The Gentiles without Christ are in a terrible state. God has not promised them help and deliverance. He has not promised to be their God. He has not promised to never leave them. Paul's concluding words in verse 12 accurately portray the Gentiles plight—they have no hope, and they are "without God in the world". Thankfully, this is not where the story ends.

**DAY THREE**

**Read Ephesians 2:13-17**

**7. Verse 13 describes a great change that has taken place in the Gentiles. What is this change and how was it brought about?**

The Gentiles "have been brought near by the blood of Christ". That is, Jesus' death and resurrection have brought the "outsiders" in.

**8. Verses 14-17 concern the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. How has this relationship changed because of Jesus' death and resurrection?**

Christ has completely changed the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. Formerly, a great dividing wall of hatred stood between them. This wall has been broken down by Christ. There are no longer two peoples in view (Jews and Gentiles), rather, in Christ there is "one new man in place of two".

**9. Paul refers to "the dividing wall of hostility" that stood between Jews and Gentiles. What was this wall? How was it dealt with?**

It was the law of commandments and ordinances. He dealt with this dividing wall by "abolishing" it through his death.

**10. While Jesus' death changed the relationship between believing Jews and believing Gentiles, it took some time for the believing Jews to come to an understanding of this truth. How did the Jews in the early church come to an awareness of this truth?**

***Acts 10:1-48***

These verses recount the apostle Peter's dramatic "education" in the fact that God "shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:35). Peter learned this lesson through a vision which was then lived out in the following days. The animosity between Jews and Gentiles can be seen in Peter's statement, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation" (Acts 10:28). This was the mindset that needed to be changed.

***Acts 11:1-18***

Here we read that the Jewish brothers of "the circumcision party" criticized Peter because he "went to uncircumcised men and ate with them". Peter then explained the vision and the events that followed. After listening carefully, the Jewish believers were persuaded and said, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life". This was a colossal shift in understanding! Prior to this, they simply could not imagine the Gentiles as a part of God's plan.

***Acts 15:1-21***

This chapter begins with Jewish men telling Gentile believers that they must be circumcised in order to be saved. Paul and Barnabas sharply disagreed with the Jewish Christians making these claims. The church in Antioch did not know how to settle the dispute, so they sent an entire delegation to Jerusalem to find out what the "apostles and the elders" thought about this question. It is significant that this debate was not settled easily. The passage speaks of "much debate". This is not surprising. However, in the end, Peter convinced the people by recounting the lesson that the Holy Spirit had taught him. Peter concluded by saying, "we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will" (Acts 15:11).

**11. Why do you think it was so hard for the first Christians to acknowledge that God could accept the Gentiles?**

The Gentiles were not God's covenant people. They had done nothing to deserve receiving any special treatment from him (of course, the Jews hadn't done anything worthy either). The Jews just could not imagine God's life being poured out on uncircumcised pagans.

## **DAY FOUR**

### **Read Ephesians 2:18**

**12. Verse 18 includes a reference to all three members of the Trinity. Based on this verse, describe the roles filled by the different members of the Trinity.**

#### ***Jesus***

Through Jesus we have access to the Father. He is the door we go through. The word “through” is used very frequently in reference to Jesus’ work.

#### ***Father***

The goal of our faith is to get to the Father. He is the one whom for whom we live.

#### ***Holy Spirit***

The way we come to the Father through Jesus is in (or by) the Holy Spirit.

**13. John 14:6 doesn’t mention the Holy Spirit, but it is very similar to Ephesians 2:18. Outline the roles filled by Jesus and by the Father as described in this verse.**

#### ***Jesus***

Again, we see that we must go through Jesus to get to the Father. “No one comes to the Father except through me.”

#### ***Father***

Again, we see that the Father is the goal of our faith. We are brought (in or by the Spirit) to the Father through Jesus.

**14. How does the Holy Spirit help the believer relate to the Father? *Romans 8:14-17***

He leads us to the Father and causes us to cry out (on the inside), “Abba! Father!”. In other words, the Spirit moves us to desire the Father.

**15. Is there any way to access the Father other than the way outlined in these verses?**

***Ephesians 2:18, John 14:6***

No. There is no other way. Good works will not get one to the Father. Right intentions will not get one to the Father. Sincerity of belief will not get one to the Father. As John 14:6 makes clear, no one comes to the Father except through Jesus.

**16. What do you think Paul means by his use of the phrase “in one Spirit”?**

It is worth noting that the word “in” here can also be translated “by” (as in the NIV). I believe he is saying that the Holy Spirit’s role is to envelop the believer and bring the believer through Christ to the Father. The Holy Spirit is, in a sense, the agent by whom our salvation is worked out. The fact that Paul refers to “one Spirit” here indicates why unity is found between believing

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Jews and Gentiles—the same Spirit is working within and around both parties! See also Ephesians 4:4.

#### **DAY FIVE**

#### **Read Ephesians 2:19-21**

#### **17. How does Paul describe the Gentiles in verses 19-21?**

His words indicate the tremendous change that has been brought about for the Gentiles. He says that they were “strangers and aliens”. But now, the Gentiles “are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God”. He says that in the Lord, the Gentiles are “being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit”.

#### **18. If you were a Jewish Christian living in or around Ephesus during the first century, do you think you would have had a hard time accepting Paul’s statement here? Why or why not?**

Possibly, although I think that I would have had a great deal of face-to-face contact with Gentiles over the years, and my animosity toward them would not be so developed as a Jew living in Jerusalem, which was the capital of Judaism.

#### **19. Do you think it would be harder for a believing Jew in Jerusalem to accept these truths than for a believing Jew in Ephesus? Why or why not?**

Definitely. The Christian Jews in Jerusalem never really “got over” the law. As we see in Acts 21:20, the believing Jews in Jerusalem were noted for their zealotry for the law. This would inevitably lead to the belief that those who did not keep the law were somehow second class Christians (or worse). It would have offended the Jews in Jerusalem to see that Paul had “elevated” the Gentiles to equal standing with them.

#### **20. What importance do the apostles and prophets play in the structure that God is building?**

The household of God is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets”. Thus, we see that the OT prophets and the NT apostles are, in some ways, equivalent. Their teachings have laid the foundation upon which the household of God is being built.

#### **21. Practically speaking, how do you think we should demonstrate our understanding of this truth?**

We must devote ourselves to the teachings of the apostles and prophets. They are foundational. This is another way of saying that we must devote ourselves to the Bible.

#### **22. How is Jesus described in these verses? What does Paul mean by this description?**

He is called the cornerstone. Paul means that Jesus is the most important part of this building which is being built. He is the first block and the most important block. Without him the building (called “a holy temple” in verse 21) does not exist.



**23. Why is this a fitting description of Jesus' work? See also 1 Peter 2:4-8**

Because apart from him there is no building. As 1 Peter says, God has laid this stone (Jesus), "and whoever believes in him will never be put to shame".

**24. We are "being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit". What does this say about the importance of the church?**

The church must not be thought of as merely a building where we gather. Rather, it is the household of God (see also 1 Timothy 3:15). As with the temple in the Old Testament, which was a place where God chose to reside (even though the heavens cannot contain him), the church is a structure where God has chosen to reside. The Holy Spirit is the one who orchestrates this building so that we are fit for God's habitation.

**25. Would others say that you live as if this were true?**

This is an important question. Do I live as if the church actually were God's dwelling place? If so, I will treat the church with the greatest respect, for it is more than just the gathering of God's people. It is the holy temple in which God has chosen to dwell. Woe to those who would work to destroy God's dwelling place.

**DAY SIX**

**Read the study notes for chapter 2:11-22.**

**26. Read the study notes and then complete the following sentence. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

?????



**“Seated on High”**  
**WEEK FIVE: Ephesians 3**

**DAY ONE**

**Ephesians 3**

**1** For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—**2** assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, **3** how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly, **4** When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, **5** which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. **6** This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

**7** Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. **8** To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, **9** and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, **10** so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. **11** This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, **12** in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. **13** So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

**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.

**DAY TWO**

**Read Ephesians 3:1-6**

Notice this dash here. It is significant. It signals that Paul is breaking off his main train of thought. He resumes the thought he began in verse one in verse 14 (this is evident by the beginning of verse one (“For this reason”) and the beginning of verse 14 (“For this reason”).

This seems obvious to us, however, it was a marvel to the early Christians. See, for instance, the believers reaction that the Gentiles had been filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 11:18.

Do you know this of Christ? If not, pray that God would reveal Christ’s greatness to you.

Never belittle the church. It is the agent by which God’s glory is made known to “the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places”.

Paul’s sufferings don’t demonstrate the weakness of Christ. Rather, they point to the importance of the church in God’s eternal plan to glorify himself!

It is a miracle to comprehend the unsearchable dimensions of Christ’s love. Pray, pray, pray that you—and your church—might truly know this love and that you might be “filled with all the fullness of God”. You will know you are full when all else in your mind pales in comparison to the greatness of him.

God’s splendor is made known in the church and in Christ Jesus. People see the greatness of God when they see the church and when they see Jesus. No wonder Satan hates both of them.

**1. Paul begins verse one by describing himself as a prisoner. However, earlier in the letter, he described Christ as victorious (Ephesians 1:20-23) and the believer as seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6). If Christ is victorious and the believer is seated with Christ (thus sharing in his victory), why is Paul living as a prisoner?**

This is an important question, and it appears to be the reason verse one is broken off by a dash. It's as if Paul, as he preaches, knows that some would wonder how he could be a prisoner and still claim that Christ is victorious. He goes on to share that he has been made a minister of the gospel (verse 7) "by the working of his power" (verse 7). To him was given the charge to "preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (verse 8). The end result of this is that God's wisdom would "be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (verse 10). Thus, Paul's troubles were not signs of failure or signs of weakness. Rather, they were signs that God's "eternal purpose" (verse 11) was being worked out right before the Ephesians' eyes!

**2. What is the "mystery" that was made known to Paul?**

"This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (verse 6). Paul calls this "the mystery of Christ" (verse 4).

**3. How did Paul learn about this mystery?**

It was revealed to him by the Spirit (see verse 5).

**4. The "sons of men in other generations" were not aware of this mystery. Why do you think this mystery was kept hidden until the time of Paul?**

The mystery was revealed in God's perfect time, and it was God's delight to reveal the mystery through the church (see verse 10). Much was hidden from the prophets until the death and resurrection of Jesus. In fact, according to 1 Peter 1:10-12, the prophets knew they were seeing things very dimly and they longed to see things in a clearer way, but they knew they were serving those who were to come after them.

**5. What, if anything, does this tell you about the way God works in the world?**

We sometimes assume that things have spun out of control. However, everything is working out according to God's plan. The church plays a critical role in God's plan.

**DAY THREE**

**Read Ephesians 3:7-13**

**6. How did Paul become a minister of the gospel?**

He was made a minister "according to the gift of God's grace, which was given [him] by the working of his power" (verse 7).

**7. What, if anything, does this tell you about the way God works in the world?**

God's purposes are accomplished by enablements that God grants to people. People are not doing great things from God out of their own wellspring of goodness. Rather, they are using God's grace. He works through them with his power to accomplish his purposes.

**8. How does Paul describe himself in verse 8?**

"[T]he very least of all the saints". I truly think he believed this. He knew his background. He knew that he had done nothing worthy of being chosen as a follower of Christ and a minister of his gospel. (See also 1 Timothy 1:15.)

**9. Paul was called to complete two different tasks, what were they? *Ephesians 3:8-9***

He indicates that he was called (1.) "to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Jesus is not embarrassing or irrelevant—he is gloriously good!), and (2.) "to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things".

**10. What was the successful completion of these tasks to accomplish? *Ephesians 3:10***

These things would serve to bring maturity to the church. The church would make known "the manifold wisdom of God" to "the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places".

**11. Verse 11 reads, "this was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord". Review verses seven through ten carefully. What, specifically, was God's eternal purpose?**

His eternal purpose was to make known the manifold wisdom of God. In other words, God's eternal purpose was to show off his own greatness.

**12. What does Christ's work give to the one who believes? *Ephesians 3:11-12***

In Christ "we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him".

**13. How does Paul describe his sufferings in verse 13 (remember, he was writing this from prison)? Based on verses seven through 13, why is he justified in describing them in this way?**

He describes them as the Ephesian church's glory. His sufferings for the church demonstrate the weight (i.e., importance) of the church. The church is worth suffering for, because she has the wonderful task of making God's glory known!

**DAY FOUR**

**Read Ephesians 3:14-19**

**14. Verses 14 through 19 describe a prayer that Paul prays for the saints. To whom is the prayer directed? How does Paul describe this person in the prayer?**

He prays to the Father. Paul describes him as the one "from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named". He says that the Father is rich in glory.

**15. What, exactly, does Paul want to see happen as a result of this prayer?**

He is praying that the saints may be strengthened with power through God's Spirit so that Christ might dwell in their hearts through faith. This would result in the saints being able to comprehend "the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that [they] may be filled with all the fullness of God".

**16. What tasks does Paul ascribe to the various members of the Trinity in these verses?**

***Father***

He prays that the Father "may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being".

***Holy Spirit***

The Spirit is the agent who strengthens the saints.

***Christ***

The result of this prayer is that Christ will dwell in the hearts of the saints. This results in the saints knowing (experiencing) the love of Christ.

**17. Paul prays that the saints may be able to comprehend "the breadth and length and height and depth" but he doesn't explain to what these dimensions refer. To what do you think these dimensions are connected?**

Based on the first phrase of verse 19, it appears that Paul is referring to the love of Christ here.

**18. What needs to happen in a saint's life if he or she is to "be filled with all the fullness of God"? See also 2 Peter 1:3-11**

Christ needs to dwell in that saint's heart and that saint needs to comprehend the vastness of the love of Christ. We are to constantly grow in our knowledge of him.

**19. What are a few things that might indicate whether a saint is or is not "filled with all the fullness of God"?**

If the saint truly is filled with the fullness of God, that saint will be fascinated with God's greatness. He or she will be enthralled with the wonders of Christ's love. This saint will understand God's love because he or she has experienced and known it. The fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5) will be evident in that saint's life.

**DAY FIVE**

**Read Ephesians 3:20-21**

**20. Verses 20 and 21 are a doxology—"A command to praise God". Why do you think Paul inserted a doxology at this point in the letter?**

The thought of Christ's love and God's fullness moved him to praise God—how could he do otherwise?

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**21. How does Paul describe God the Father in this doxology?**

He describes him as the one “who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us”.

**22. How, specifically, is God the Father to be praised?**

He is to receive glory “in the church and in Christ Jesus”. This is to take place “throughout all generations”.

**23. What do these verses tell you about the eternal importance of Jesus and of the church?**

The church and Jesus are of the utmost importance because they are primary ways in which God’s glory is revealed.

**24. Why is glory to be directed to God the Father if the work of our salvation has been done through Jesus? *See also John 3:16***

Because it is the Father’s greatness and love that is demonstrated through the church and through Jesus. Jesus’ incarnation and his death demonstrated the Father’s great love for the world. He is the goal of our faith. Jesus always pointed attention to the Father (see John 12:27 and 14:6).

**DAY SIX**

**Read the study notes for chapter 3.**

**25. Read the study notes and then complete the following sentence. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

?????

This marks the turning point in this book. From this point forward, Paul applies the truths he has presented in chapters 1-3 to how one ought to live.

It is interesting to consider how Paul thought of his imprisonment.

As we learned in the first three chapters, our calling is incredible—we've been seated with Christ himself. Are you living in a manner worthy of that calling?

This is a quote from Psalm 68:18. Fitting the two together, we are left with something like, "He received gifts and he then gave gifts to men."

See the notes regarding this phrase at the bottom of page 70. See also footnote nine on page 70.

He descended in the Incarnation.

Christ will be preeminent in all.

This is either two separate groups or one group (pastor-teachers).

We must understand that all believers are to do the work of ministry. Pastors, etc., are to equip people so that they might do this.

**“Seated on High”**

**WEEK SIX: Ephesians 4:1-16**

**DAY ONE**

**Ephesians 4:1-16**

**1** I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, **2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, **3** eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **7** But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. **8** Therefore it says,

"When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

**9** (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? **10** He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) **11** And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, **12** to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, **14** so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. **15** Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

**DAY TWO**

**Read Ephesians 4:1-6**

**1. The first three chapters of Ephesians are primarily theological. The last three are more practical. How would the reader know, based on verse one alone, that Paul was making a major transition here?**

The word “therefore” lets the reader know that Paul is going to make applications based on the things he has said in the first three chapters.

**2. What does Paul urge the saints to do in verse one?**

He urges his readers “to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called”.

**3. What similarity do you find between verse one and Ephesians 4:17, 5:2, 5:8, and 5:15?**

In all of these verses, Paul refers to the manner in which we walk.

**4. What does the repeated use of this particular word tell you about Paul’s understanding of the impact the gospel should make in a person’s life?**

Paul’s use of this word demonstrates that the gospel should and must impact how we live. Our actions are logically connected to our beliefs. As Jesus said in John 14:15, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments”. Faith disconnected from actions is, as James 2:17 says, dead.

**5. What do you think Paul means by the phrase “the calling to which you have been called”?**

I think he is referring to the things he discussed in chapters 1-3. Specifically, he is talking about the manner in which God called you (i.e., “he chose us in him before the foundation of the world”, “he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ”, etc.) and the place to which he has brought you (i.e., he “made us alive together with Christ”, he “raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”, etc.). We are to consider all that God has done for us and the exalted position he has given to us, and we are to walk in keeping with that standard.

**6. Verses two and three explain how verse one is to take place. How, exactly, are Christians to “walk”? *Ephesians 4:2-3***

The Christian is to walk “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”.

**7. Would those who know you best say that you make a habit of doing these things?**

?????

**8. Verses four through six describe things that Christians have in common. What are these things?**

1. One body
2. One Spirit
3. One hope that belongs to your call
4. One Lord
5. One faith
6. One baptism
7. One God and Father of all



**9. Why is it important to reflect on the things we have in common?**

Because this makes us, as verse three says, “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”. Sometimes we focus so greatly on our differences (between, for instance, Christian denominations) that we forget how much we have in common.

**DAY THREE**

**Read Ephesians 4:7-10**

**10. To whom has grace been given, and how was this grace given?**

Grace has been given “to each one of us”. Paul is obviously referring to Christians here. This grace was given “according to the measure of Christ’s gift”.

**11. Paul quotes Psalm 68:18 in verse eight. What is he attempting to prove by this quotation?**

He uses this verse to prove that Christ gave gifts to the church upon his ascension.

**12. Turn to Psalm 68:18 and compare it to Paul’s quotation in Ephesians 4:8. How do these two verses differ?**

In Psalm 68:18 we read of the Lord “receiving gifts among men”. In Ephesians 4:8 we read that Christ “gave gifts to men”.

**13. What does the Old Testament passage seem to be emphasizing?**

It seems to be emphasizing the Lord’s victory and his triumphant return to heaven and the gifts he received as the conqueror.

**14. What does Paul seem to be emphasizing in his quotation?**

He is emphasizing the Lord’s triumphant return to heaven and the gifts he gave to men.

**15. Both of these statements are true. How do you think these two statements fit together?**

Paul’s understanding of the Psalm seems to be that Christ received gifts and he then gave those gifts to his people.

**16. What is the point Paul is making verses nine and ten?**

He takes a short diversion (that is why these verses appear in parenthesis) to say that this verse must, by speaking of Jesus’ ascension, infer that he also came down to earth. Thus, Paul’s point is that this Psalm, by inference, refers to the Incarnation (the time when Jesus came to earth). Quite a lot is packed into this one verse! This provides us with a window into how Paul read his Old Testament.

**17. Paul has just used one verse in the Old Testament to teach several important truths about Jesus. What does this tell you about Paul's teaching method? What does this tell you about the message of the Old Testament?**

Paul's teaching method is demonstrated here. He uses Old Testament Scriptures to teach about Jesus. This is easy for him, because the Old Testament is all about Jesus! This is emphasized repeatedly in the New Testament. See, for instance, Luke 24:27 and 24:44-47.

**18. According to verse ten, why did Jesus ascend? What should this mean for you and the way you live your life?**

He ascended "that he might fill all things". His ascension was in order that he might take the throne and begin to rule and that his influence and presence would be known everywhere. He is to be the focus of everything (see Colossians 1:15-20). Christ's ascension means that nothing in my life is outside of his control. I can keep nothing from him. As ascended King, he will fill all things, even the remotest corners of my life.

#### **DAY FOUR**

#### **Read Ephesians 4:11-16**

**19. In verse 11, Paul refers to gifts that have been given to the church. What are these gifts?**

These gifts are people—"he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers". Scholars disagree whether four or five gifts are referred to here. Some would separate pastors and teachers. Others see this as referring to one group (i.e., pastor-teachers).

**20. Why have these gifts been given? *Ephesians 4:12***

He gave these gifts "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ".

**21. According to verse 12, who is to do "the work of ministry"?**

The saints are to do the work of ministry. This may lead many of us to redefine what is meant by the term "the work of ministry".

**22. Do you think most saints believe this? What would change if they understood this truth?**

No, I do not think most saints believe this. They think the "professionals" are to do the work of ministry. If the saints understood this, they would throw themselves into the work of ministry.

**23. From what do these gifts protect the saints? *Ephesians 4:14***

They protect them from "the waves" and "every wind of doctrine". Thus, apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers are to work for the maturing of the saints so that they might not be brought off course by difficult circumstances, false ideas, false teachers, etc.

**24. How, practically speaking, do you think these gifts can protect the saints from this?**

The leaders, as under-shepherds of Christ, are gifted to see what is needed in the saints and to help put those things into the saints.

**25. Based on these verses, describe Jesus' goal for the church.**

In the same way that I want my children to grow into mature adults, Christ's goal is that we might grow into, as verse 13 states, "mature manhood". Mature manhood is seen when we have grown "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ". Thus, Christ's goal goes far beyond merely desiring that we all go to heaven or that we might be saved from our sins. His goal for the church is that we might look like him in every way.

**26. Based on these verses, describe the manner in which the church is to function.**

The church must recognize that it is a body and that Christ has equipped it with "joints" so that it can function and grow. The church must see its leaders as essential to its growth, for they have been given as gifts from Jesus himself. The leaders must see that their task is equipping the saints for the work of ministry. All of us must see the standard as "mature manhood". We should not be satisfied with anything less than growing up "into him who is the head, into Christ". All of this is to be done in love.

**DAY FIVE**

**Read Ephesians 4:1-16**

**27. Imagine a friend of yours tells you, "My relationship with God is personal. I don't need to be a part of a church in order to be a Christian." Based on verses one through 16, write a response to your friend.**

This is a common thought that many who would call themselves Christians have. The idea of a Christian living in isolation is utterly foreign to the picture painted of a Christian in the New Testament. It makes passages like the one which we have just considered meaningless.

**DAY SIX**

**Read the study notes for chapter 4:1-16.**

**28. Read the study notes and then complete the following sentence. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

?????



**“Seated on High”**  
**WEEK SEVEN: Ephesians 4:17-5:21**

**DAY ONE**

**Ephesians 4:17-5:21**

**17** Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. **18** They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. **19** They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. **20** But that is not the way you learned Christ!— **21** assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, **22** to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, **23** and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, **24** and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

**25** Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. **26** Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, **27** and give no opportunity to the devil. **28** Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. **29** Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. **30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. **32** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

**Ephesians 5**

**1** Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. **2** And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

**3** But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. **4** Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. **5** For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. **6** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. **7** Therefore do not become partners with them; **8** for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light **9** (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), **10** and

The Christian must be holy because God is holy. We must not live as the (non-Christian) Gentiles live. If we do, we have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

This is an interesting phrase. I would have expected Paul to say, “That is not the way you learned about Christianity.” Hmm. I wonder why he said it like this? And what does the following phrase mean (the one beginning with “assuming that ...”)?

See my notes on page 80 of the study regarding this verse.

I think this is referring not to neighbors in general, but to fellow members of the local church (as the next phrase seems to make clear).

We tend to think that anger is evil. In context, however, we are commanded to be angry here. We should be angry, for instance, about sin existing among believers. This anger, however, must not lead us into sin.

How do I know how to behave? “Easy,” Paul says. Just imitate God.

This is a stunning statement and worthy of deep consideration. The Christian will be marked by holiness.

try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. **11** Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. **12** For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. **13** But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, **14** for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

"Awake, O sleeper,  
and arise from the dead,  
and **Christ will shine on you.**"

**15** Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, **16** making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. **18** And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, **19** addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, **20** giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **21** submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Notice, this speaks of Christ shining on you. He does this as we let our light shine on others.

How are we filled with the Spirit? I believe this happens as we obey the commands outlined in the verses we have just considered.

These are all marks of a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit. Are they the marks of your life?

## DAY TWO

### Read Ephesians 4:17-24

#### 1. What is the command Paul gives in verse 17?

"[Y]ou must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds."

#### 2. How does Paul describe "the Gentiles" in verses 18 and 19?

"They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity." This is, of course, true of all who do not know the Lord, whether Jew or Gentile (see question 4 below).

#### 3. What does this description have to do with the command Paul gave in verse 17?

We must no longer give ourselves up to sensuality (being led by our man-centered senses). We must no longer long to practice evil.

#### 4. How does Paul describe non-Christian Jews and Gentiles in Romans 3:9-18?

He says that both Jews and Gentiles (referred to as Greeks in verse 9) "are under the power of sin". Paul then defines what being under the power of sin looks like. Paul's indictment against mankind here is stunning. He puts all in the same basket—a basket destined for Hell: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one". See also Jesus' words in Mark 10:18.

**5. Do you think most Christians think of those who are non-Christians in this light?**

No, but we should. Knowing these truths is powerful impetus to live differently and to evangelize. When we begin to think that God is unjust in judging mankind because all mankind is basically good, we need to remember verses like these.

**6. What difference would it make in your day-to-day life if you saw those who are non-Christians in this light?**

?????

**7. In what way were the Christians to whom Paul was writing different from the Gentiles?**

***Ephesians 4:20-24***

They had “learned Christ”. They had, each one, put off their old self (see the study notes regarding my statement here, for it is different from the rendering in the ESV) and were being “renewed in the spirit of [their] minds”. They were “to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness”.

**8. Verse 22 refers to “your old self” (sometimes translated as “your old man”). What do the following verses say about “your old self”?**

***Romans 6:6***

“[O]ur old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.”

***Colossians 3:9-10***

We should not lie because we “have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator”.

**DAY THREE**

**Read Ephesians 4:25-32**

**9. Why should the Christian “speak the truth with his neighbor”? *Ephesians 4:25***

Because “we are members one of another”.

**10. In verse 26, Paul tell his readers, “Be angry and do not sin”. When might anger be appropriate?**

Godly anger is appropriate. For instance, Jesus was angry when he drove the merchants out of the temple. This was righteous anger. We should be angry over many things. Verse 26 is worthy of some consideration. It is hard, because of our preconceptions, to read this verse as it is written. It is actually a command that we get angry! This is worthy of some thought.

**11. What is the Christian to do with his or her anger?**

“[D]o not let the sun go down on your anger” (i.e., we should deal with the source of our anger quickly).

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**12. What happens if Paul's commands in verse 26 are not followed? *Ephesians 4:27***

If we don't get angry (about things that demand anger), and if we let the sun go down on our anger, we give the devil a foothold. Not getting angry (externally) often results in a bitter root taking hold in our lives.

**13. What is to be the motivation behind "doing honest work with [your] hands"? Is this a motivation behind your work? *Ephesians 4:28***

The motivation for the thief laboring is "that he may have something to share with anyone in need". This should be a motivation for all of us. We're not just working to meet our own needs. We're working to help others.

**14. Based on verses 29 through 31, how do you think one grieves the Holy Spirit?**

We grieve the Holy Spirit when we let "corrupting talk" (of any kind) come out of our mouths.

**15. Review these commands. Which one, if any, do you need to address in your life?**

?????

**DAY FOUR**

**Read Ephesians 5:1-14**

**16. Would those who know you best say that you are an imitator of God? Why or why not?**

*Ephesians 5:1*

?????

**17. Outline the sins the Christian is to avoid.**

We are to avoid sexual immorality, all impurity, and covetousness. There must be no "filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking" in our lives. This includes things we say, do, watch, and read.

**18. With what should the Christian replace "filthiness" or "foolish talk"? *Ephesians 5:4***

Thanksgiving.

**19. Paul refers to the covetous as idolaters (*Ephesians 5:5*). In what ways might covetousness be the same as idolatry?**

A covetous person is constantly striving to meet his own needs. In a sense, this person is worshiping himself—constantly bringing offerings to himself.

**20. Why must the Christian avoid sin? *Ephesians 5:5-6***

He must avoid sin because "everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God".

**21. Why is God pouring his wrath out? Romans 1:18-25**

God is pouring out his wrath against “all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” because “by their unrighteousness” these men “suppress the truth”. In other words, people are suppressing the truth about God and his greatness because of their evil deeds. Romans 1:21 states this well. It says, “although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him”. People, by their evil deeds, suppress God’s glory. They ought to honor God and give thanks to him. Instead, they do evil deeds that work to oppose God’s glory.

**22. Paul warns the Christians not to be deceived by empty words. Based on these verses, who would be speaking these empty words? What might they be saying? Ephesians 5:6**

The person speaking those words would probably be a person who did those deeds himself and was trying to persuade himself (and others) that God wouldn’t punish him for those deeds. For instance, a person committing fornication (sex outside of marriage) might say, “I’ve given my life to Jesus. I’ve professed him as my Lord. He understands my situation. I can do these things and still be a Christian”. These are vain words. God will punish this person. According to these verses, “everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God”.

**23. Based on these verses and Romans 1:18-25, write a response to these persons.**

If you think God overlooks sin, you are greatly deceived. Sin is not allowed for Christians (see 1 John 3:4-10). If my kids asked me, “How much can I carve on the dining room table?” I would answer, “You can’t. It’s not allowed.” The same is true of our sins. It is not permitted. God is pouring his wrath out because of man’s sinfulness. He will punish those who persist in sin.

**24. Outline Paul’s commands in verses seven through 14.**

We are not to associate with those who walk in sin and try to deceive us into thinking that those sins are inconsequential before God. We are to “Walk as children of light”, and we are to “try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord”. Beyond this, we are to “Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them”.

**25. What effect is the Christian’s life to have on the deeds of darkness?**

It is to expose the deeds of darkness.

**26. Is your life having this effect?**

?????

**DAY FIVE**

**Read Ephesians 5:15-20**

**27. In verse 18, the Christian is commanded to “be filled with the Spirit”. Based on Ephesians 4:17 through 5:17, how do you think this happens in the Christian’s life?**

We are filled with the Spirit when we “no longer walk as the Gentiles do” and when we do walk as the saints ought to walk.

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**28. What do you think prevents this from taking place?**

Sin keeps us from being filled with the Holy Spirit. The sin might be the sin of being self-centered, the sin of unthankfulness, the sin of being consumed with anything but God.

**29. What specific changes need to take place in your life in order for this to happen?**

?????

**30. Verses 19 through 21 outline specific activities that characterize the person who is “filled with the Spirit”. What are these activities?**

If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you will be “addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ”.

**31. Are these activities present in your life? If not, why not?**

?????

**DAY SIX**

**Read the study notes for chapter 4:17-5:21.**

**32. Read the study notes and then complete the following sentence. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

?????



**“Seated on High”**  
**WEEK EIGHT: Ephesians 5:22-6:9**

**DAY ONE**

**Ephesians 5:22-6:9**

**22** Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. **23** For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. **24** Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. **25** Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, **26** that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. **28** In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **29** For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, **30** because we are members of his body. **31** “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” **32** This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. **33** However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

**Ephesians 6**

**1** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), **3** “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” **4** Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

**5** Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, **6** not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, **7** rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, **8** knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. **9** Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

There is one basic command for wives and one basic command for husbands. We must recognize that, no matter how unpopular these commands might be, it is sin to disobey these commands. Great sins are committed when we bow at the altar of political correctness.

The reason the wife must submit is the husband is the head of the wife. Whether he acts like the head or whether his wife thinks he is the head is a different matter.

This doesn't, obviously, include sin.

We must not miss this! Our marriages are not all about us. They are about something far bigger! Marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. We must not think that we can arrange our marriage in any way that we might choose. The ordering of the relationships within marriage matter because the relationship between Christ and the church matters.

This may, as the study notes indicate, refer to eternal life.

We must work with all our hearts. We are working for the Lord.

The reward we will receive for our labors from the Lord is to be in our minds. We will be repaid for the good—and evil—that we do.

## **DAY TWO**

### **Read Ephesians 5:22-24**

**1. In Ephesians 5:22 through 6:9, Paul outlines appropriate and inappropriate behavior for those living within families (slaves are included because they were a part of families at that time). Why would he address the subject of family relations at this point in the book, and why is this subject important?**

Paul is referring to how Christians are to “walk”. As most people are a part of a family, if we are to learn how to walk as Christians, we will need to learn to walk as Christians in the context of the family. Family members are, after all, the people with whom we spend the most time.

**2. What are Paul’s instructions to the wives?**

Wives are to submit to their husbands in the same way that they submit to the Lord. They are to submit “in everything to their husbands” (they are not, of course, to follow their husbands into sin). The pattern for the wife’s submission to the husband is the church’s submission to Christ.

**3. Why do you think wives would need to be told to do this?**

Because they naturally, because of the effects of sin, do not want to submit to their husbands.

**4. How do you think God’s words to Eve in Genesis 3:16 relate to this issue (see, particularly, the second half of the verse)?**

The second half of the verse reads, “Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you”. This verse seems to be indicating that women, because of the Fall (mankind’s first sin and the effects of that sin), will desire the position held by their husbands. They will forget that they have been created to be man’s helper (see Genesis 2:18) and will take the position God intended the man to fill.

**5. Read the following verses and summarize the instructions given to wives.**

#### ***Colossians 3:18***

Wives are to submit to their husbands, “as it fitting in the Lord”.

#### ***1 Peter 3:1-6***

Wives are to “be subject” to their husbands so that the husbands, if they are not Christians, may be “won without a word by the conduct of their wives”. The godly wife is to be clothed inwardly with “a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious”. Holy women in the past set an example for godly women to follow when they submitted to their husbands. Peter concludes his instructions to women by telling them to “do good and do not fear anything that is frightening”.

**6. How does Paul describe the wife’s relationship to her husband in 1 Corinthians 11:3?**

The wife’s head is her husband. The husband’s head is Christ. Christ’s head is God.

**7. What are some reasons a woman might have a hard time submitting to her husband's authority?**

There are many reasons. As we have already seen, one reason women would not submit is because of sin's effect on humanity. Other reasons include the fact that a woman may be more intelligent/gifted/capable in leadership than her husband. It should be noted that the culture certainly does not encourage women to submit to their husbands. This idea is completely politically incorrect. We must remember, as Christians, that most of what we believe is politically incorrect. If we start gutting the word of God in order to win favor with the world we will soon realize that we can't please them unless we completely rework the gospel and we can't please God if we attempt to rework the gospel.

**8. Would there ever be a time when the woman should not submit to her husband's authority?**

The husband's authority has been given to him by God. His head, as we saw in 1 Corinthians 11, is Christ. Therefore, his authority never supersedes the commandments of Christ. The wife must not submit to her husband if he is leading her into sin. However, even in those circumstances, she should demonstrate by her attitude to her husband that her normal inclination is to follow his leadership and that not following his leadership is not her desire.

**9. If you are a wife, how are you doing in regard to the keeping of this instruction?**

?????

**DAY THREE**

**Read Ephesians 5:25-33**

**10. What are Paul's instructions to the husbands?**

Husbands are to love their wives "as Christ loved the church". In the same way that Christ gave himself up for the church, husbands are to give themselves up for their wives. Husbands "should love their wives as their own bodies". Husbands are to nourish and cherish their wives. This loving, nourishing, and cherishing should not be done by sheer will-power. Rather, this is possible because, as Christians, we have been filled with the love of God (see Romans 5:5 and Galatians 5:22-23) and we rely upon his resources.

**11. Why do you think husbands would need to be told to do this?**

Because they don't naturally show love to their wives. In the same way that the curse caused problems in the way that wives relate to their husbands, the opposite must be assumed—the curse caused men to not naturally love their wives. Instead, sin causes men to be self-consumed.

**12. Read the following verses and summarize the instructions given to husbands.**

***Colossians 3:19***

Husbands are to love their wives and they must not be harsh with them.

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**1 Peter 3:7**

Husbands must “live with [their] wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel”. The husband is to understand that his wife is a fellow-heir “of the grace of life”. If the husband does not obey these commands, his prayers will be hindered.

**13. Why does Paul begin talking about Christ’s love for the church in these verses? What does this have to do with husbands and wives?**

We see here that marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. Marriage is meant to remind us of the greater relationship between Christ and the church. Submission by the wife is a picture of the submission the church must give to Christ. Love, by the husband, is a picture of the love Christ gives to the church. What better way to explain to a child how the church is to relate to Christ than to say, “Just look at how daddy and mommy treat each other.”

**14. What, specifically, did Christ do for the church?**

“Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.”

**15. Why did he do these things?**

He did this “so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish”. Notice, Jesus’ work—not the church’s work—makes her holy. He receives all the glory for the beauty of the church.

**16. How is Christ presently taking care of the church? *Ephesians 5:29***

He “nourishes and cherishes it”.

**17. Practically speaking, how do you think he does this?**

He provides the sustenance the church needs to keep going. For instance, as we saw in Ephesians 4, he is constantly providing gifted people to the church so that she might grow into maturity. He is protecting the church from unnecessary trouble. He is showing his love to the church by demonstrating his affection for her with his words. These words of affection may be found throughout the Bible. As Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, “I will build my church”. We must believe that he will keep his word.

**18. How can the husband do this for his wife?**

He must think of her needs and do what he can do to meet those needs. It is clear that this is his responsibility. This care must not be done in an unloving manner (nor can it be done in an unloving manner). Rather, his care for his wife must be done in an attitude of great love. He must pray for her, asking God to pour grace into her life. This, too, is his responsibility.

**19. Verse 31 is a quotation from Genesis 2:24. The verse refers to a husband and wife, but Paul says “it refers to Christ and the church”. What do Paul’s words here tell you about God’s intent for marriage?**

Marriage is to be a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. This is why marriage matters—it is a picture of a greater reality. If our marriages are sub-standard in these areas, we will have an sub-standard understanding of the relationship between Christ and the church. We must obey these commandments because we care about the relationship between Christ and the church.

**20. If you are a husband, how are you doing in regard to the keeping of these instructions?  
?????**

#### **DAY FOUR**

##### **Read Ephesians 6:1-4**

**21. What are Paul’s instructions to the children?**

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” Children are to honor their parents so that life would go well for them and that they might “live long in the land”.

**22. Why do you think children would need to be told to do this?**

Because they do not naturally want to do this. Again, this is a result of sin.

**23. What, practically, can parents do to bring their children up in the “discipline and instruction of the Lord”?**

##### ***Proverbs 13:24***

Parents who love their children must be diligent to discipline them. They must not withhold “the rod”.

##### ***Proverbs 19:18***

“Discipline your son, for there is hope; do not set your heart on putting him to death.” In other words, if you don’t discipline your son, you are, by your lack of willingness to correct him, allowing him to stay on a course leading to sure ruin.

##### ***Deuteronomy 6:6-9, 20-25***

Parents are to diligently teach God’s words to their children. Diligently teaching God’s words means that parents are talking about God’s words all the time, reminding them of what he has said and the things that he has done. Of course, to do this, God’s words must be deep within the hearts of the parents. In order to pass God’s words on to their children, parents must love those words themselves.

***Psalm 78:4-8***

Parents must “tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done”. When parents do this, their children will learn them “and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments”. By our obedience to this command, we are impacting two generations: our children and our grandchildren!

**24. “Honor your father and mother” is one of the Ten Commandments. It is the only commandment with a promise attached to it. What is the promise? Do you think this promise refers to earthly life or eternal life?**

The promise is that obedience to parents leads to long life in the land. I am inclined to think this promise refers to eternal life in this passage.

**25. What are Paul’s instructions to fathers? *See also Colossians 3:21***

“[D]o not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” In Colossians, Paul tells fathers why they shouldn’t provoke their children. He says that this can cause them to “become discouraged”.

**26. If you are a father (or mother), how are you doing in regard to keeping these instructions?**

?????

**DAY FIVE**

**Read Ephesians 6:5-9**

**27. What are Paul’s instructions to slaves?**

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man...”

**28. Why do you think slaves would need to be told to do this?**

Because slaves would naturally, because of sin, do all the things that Paul commanded them not to do. As we have seen, the effects of sin spill into every relationship. Sin impacts how wives relate to husbands, how husbands relate to wives, how children relate to parents, and how slaves relate to masters.

**29. Read the following verses and summarize the instructions given to slaves.**

***Colossians 3:22-25***

Slaves are to “obey in everything”. They are not to do this just when their master is watching, but they are to do this “with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord”. They are to do their work “heartily”, just as if they were working for the Lord. They are to understand that they will be rewarded for their hard work from the Lord.

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**1 Timothy 6:1-2**

This is an important passage. Notice the reason why slaves are to behave in the way they are commanded to behave. This should impact how we all live. Slaves must consider their masters “worthy of all honor”. They are to do this “so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled”. Slaves with Christian masters must not be disrespectful to them but, instead, “must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved”.

**1 Peter 2:18-21**

Servants are to serve their masters “with all respect”. They are to do this, both to kind and to unjust masters. Peter reminds the servants that suffering for doing good “is a gracious thing in the sight of God”. He goes on to say that we have been called to this “because Christ also suffered for [us]”. This should provide some comfort to you if you work for a cruel or unkind employer.

**30. What applications, if any, do these verses have to employees today? See also Colossians 3:17**

Obviously, we do not have to stay in a terrible situation as employees, because, unlike slaves, we can quit and find a new job. This does not mean that we should always do so. However, Paul’s words here definitely apply to how employees ought to behave. We must work with all our hearts. Our behavior in the work-place reflects on the opinion non-believers hold of the gospel. We must work hard all the time, doing our best because we understand that we are working for the Lord.

**31. If you are an employee, how are you doing in regard to keeping these instructions?  
?????**

**32. What are Paul’s instructions to masters? See also Colossians 4:1**

Masters are to reward their slaves for their work and are not to threaten them. They are to act this way because of their awareness that they themselves “have a Master in heaven”.

**33. Why do you think masters would need to be told to do this?**

Sin has so distorted humanity’s ways of doing things that all of us have, at many times, taken advantage of others for our own selfish gain. We have all threatened and bullied in order to get our way. If I think that I am somehow better than those who owned slaves in the first century, I am mistaken. Apart from the grace of God in my life, I would always look out for myself, all the time. Paul needed to tell the masters that they could not be masters in the way they had been masters before. They needed, as masters, to behave in a Christ-like manner. Remember, Jesus is a slave owner (he owns you!!!). He, Paul was saying, must be the pattern for how a slave master is to behave.



**34. If you are an employer, how are you doing in regard to keeping these instructions?**

?????

**35. Slaves, as well as masters, made up a large percentage of the first century population in the church. How do you think these instructions would have impacted the life of the church?**

It would be easy to see schisms develop in churches between slaves and masters. It is important to note that Paul does not favor one group over the other. Rather, he encourages them both to live and walk “in a manner worthy of the calling to which [they had] been called” (Ephesians 4:1). Bitterness and deceit—even if they seem to be justified by one’s situation—are never right. The Christian has no excuse—ever—to walk in wickedness. So often we excuse evil behavior because of extenuating circumstances. Paul does not do this. Even if one is in the worst situation possible (i.e., being owned by a cruel master), there is no legitimate excuse to sin. All of us, no matter who we are and in what circumstances we find ourselves, are commanded to walk in holiness. These commands, if obeyed, would have brought peace to troubled relations within the church and, most importantly, glory to God.

#### **DAY SIX**

**Read the study notes for chapter 5:22-6:9.**

**36. Read the study notes and then complete the following sentence. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

?????



You cannot be strong in yourself.

These are things that do not happen in the life of a Christian unless we, by the power and strength of God, do them. We must put on the armor of God.

The key word from chapter four to this section has been **walk**. Now the key word is **stand**.

This means that you, not the devil or his helpers, are the one left standing.

The only way you can stand is by doing the things that follow this phrase (i.e., you stand by walking in the truth, you stand by walking in righteousness, you stand by knowing the gospel, etc.).

Notice the number of times **all** is used in this verse regarding prayer. We would do well to obey this command.

Two great things to pray for your pastor: (1) that words might be given to him, (2) that he might preach boldly.

Do you love Jesus with love incorruptible?

**“Seated on High”**  
**WEEK NINE: Ephesians 6:10-24**

**DAY ONE**

**Ephesians 6:10-24**

**10** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. **11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. **12** For 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. **13** Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. **14** Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, **15** and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. **16** In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; **17** and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, **18** praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, **19** and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, **20** for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

**21** So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. **22** I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts. **23** Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **24** Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

**DAY TWO**  
**Read Ephesians 6:10-12**

**1. How is the Christian to successfully stand against the devil’s schemes?**

We cannot stand unless we are “strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might”. We are commanded to “Put on the whole armor of God”.

## **2. What do the following passages teach about the Christian's battle with the devil?**

### ***James 4:7***

We must (1) submit ourselves to God, and (2) resist the devil. If we do these things, he will flee from us.

### ***1 Peter 5:8-9***

We are commanded to be sober-minded and watchful. The devil is our enemy and he is dangerous. He is looking to devour someone. We are to resist him, standing firm in our faith. Christians throughout the world are experiencing the same kinds of sufferings.

## **3. There is a tremendous promise in 1 Peter 5:10 regarding God's provision for those against whom the devil is fighting. What is it?**

The promise is "after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you". This is a tremendous promise indeed. God does not forget about the saints!

## **4. How does Paul describe the foes against whom the Christian fights?**

He says that they are not flesh and blood. Rather, they are "rulers", "authorities", "the cosmic powers over this present darkness", and "spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places".

## **5. How might this knowledge change the way Christians interact with non-Christians?**

Ultimately, we do not battle against non-Christian people. Our real battle is not against flesh and blood. This allows us to see the bigger picture. We are able to see who is behind the hatred and persecution we endure. We are called to love others. We are not, however, called to love the devil and his helpers.

## **6. How do the following verses describe Jesus' relationship with these foes?**

### ***Ephesians 1:21***

He is far above them! Upon his resurrection, Jesus was seated at the right hand of God, "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".

### ***Colossians 2:15***

Through Christ's work, God has taken away their weapons! God "disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him".

### DAY THREE

#### Read Ephesians 6:13-17

**7. The manner in which the Christian walks was the theme of earlier sections in Ephesians. What, based on verses 11, 13, and 14, seems to be the theme of this section?**

How we are to stand.

**8. Paul, in these verses, alludes to the book of Isaiah. To which pieces of armor does Isaiah refer in the following verse? *Isaiah 59:17***

A breastplate and a helmet.

**9. Look at the verses immediately preceding verse 17 (in Isaiah). Who is wearing this armor? How does your answer impact your understanding of the phrase “the whole armor of God”. To whose armor, in Ephesians, is Paul referring?**

Yahweh put on this armor! The armor to which Paul is referring is God’s own armor—the armor he wears. He is a warrior God.

**10. Paul lists six different pieces of armor. Describe each piece of armor below. What do you think each piece of armor represents?**

1. The belt of truth—we must walk (there’s that word again) in the truth. This refers to living a life of personal integrity.

2. The breastplate of righteousness—we must walk in righteousness, doing the right thing from our heart.

3. As shoes, the readiness given by the gospel of peace—we must know and understand the gospel. It is to be the foundation we stand upon. This means we must know God’s word.

4. The shield of faith—we must place our trust in God. He is our helper and deliverer.

5. The helmet of salvation—in order for our minds to be protected, we must think about the victory Christ won through his death, burial, and resurrection.

6. The sword of the Spirit—we must know how to use God’s word in the battle against Satan and his forces. Obviously, if we are to use God’s word, we must know God’s word.

**11. Practically speaking, how do you think the Christian puts on the pieces of armor?**

We must actively do these things. We cannot assume, “I’m a Christian, everything will be all right.” We must walk in truth, ensuring that we have no falsehood in us. When we do this, we have the belt of truth fastened around us. We must do the right thing. When we do this, we have the breastplate of righteousness on us. We must know the gospel. It provides the footing for our feet. Etc., etc., etc.

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## **DAY FOUR**

### **Read Ephesians 6:18-20**

**12. Paul, in speaking of prayer, uses the word “all” four times in verse 18. Outline the four uses of this word below.**

1. Pray at all times.
2. Pray with all prayer and supplication.
3. Keep alert with all perseverance.
4. Make supplication for all the saints.

**13. Paul reminds his readers “to keep alert with all perseverance”. What do these two things have to do with prayer?**

Prayer demands alertness. We are to watch what is going on around us. And we cannot quit. We are in a battle—a hand-to-hand combat with Satan’s forces. We must not quit during this battle. As Jesus said in his parable about the woman and the unjust judge, we are to pray always and not give up.

**14. For what, specifically, does Paul ask the saints to pray?**

He asks the saints to pray “that words may be given to [him] in opening [his] mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel”.

**15. What do these prayer requests tell you about the preaching of the gospel?**

It requires God’s help to preach the gospel. God gives us words to preach. God gives us boldness. We must not assume that we do not need these things. We should pray these things for our pastors. We should pray these things for our missionaries.

**16. For what, specifically, doesn’t Paul ask the saints to pray (think about his present situation)? What does this tell you about Paul?**

He doesn’t ask for prayer so that he might be released from prison. His greatest priority was the spread of the gospel, not his personal comfort. He obviously didn’t see his imprisonment as a hindrance to that work.

**17. For what would you have asked prayer?**

?????

## **DAY FIVE**

### **Read Ephesians 6:21-24**

#### **18. Why was Paul sending Tychicus to the saints?**

He sent him to tell the saints how Paul was and what he was doing. He sent him to encourage their hearts.

#### **19. What do you think Tychicus did when he arrived with the saints?**

I would imagine he greeted the church and gave the letter to the elders. They would have probably asked him to speak to the people. He would have told them about Paul and preached the word to them.

#### **20. What do you learn about Tychicus from the following verses?**

##### ***Acts 20:1-6***

Tychicus was an Asian (that is, from modern day Turkey). He accompanied Paul to Macedonia.

##### ***Colossians 4:7-8***

Paul calls Tychicus a “beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord”. He was carrying the letter to the church in Colosse.

##### ***2 Timothy 4:12***

Paul tells Timothy that he sent Tychicus to Ephesus. This is a different mission than the one in which he brought the letter to the Ephesians to Ephesus.

##### ***Titus 3:12***

Paul tells Titus that he might send Tychicus to him in Crete. Evidently, Tychicus was at Paul’s constant disposal. He sent him constantly to places that he couldn’t go himself.

#### **21. Would Paul have been able to send you on these missions? Why or why not?**

?????

#### **22. The word “love” is used three times in the final two verses. What does this tell you about Paul’s faith and his understanding of the church and his understanding of the gospel?**

Paul’s faith was not cold. He had a tender heart for the Lord and for his church. He wanted to pass on the Lord’s love to the saints. He especially loved those who loved Jesus “with love incorruptible”.

**DAY SIX**

**Read the study notes for chapter 6:10-24.**

**23. Read the study notes and then complete the following sentence. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...**

?????