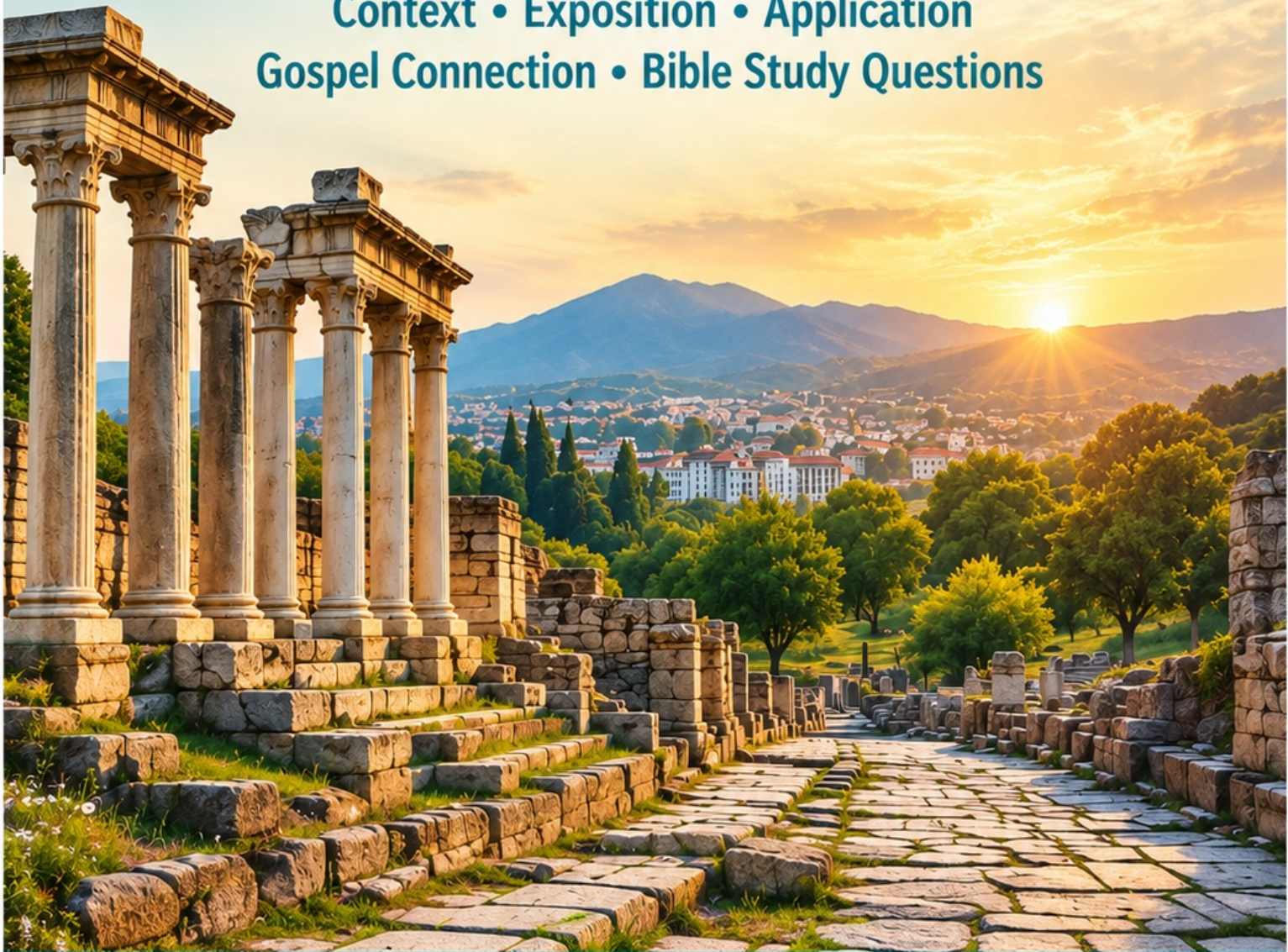


A Strong Foundation

BIBLE STUDY NOTES **ON** **EPHESIANS**

Context • Exposition • Application
Gospel Connection • Bible Study Questions



Compiled by Babu Ganta

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Lesson 1 : Bible Study Guidenes.

How to Study the Bible Carefully and Faithfully

A Note to Bible Study Leaders

These notes have been prepared as a simple and practical guide for Bible study leaders. They are meant to help you understand a passage, think through its meaning, apply it to life, and help others discover its truths.

But remember: these notes are not a substitute for your own careful study of God's Word.

There are many helpful Study Bibles and commentaries available. The GM Study Bible, for example, is a useful resource and is available online free of cost in several Indian languages.

But when should we open a Study Bible or commentary?

Not immediately.

First open your Bible.

Read the passage carefully. Read it again. If possible, read it two or three times. Then begin asking questions:

What is being said? Who is speaking or writing? To whom? Why? What was happening at that time? What comes before this passage? What comes after it?

Our first responsibility as Bible study leaders is not to find something interesting or impressive to say. It is to discover:

What has God actually said in His Word?

Why Are These Notes Written in a Conversational Style?

As you go through these lessons, you will notice many questions.

Why?

Because Bible study should not merely give us information. Good questions make us stop, observe, think, and respond.

Instead of simply saying, "This verse means this," the notes may ask, "What do you notice here?" "Why do you think Paul says this?" "What does this teach us about God?" or "How should this truth change our lives?"

The questions are there to make us think.

You will also notice that the main points are connected to one another. One thought leads naturally to the next. This helps us follow the flow of the passage and remember its message more easily.

The Bible itself is not simply a collection of disconnected verses. Words form sentences, sentences form paragraphs, paragraphs form larger arguments, and all of Scripture fits into God's great story.

So we want to learn to follow the flow of Scripture, not merely collect individual verses.

Think of These Notes as a Friendly Tour Guide

These notes can certainly be used for a group Bible study. A leader can read the passage, use the questions, encourage discussion, explain important points, and help the group think about application.

But you can also use these notes for your personal Bible study.

Think of them as a friendly tour guide walking with you through a passage of Scripture.

A good tour guide does not become the attraction. He simply points and says, "Look at this. Did you notice that? Do you know why this is important?"

In the same way, these notes are meant to keep pointing you back to the Bible itself.

You may find yourself reading through the notes on a passage without stopping because you want to see how all the thoughts connect. That is perfectly fine.

But you may then want to go through the same passage a second time — more slowly.
This time, pause.

Read the verses again. Think about each point. Ask the questions. Pray over what you are learning.
Allow God's Word to examine your own heart.

There is no need to rush.

There is also no rule that says you must complete a particular passage in one meeting or within a limited amount of time.

The goal is not to finish the lesson. The goal is to understand, enjoy, obey, and be changed by God's Word.

Exegesis and Eisegesis — Two Important Words

Every Bible study leader should understand two important words: Exegesis and Eisegesis.

The words may sound difficult, but the ideas are quite simple.

What is Exegesis?

Exegesis means bringing out of the passage what is actually there.

We ask:

"What did the biblical writer actually mean?"

We do not begin with our own idea and try to make the Bible support it. We carefully listen to what Scripture itself is saying.

Our opinions should not control the Bible.

The Bible should correct and shape our opinions.

What is Eisegesis?

Eisegesis is putting our own ideas into the passage.

We may already believe something and then search for a verse that appears to support our opinion.

That is dangerous.

A verse removed from its context can easily be misunderstood and misused.

So before asking:

"What does this verse mean to me?"

we should first ask:

"What does this verse actually mean in its context?"

Only after understanding its meaning should we ask:

"How does this truth apply to my life today?"

Meaning comes before application.

A Simple Method for Studying the Bible

We can remember four important areas:

Context • Exposition • Application • Gospel Connection

Let us look at each one.

1. Understand the Context

Before explaining a passage, ask some basic questions.

Who wrote this book?

To whom was it written?

Why was it written?

What were the circumstances?

What comes immediately before this passage?

What comes after it?

Where does this passage fit into the chapter, the book, and the larger message of Scripture?

This protects us from taking a verse out of context.

A verse belongs to a sentence. The sentence belongs to a paragraph. The paragraph belongs to a chapter and book. And that book belongs within the whole story of Scripture.

Context helps us hear the verse the way its original readers were meant to hear it.

2. Explain the Passage Verse by Verse

Now look carefully at what the passage actually says.

Do you notice any words that are repeated?

Are there commands?

Promises?

Warnings?

Comparisons?

Reasons?

Results?

Questions?

Connections between one verse and the next?

Then ask deeper questions:

What does this passage teach us about God?

What does it teach us about ourselves?

Is there a truth to believe?

Is there a command to obey?

Is there a warning we should take seriously?

Is there a promise we need to understand?

Do not hurry past the text in order to reach your own message.

Let the passage give you the message.

3. Ask Application Questions

Bible study should not end with understanding.

God's Word calls for a response.

But instead of merely telling people, "You must do this," good questions can help them examine their own hearts.

Ask:

What should change in my thinking because of this passage?

Is there something I need to believe?

Something I need to confess?

Something I need to stop doing?

Something I need to obey?

How should this truth affect my family, relationships, work, priorities, decisions, words, and daily life?

Application is not merely asking, "What should other people do?"

We begin with ourselves.

4. Look for the Gospel Connection

Finally, ask how the passage connects with the larger story of the Bible.

One simple way to remember that story is:

Creation • Fall • Redemption • Restoration

Ask:

What does this passage show us about God and His purposes?

What does it reveal about human sin and our need?

Why do we need God's grace?

How does this passage connect with Christ - His person, His work, His death on the cross, His resurrection, or the new life He gives?

We should not artificially force Jesus into every small detail of a passage. But we should remember that every passage belongs to the one great story of God's redemption revealed throughout Scripture.

A Simple Order to Remember

When preparing or leading a Bible study, remember this simple flow:

Read carefully • Understand the context • Explain the text • Ask application questions • Look for the Gospel connection.

You can come back to these five steps again and again as you work through the lessons that follow.

Remember Ezra 7:10

Ezra gives us a wonderful pattern for everyone who teaches God's Word.

Ezra 7:10 tells us that Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, to practise it, and to teach it.

Notice the order.

Study • Practise • Teach

First, Ezra studied God's Word.

Then he sought to live according to what he had learned.

Then he taught it to others.

That order is important.

The danger for Bible teachers is that we can begin reading Scripture mainly to find something to teach someone else.

Instead, before asking,

"What should I teach others from this passage?"

ask,

"What is God teaching me through this passage?"

Before asking,

"How should they change?"

ask,

"How should I change?"

Bible study leaders never graduate from being students of God's Word.

Our Goal

Our goal is not simply to complete another Bible study lesson.

It is not to see how quickly we can finish a chapter or a book.

Our goal is to understand God's Word correctly, enjoy its truth, obey what God teaches us, and help others do the same.

We want God's Word to shape our faith, thinking, character, relationships, priorities, decisions, and everyday life.

So take your time.

Read. Ask questions. Think. Go back to the passage. Read it again. Pause. Meditate. Pray. Obey.

And then share with others what God is teaching you.

I hope and pray that these notes will serve as a friendly companion on that journey —helping you relish God's Word more, understand it more deeply, meditate on it carefully, live by it faithfully, and share it joyfully with others.

Babu Ganta

Bible Study Lesson 1 Ephesians - Overview

(Including the Background, Beginning of the Church and the Challenges)

Have you ever wondered: What has God done for us in Christ? And if He has done so much for us, how should it change the way we live?

These are the big questions Paul answers in Ephesians.

Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison, probably around AD 60–62. Interestingly, he does not begin by talking about his chains or difficulties. His attention is on God—who God is, what God has done through Christ, and what that means for His people.

Unlike some of Paul's other letters, Ephesians is not mainly written to correct one particular church problem. It gives us a much bigger picture. What has God done for us in Christ? How should the gospel change our personal life, church life, family, relationships, work, and even the way we face spiritual opposition?

So as we study Ephesians, keep two simple questions in mind:

What has God done for me in Christ?

How should I live because of what God has done?

How Did the Church at Ephesus Begin?

Did the church at Ephesus suddenly appear after one evangelistic meeting? No. God built this church gradually through teaching, discipleship, and gospel ministry.

Apollos taught in Ephesus. He was a gifted speaker and knew the Scriptures well, but his understanding was incomplete. What did Priscilla and Aquila do? They took him aside and explained the way of God more accurately (Acts 18:24–26).

What can we learn from this? Even gifted teachers need to keep learning.

Later Paul came to Ephesus and met some disciples who needed a clearer understanding of Jesus Christ (Acts 19:1–7).

Paul then taught in the synagogue for about three months. When opposition increased, did he stop? No. He moved to the lecture hall of Tyrannus and continued teaching every day. This ministry continued for about two years, and the Word of the Lord spread throughout the province of Asia (Acts 19:8–10).

Notice the pattern:

Gospel ☉ Teaching ☉ Discipleship ☉ Growth ☉ Wider Gospel Impact

Strong churches are normally not built overnight. God uses faithful teaching of His Word, personal discipleship, perseverance, and gospel witness.

What Kind of City Was Ephesus?

Imagine trying to follow Christ in a city filled with idol worship, magic, religious business, and strong cultural pressures.

That was Ephesus.

Ephesus was an important commercial, religious, and cultural city. The famous temple of Artemis was there. Idol worship and magical practices were deeply rooted in the society (Acts 19:19, 23–27).

Yet what happened when the gospel came?

People from these backgrounds believed in Christ. Some who had practised magic

publicly burned their expensive magic books. Their new faith began changing their old way of life.

But the church was also made up of Jews. So people from very different religious and cultural backgrounds were now sitting together, worshipping together, and calling one another brothers and sisters.

How could such different people become one?

Through Christ.

That is why one of the great themes of Ephesians is that Jews and Gentiles have been made one body in Christ (Ephesians 2:11–22; 3:6).

They had different backgrounds, but now they had one Lord, one faith, and one body (4:4–6).

Isn't that still one of the beautiful things about the church today? Christ brings together people who otherwise might never have belonged together.

What Challenges Did the Ephesian Church Face?

1. Living a Holy Life in an Idolatrous Society

The culture around them encouraged practices that were completely opposed to Christ.

When people believed the gospel, they could not simply add Jesus to their old life. Some burned their magic books. The gospel even affected the business connected with Artemis worship, resulting in a major disturbance in the city (Acts 19:18–41).

So here is a question for us:

Has following Christ actually changed anything in my life?

2. Living Together as One Church

Jews and Gentiles had generations of religious and cultural separation behind them. Now Christ had brought them together.

Paul says Christ broke down the dividing wall of hostility and made the two groups one new people (2:14–16).

What does the gospel do? It does not merely reconcile us to God. It also changes the way we relate to one another.

If Christ has accepted us, how can we refuse to accept other believers because they come from a different background?

3. Guarding Against False Teaching

Paul later warned the Ephesian elders that after his departure, "savage wolves" would come among them (Acts 20:28–31).

So believers needed more than enthusiasm. They needed to know the truth.

That helps us understand Ephesians 4. Paul wants believers to become mature so that they will not be carried around by every wind of teaching.

Ask yourself:

Do I know God's Word well enough to recognize teaching that sounds spiritual but is not biblical?

4. Leaving the Old Life Behind

Becoming a Christian is not simply changing our religious label. Paul tells them to put off the old life and put on the new.

What should change?

Lies ☉ Truth

Stealing ☉ Honest work and generosity

Harmful speech ☉ Words that build others up

Bitterness and anger ☉ Kindness, compassion, and forgiveness

Sexual impurity and greed ☉ Holiness (4:17–32; 5:1–18)

So we should ask:

Where can people see that Christ is changing me?

5. Standing Firm in Spiritual Battle

The Christian life also involves spiritual conflict.

Paul says:

"Our struggle is not against flesh and blood" (6:12).

Therefore, our strength cannot simply come from determination, education, money, personality, or human ability.

Where does our strength come from?

From the Lord.

That is why Paul tells believers to put on the whole armour of God (6:10–18).

We can remember the background of Ephesians with this simple movement:

New identity in Christ ☉ New people ☉ New way of life ☉ Stand firm in spiritual battle.

How Can We Remember the Whole Book?

Ephesians can first be divided very simply into two halves:

Chapters 1–3 — What God Has Done for Us in Christ

Chapters 4–6 — How We Should Live Because of What God Has Done

Notice the order. Paul does not begin with, "Do more!"

He begins with, "Look at what God has done!"

So remember:

First grace ☉ then obedience.

First the gospel ☉ then a gospel-shaped life.

First our new identity ☉ then our new walk.

Now let us take a quick tour through the six chapters.

Chapter 1 - Every Spiritual Blessing in Christ

Where does Paul begin — with us or with God?

With God.

Again and again we meet expressions such as "in Christ," "in Him," and "through Him."

In Christ we have been chosen. We have been adopted into God's family. We have redemption and forgiveness through His blood. We have received an inheritance. We have been sealed with the Holy Spirit.

Then Paul prays that believers will know God better and understand the hope of His calling, the riches of His inheritance, and His immeasurable power toward those

who believe.

Key verses: 1:3; 1:4–5; 1:7; 1:13–14; 1:18–23.

Think about it: Am I constantly looking for what I do not have, or am I beginning to understand what God has already given me in Christ?

Chapter 2 - From Death to Life by Grace

What was our condition without Christ?

Paul does not say we were merely weak or that we needed a little improvement.

He says:

"You were dead in your transgressions and sins" (2:1).

Dead people do not need improvement. They need life.

Then come two wonderful words:

"But God..." (2:4).

Because of His great love and mercy, God made us alive with Christ.

How are we saved?

By grace through faith—not by works (2:8–9).

Then do good works matter? Yes! But notice the order.

Good works are not the cause of salvation; they are the fruit of salvation.

We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works (2:10).

Then Paul shows that Christ also brings Jews and Gentiles together and makes them one new people—the church.

Key verses: 2:1; 2:4–5; 2:8–10; 2:14; 2:19–22.

Think about it: Am I depending on what I have done for God, or on what God has done for me in Christ?

Chapter 3 - God's Mystery and His Church

What does Paul mean by "mystery"?

He does not mean something that can never be understood. He means something that was previously not fully revealed but has now been made known by God.

What is the mystery?

Through the gospel, Jews and Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers together in God's promise in Christ (3:6).

The church was not God's emergency plan. It is part of His eternal purpose.

Then Paul prays that believers will be strengthened inwardly through the Holy Spirit, rooted and established in love, and increasingly understand the enormous dimensions of Christ's love.

Key verses: 3:6; 3:10; 3:16–19; 3:20–21.

Think about it: Do I see the church merely as a Sunday meeting, or as something precious in God's eternal plan?

The Great Turning Point — "Therefore..."

Something important happens when we reach chapter 4.

The first three chapters have mainly explained what God has done for us.

Then Paul says:

"Therefore..."

Because all this is true, how should we live?

"Live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (4:1).

Remember the order:

Grace © Obedience

New identity © New life

What Christ has done © How we now live

Chapter 4 - Walk Worthy of Your Calling

What does a gospel-shaped life look like?

Paul begins with humility, gentleness, patience, love, and unity.

Christ gives different gifts to His church. Why?

So that God's people can be equipped for ministry and grow toward maturity.

Then Paul describes Christian change very practically:

Put off the old self © Be renewed in your mind © Put on the new self.

What does that look like?

Lies © Truth

Stealing © Honest work and generosity

Harmful words © Words that build others up

Bitterness and anger © Kindness, compassion, and forgiveness

Key verses: 4:1–3; 4:11–16; 4:22–24; 4:29; 4:32.

Think about it: Is the gospel changing my speech, anger, work, relationships, and willingness to forgive?

Chapter 5 - Walk in Love, Light, and Wisdom

Paul gives us three easy pictures of the Christian life:

Walk in love.

Walk as children of light.

Walk wisely.

But what does Christian love look like?

Look at Christ:

Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us (5:2).

That is our pattern.

Paul then speaks about sexual purity, speech, thanksgiving, the use of time, and understanding God's will.

Then he says:

"Be filled with the Spirit" (5:18).

What does a Spirit-filled life look like? It shows itself in worship, gratitude, humility, and relationships.

Paul then applies the gospel to marriage. The relationship between husband and wife should reflect the relationship between Christ and His church.

Key verses: 5:1–2; 5:8–10; 5:15–18; 5:21; 5:25; 5:32–33.

Think about it: If Christ's love truly controls me, what should change in my family,

Chapter 6 - Christ at Home, at Work, and in Spiritual Battle

Does the gospel affect only our Sunday worship?

No. Paul brings it right into everyday life.

Children should honour their parents. Parents should raise their children in the instruction of the Lord without provoking them.

Workers should not work merely to impress people. They should work as though serving the Lord. Masters and leaders should remember that they too have a Master in heaven and therefore treat others rightly.

Then Paul takes us to spiritual warfare.

What should we do?

Be strong in the Lord.

Put on the whole armour of God:

Truth © Righteousness © Gospel of peace © Faith © Salvation © Word of God © Prayer.

Key verses: 6:1–4; 6:5–9; 6:10–12; 6:14–18.

Think about it: At home, at work, and in spiritual struggles, am I depending mainly on my own strength—or am I learning to be strong in the Lord?

One Easy Way to Remember Ephesians

SIT — Chapters 1–3

Know your position in Christ.

Before thinking about everything you must do, understand what God has already done for you.

WALK — Chapters 4–5

Live according to your calling.

Because you belong to Christ, let the gospel change the way you speak, work, forgive, love, worship, and relate to others.

STAND — Chapter 6

Stand firm in spiritual battle.

Do not depend upon your own strength. Put on the whole armour God has provided.

So remember just three words:

SIT © WALK © STAND

And underneath all three is one great truth:

GRACE

We were dead — God made us alive.

We were far away — Christ brought us near.

We were separated — Christ made us one.

We were without hope — now we are in Christ.

So Ephesians leaves us with one important question:

If God has done all this for me in Christ, how should it change the way I see myself, the way I see the church, the way I treat my family, the way I handle relationships and work, and the way I live every day?

That question will guide us as we study the whole letter.

Remember the Flow

What God has done © Who we are in Christ © How we should live © How we should stand.

Or even more simply: SIT © WALK © STAND.

Bible Study Lesson 2. Ephesians 1:1-14

Every Spiritual Blessing in Christ

Context

Do you know where Paul was when he wrote this letter? He was in prison. His hands were in chains. He did not have freedom. His circumstances were not easy. But how does Paul begin his letter? Does he begin by saying, "I am going through so many difficulties"? No. He begins with who God is and what God has done for us.

When we read Ephesians 1:3–14, it sounds almost like one great song of praise. Have you noticed one expression that appears again and again? "In Christ..." "In Him..." "Through Christ..."

Why does Paul repeat these words? Because our greatest blessings are not merely money, health, a good job, a good house, or a comfortable life. Our greatest blessings are in Christ.

Notice how one blessing leads to another:

Blessed ☉ Chosen ☉ Adopted into God's family ☉ Redeemed and forgiven ☉ Included in God's great plan ☉ Given an inheritance ☉ Sealed with the Holy Spirit

Let us begin with one question: When you say, "God has blessed me," what comes to your mind first? Money? Health? Family? Job? Or the spiritual blessings God has already given you in Christ?

1. Blessed with Every Spiritual Blessing - Ephesians 1:1-3

How does Paul introduce himself? He calls himself, "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God." Then he greets the believers with grace and peace.

What does he do immediately after that? He praises God. Why? Because God has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms.

Notice something important. Paul does not say, "One day God may bless you." He says, God has already blessed you.

What are these blessings? The following verses explain them. God has chosen us, adopted us, redeemed us, forgiven us, included us in His great plan, given us an inheritance, and sealed us with the Holy Spirit.

So ask: "Am I thinking more about what God has not yet given me, or am I remembering the great blessings He has already given me in Christ?"

2. Chosen in Christ - Ephesians 1:4

How far back does Paul take us? Before our birth? Yes. Before our parents were born? Yes. Even further?

Paul says, "He chose us in him before the creation of the world."

Before we ever thought about God, He already had a gracious purpose for His people in Christ.

But why did God choose us? Only so that we could go to heaven? No. Paul says, "To be holy and blameless in his sight."

God does not only save us. He also intends to change us.

Should the doctrine of election make us proud? Can we say, "God chose me because I am better than others"? No. God's choosing should produce humility, gratitude, worship, and a desire for holiness.

Ask: "If God's purpose is to make me holy, is there something I am still holding on to that He wants to change?"

3. Chosen - and Adopted into God's Family - Ephesians 1:5-6

Did God choose us and stop there? No. Paul now speaks about adoption. Through Jesus Christ, God determined to bring us into His family as His children.

What a wonderful truth! The gospel is not simply God saying, "Your sins are forgiven. You may go now."

Imagine a judge saying to a guilty person, "Your punishment has been cancelled. You are free to go." That would already be wonderful news.

But what if the judge then said, "Now you belong to my family. Come into my home"? Would that not be even more remarkable?

Through Christ, God not only forgives us. He brings us into His family.

Did we earn this? No. Did our good works bring us into God's family? No. It is grace.

Ask: "Am I living like an outsider trying to earn God's acceptance, or like a child who has already been received into God's family through Christ?"

4. How Can Sinners Become God's Children? - Ephesians 1:7- 8

An important question now arises. God is holy. We are sinners. How can sinful people enter the family of a holy God?

Where does Paul take us? To the cross.

He says, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins."

What is redemption? It is being set free through the payment of a price.

What price was paid for our freedom? The blood of Christ.

Forgiveness is free to us. But it was not cheap. Jesus gave His life.

This protects us from two errors.

First error: "My sin is not really serious." If sin were a small matter, why did Christ have to die?

Second error: "My sin is too great. God could never forgive me." That is also wrong.

Christ's sacrifice is sufficient.

So when guilt troubles us, where should we look? Only at our failures? No. We look to the finished work of Christ.

5. Redeemed - and Included in God's Great Plan - Ephesians 1:9-10

Paul now moves from our personal salvation to a much bigger picture. God has saved me. That is wonderful. But does God's plan end with my personal salvation? No.

What is God's great purpose? Paul says that God intends to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under Christ.

History is not moving without direction. Governments rise and fall. Nations change. Cultures change. Human plans succeed and fail. But God's plan has a center. Who is that center? Jesus Christ.

So what should our question be? Should we ask, "How can I give Jesus a small place in my plans?" Or should we ask, "How should my whole life fit into God's Christ-centered plan?"

6. An Inheritance in Christ - Ephesians 1:11-12

If everything is moving toward Christ, what do those who belong to Him receive? An inheritance.

Paul says that God works everything according to the purpose of His will. What does that mean? Our lives are not outside God's sovereign purpose. Our present circumstances may be difficult. We may not understand everything. But our present situation is not the whole story.

A glorious inheritance awaits God's people.

And what is the final purpose of all this? "For the praise of his glory."

Our salvation begins with God's grace and ends in God's glory.

So in difficult times we can remind ourselves: "This is not the end of my story."

Someone may ask, "God has promised an inheritance, but how do I know I will really receive it?"

Paul points us to whom? The Holy Spirit.

He says that when they believed, they were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

Notice the sequence:

They heard the word of truth ☉ They heard the gospel of salvation ☉ They believed ☉ They were sealed with the Holy Spirit

What does a seal mean? It marks ownership. It shows that we belong to God.

But Paul says something more. The Holy Spirit is also the guarantee of our inheritance.

Think of a deposit paid in advance. What does a deposit say? "I am committed to completing this transaction."

In the same way, the Holy Spirit in the believer is God's guarantee that He will complete the salvation He has begun. So when doubts come, where should we look? Only at, "Am I feeling strong today?" No. We look to God's promise and the work of the Holy Spirit.

How Does the Whole Passage Fit Together?

Is Paul giving us seven unrelated ideas? No. One blessing leads to another:

God blessed us @ Chose us in Christ @ Adopted us into His family @ Redeemed and forgave us through Christ's blood @ Included us in His great plan @ Gave us an inheritance @ Sealed us with the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of that inheritance
Remember: Blessing @ Choosing @ Adoption @ Redemption @ God's plan
@ Inheritance @ Spirit's seal

What phrase holds all these blessings together? "In Christ."

Application

When we say, "God has blessed me," what do we usually mean? Good health? A good house? Children doing well? A good job? Money? Travel? Deliverance from difficulties?

All these may be gifts for which we should thank God. But where does Paul begin? With our spiritual riches in Christ.

So we can remind ourselves:

In Christ, I have been chosen.

In Christ, I have been brought into God's family.

In Christ, I have redemption.

In Christ, I have forgiveness.

In Christ, I have an inheritance.

In Christ, I have been sealed with the Holy Spirit.

Can we still say, "God has blessed me" when our circumstances are difficult?

Paul could.

From where? From prison.

He did not praise God because his circumstances were comfortable. He praised God because his riches in Christ had not changed.

Gospel Connection

Who is at the center of all these blessings? Jesus Christ.

What is our problem? We are sinners.

Can we redeem ourselves? No. Can good works erase our sin? No. Can we earn a place in God's family? No.

Where, then, is our hope? In Christ.

Paul says, “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins” (1:7).

Through Christ, God does more than forgive us. He brings us into His family. He gives us an inheritance. He seals us with His Spirit.

Notice also the work of the Triune God in this passage:

The Father — planned our salvation.

The Son — accomplished redemption through His blood.

The Holy Spirit — seals us and guarantees our coming inheritance.

Why has God done all this?

For the praise of His glory.

Bible Study Questions - 8

1. Read Ephesians 1:1–14. Why do the phrases “in Christ,” “in Him,” and “through Christ” appear repeatedly? Who is at the center of all our spiritual blessings?
2. According to 1:3–4, how has God blessed us? Why did He choose us? If God’s purpose is to make us holy, how should that affect the way we live?
3. What do we learn about adoption in 1:5–6? Are we trying to earn God’s acceptance, or are we living as children already accepted by grace through Christ?
4. According to 1:7–8, how do we receive redemption and forgiveness? How does the cross show both the seriousness of our sin and the greatness of God’s grace?
5. According to 1:9–10, what is God’s great plan? Is Christ merely one part of our lives, or should He be the center of our whole lives?
6. According to 1:11–12, what inheritance do believers have? How does knowing that God is working according to His purpose give us hope in difficult circumstances?
7. Notice the sequence in 1:13–14. What did they hear? What did they do? What happened next? What does it mean to be sealed with the Holy Spirit, and how is He the guarantee of our inheritance?
8. According to this whole passage, what does it really mean to be “blessed”? How should the spiritual riches we already have in Christ change our prayers, worship, thinking, and daily lives?

Help for Leaders - Key Points for Each Question

Do not give these answers immediately. First, let everyone read the passage. Ask questions such as: “What do you see in this verse?” “Why do you think Paul says this?” “What might this mean?” Encourage members to answer in their own words.

Use the following points only when necessary.

Question 1 · In Christ: Who Is the Center?

Christ is at the center of every spiritual blessing. These blessings did not come because of our goodness or achievements. They come in Christ.

Ask further: “If we removed Christ from this passage, would any of these blessings remain ours?”

Question 2 · How and Why Has God Blessed Us?

Paul is not mainly speaking about material prosperity. He is speaking about spiritual blessings in Christ. God chose us to be holy and blameless before Him. Therefore, election should not produce pride. It should produce humility, thanksgiving, worship, and holiness.

Ask: “If God chose us with the purpose of changing us, what kind of change should become visible in our lives?”

Question 3 · What Does Adoption Mean?

God does not merely forgive us. Through Christ, He brings us into His family. So we do not approach God like outsiders trying to earn acceptance. We come as children who have been received by grace.

Ask: “What is the difference between being a criminal whose punishment is cancelled and being a child welcomed into the family?”

Question 4 · How Are Redemption and Forgiveness Possible?

Through Christ’s blood.

The cross shows two things: our sin is very serious, and God’s grace is very great. Forgiveness is free to us, but Christ paid for it with His life.

Ask: “How does the cross keep us from taking sin lightly? And how does it keep us from despair when we see our sin?”

Question 5 · What Is God’s Great Plan?

God’s purpose is to bring all things together under Christ.

Therefore, we should not simply fit Jesus into a small part of our personal plans. We should fit our lives into God’s Christ-centered plan.

Ask: “Is Christ one part of my life, or is He the center of my whole life?”

Question 6 · What Hope Do We Have?

We have an inheritance in Christ. God is working according to His purpose.

So even when present circumstances are difficult, they are not the end of our story.

Ask: “How does knowing that our present circumstances are not the whole story change our attitude during difficult seasons?”

Question 7 · What Does It Mean to Be Sealed with the Holy Spirit?

Notice the sequence:

Heard the gospel ◎ Believed ◎ Sealed with the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the mark that we belong to God. He is also God's guarantee of the inheritance to come.

Ask: "What should give us assurance of salvation—our changing feelings, or God's promise and the work of His Spirit?"

Question 8 · What Does It Mean to Be Truly Blessed?

Being blessed is not merely about health, money, success, or comfort. Our greatest riches are what God has already given us in Christ.

Ask: "Which of these spiritual blessings do you most easily forget? If you remembered it every day, how might it change your prayers, worship, thinking, or daily life?"

Main Truth for Leaders to Remember

At the end of the discussion, make this one truth very clear:

Every spiritual blessing comes to us in Christ.

Where was Paul? In prison.

Yet he praised God.

Why? Because his circumstances were good? No.

His circumstances could change. But his riches in Christ could not be taken away.

The same is true for us.

Final Question

If we already possess such great spiritual riches in Christ, are we living like spiritually poor people who have nothing?

Or are we increasingly realizing how richly God has blessed us in His Son and responding with gratitude, confidence, holiness, and worship?

A Prayer to Know God Better

Context

Do you remember what Paul said in Ephesians 1:3–14?

Believers have already received great spiritual blessings in Christ.

They have been: chosen, adopted into God's family, redeemed, forgiven, given an inheritance, and sealed with the Holy Spirit.

What does Paul do from verse 15 onward?

He prays for them.

But notice what he prays for.

Does he pray: "Lord, give them more money"? No.

"Remove all their problems"? No.

•Make all their circumstances easy? No.

What does he ask?

That they would understand more deeply what God has already given them in Christ.

We can possess something very valuable and still fail to understand its worth.

In the same way, believers may have great spiritual riches in Christ but live without fully understanding them.

Paul's prayer can be summarized in one sentence:

"Lord, open the eyes of their hearts."

Notice the flow: Faith and love © Knowing God © Enlightened eyes © Hope © Inheritance © Power © Risen Christ © Reigning Christ © Christ the Head of the Church

1. Faith in Christ - Love for God's People Ephesians 1:15-16

What had Paul heard about the Ephesian believers?

Two things: Faith in the Lord Jesus and Love for all God's people

When Paul heard this, he thanked God for them.

Do we see two important marks of genuine Christian life here?

Faith in Christ © Love for God's people

Faith is not merely knowing certain facts about Jesus.

It is not simply saying: "Jesus is real."

True faith should become visible in our lives, especially in our relationships.

So ask:

"Can I say that I love Jesus while neglecting His people?"

What do others notice when they look at our Christian life?

Our Bible knowledge?

The length of our prayers?

Our church activities?

Or faith that becomes visible through love for others?

2. They Had Faith and Love - Yet Still Needed to Know God More Ephesians 1:17

The Ephesian believers had faith. They had love.

Did Paul therefore say:

"That is enough. You are fully mature now"? No.

What did he pray?

That they would know God better.

There is an important difference between: Knowing about God and Knowing God.

Suppose you know someone's name, occupation, family, and hometown.

Does that necessarily mean you know that person closely? No.

In the same way, we may know many Bible stories.

We may memorize many verses.

We may understand many doctrines.

But the deeper question is:

Is that knowledge bringing us closer to God?

Bible knowledge is essential.

But where should it lead us?

To trust God. To love Him. To obey Him. To worship Him.

Ask: "Is my Bible study only increasing my information, or is it helping me know God more deeply?"

3. To Know God Better, the Eyes of the Heart Must Be Opened Ephesians 1:18

Paul uses an unusual phrase.

He prays that "the eyes of your heart may be enlightened."

Were these people already believers? Yes.

Then why did they still need their eyes opened?

Because reading God's truth is one thing.

Seeing its greatness deeply is another.

Our physical eyes can read the words.

But we need God's help to understand spiritual truth deeply and respond to it rightly.

Paul especially wants them to understand three things:

Hope • Inheritance • Power

This gives us an important lesson:

Sometimes our problem is not that God has given us too little.

Our problem is that we understand too little of what He has already given us.

So when we read the Bible, we can pray:

"Lord, open the eyes of my heart. Help me not only to read Your Word, but to understand it and live according to it."

4. Open Eyes to See Our Hope Ephesians 1:18

What is the first thing Paul wants them to know?

"The hope to which he has called you."

What does "hope" mean in the Bible?

Is it simply: "I hope something good might happen"? No.

Biblical hope is confident expectation based on God's character and promises.

God has called us out of sin and into Christ.

He is now leading His people toward a glorious future.

Does that mean believers will never face difficulties? No.

There may be:

illness, financial struggles, family problems, disappointment, failed plans, and suffering.

But remember:

Today's difficulty is not the final chapter of our story.

God's calling does not change.

His promises do not change.

The future He has prepared does not change.

Ask:

"When trouble comes, what controls my thinking—the problem in front of me, or the hope to which God has called me?"

5. Open Eyes to See Our Inheritance Ephesians 1:18

What does Paul mention next?

"The riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people."

Hope points us toward the future.

And in that future, God has a glorious inheritance connected with His people.

How do we usually measure wealth?

By money? Property? Health? Position? Recognition?

Paul teaches us to ask another question:

"What do I have in Christ?"

A house can be lost. Money can disappear. Health can change. A job can be lost. Status can disappear. People's approval can vanish.

But what God has promised His people cannot be taken away.

So ask:

"How am I measuring how rich I am—by what I can see today, or by what I have in Christ?"

6. Open Eyes to See God's Incomparably Great Power Ephesians 1:19-20

Paul now moves to the third great truth:

Hope • Inheritance • Power

He wants believers to understand the greatness of God's power toward those who believe.

How great is that power?

Paul gives us an example:

The resurrection of Christ.

Jesus truly died.

What situation seems more hopeless than death?

Yet what did God do?

He raised Christ from the dead.

Paul says that this same mighty power is at work toward believers.

When we look at our weakness, what do we often ask?

"Can I really change?" "Will this sinful habit ever be overcome?"

"Will anything come from this ministry?"

"Can I remain faithful in this situation?"

Those questions are real.

But we should also ask: "What can God do by His power?"

However, we need to be careful.

Does God's power at work in us mean:

every problem will disappear immediately? No.

Every sickness will certainly be healed? No.

We will receive all the money we want? No.

What can God's power enable us to do?

Trust. Endure. Obey. Change. Serve.

Remain faithful.

7. Resurrection Power - Christ Now Reigns Ephesians 1:20-21

Did God merely raise Jesus from the dead and stop there? No.

He seated Christ at His right hand in the heavenly realms.

Where is Christ now?

Far above every rule, authority, power, and dominion.

Notice the movement:

Christ died • God raised Him • God exalted Him • Christ now reigns

Human governments change.

Kingdoms rise and fall.

Leaders come and go.

Spiritual powers may frighten people.

But what does Paul say about Christ?

He is above them all.

Is Jesus competing with other powers for the throne? No.

He already reigns.

So ask:

"If Christ is truly above every power, why should I live as though some earthly or spiritual power is greater than Him?"

8. The Reigning Christ Is Head of the Church Ephesians 1:22-23

Paul now connects Christ's authority with the church.

God placed all things under Christ's feet and appointed Him as Head over everything for the church.

Who is the Head of the church?

The pastor? No.

The elders? No.

A denomination? No.

A wealthy family? No.

An influential leader? No.

Christ is the Head of the church.

Does this mean pastors and elders are unnecessary? No.

God gives leaders to His church.

But under whose authority must they serve? Christ's authority.
The church does not belong to them. The church belongs to Christ.

Therefore the church's:
teaching, leadership, worship, programs, and decisions
must all come under Christ and His Word.

Every church should ask:
"Is our church centered on Christ and His Word, or on personalities, traditions, programs, money,
and human preferences?"

How Does the Whole Passage Fit Together?

What did Paul see in the Ephesian believers?

Faith and love.

So he thanked God.

Should they stop there? No.

What did they still need?

To know God better.

For that, what must happen?

The eyes of their hearts must be enlightened.

What should they then see?

Hope ◎ Inheritance ◎ God's power

What is the greatest demonstration of God's power?

The resurrection of Christ.

What is the risen Christ doing now?

He is reigning.

And who is this reigning Christ?

The Head of the church.

Remember the flow:

Faith and love ◎ Knowing God ◎ Enlightened eyes ◎ Hope ◎ Inheritance ◎ Power ◎ Risen Christ ◎
Reigning Christ ◎ Head of the church

Application

Let us examine our prayers.

What do we usually pray for?

"Lord, solve my problem." "Heal my body." "Change my family situation." "Provide for my financial need." "Remove this difficulty."

Are such prayers wrong? No.

We may bring all our needs to God.

But Paul's prayer takes us deeper.

Do we also pray:

"Lord, do not only change my situation—help me know You more deeply."

"Open the eyes of my heart."

"Help me see the hope to which You have called me."

"Help me understand how rich I am in Christ."

"Help me see not only my weakness, but Your great power."

Sometimes God may not immediately remove the difficulty.

But what can He do?

He can open our eyes to see Him differently in the middle of the difficulty.

Gospel Connection

This passage brings us to the heart of the gospel.

Is the gospel only: “Jesus died for our sins”?

That is central and essential.

But the gospel does not stop there.

Jesus died

☉ God raised Him from the dead

☉ God exalted Him

☉ He now reigns above every power

☉ He is the Head of the church

Is our salvation based on a dead religious teacher? No.

Our salvation rests on the risen and reigning Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christ who died for our sins is alive.

He reigns. He rules over every power.

And He leads His church.

Bible Study Questions - 8

1. Read Ephesians 1:15–17. What two things does Paul see in the Ephesian believers that make him thank God? What does he mainly pray for them?
2. According to 1:17, what does Paul want them to receive? What is the difference between knowing about God and knowing God? Where should Bible study ultimately lead us?
3. What does “the eyes of your heart may be enlightened” mean in 1:18? Why do believers still need this? What three things does Paul want them to understand?
4. Think about the hope and inheritance in 1:18. How is biblical hope different from ordinary wishful thinking? How should our inheritance in Christ change the way we view money, health, status, and suffering?
5. According to 1:19–20, what great example does Paul give of God’s power? How should knowing resurrection power change the way we face weakness, difficult circumstances, and ministry challenges?
6. According to 1:20–21, where is Christ now? What is His position in relation to human and spiritual powers? How should this truth change our fears?
7. According to 1:22–23, who is the Head of the church? How should this affect pastors, elders, traditions, programs, and church decisions?
8. Apply this passage personally. Are your prayers mostly about changing circumstances, or are you also praying to know God better, to have enlightened eyes, and to understand your hope, inheritance, and God’s power?

Help for Leaders - Bible Study Questions

First, let the group read the passage carefully and discover the answers themselves.

Do not give the answers immediately.

Use short follow-up questions such as:

“Which verse gives us that answer?”

“What does this phrase tell us?”

“What else do you notice?”

“How does this apply to our lives?”

Question 1 · Faith and Love

Two things are clear in 1:15–16:

Faith in Christ ☉ Love for God’s people

True faith does not remain only in the mind.

It becomes visible in relationships.

Ask: “Is our faith becoming visible in the way we treat other believers?”

Question 2 · Knowing God More Deeply

Paul is not merely praying that they will receive more information.

Bible knowledge should lead us to:

trust, love, obey, and worship God.

Ask:

“Do we know many things about God, or are we actually growing in knowing God Himself?”

Question 3 · The Eyes of the Heart

This refers to spiritual understanding.

Even believers need God’s help to understand His truth more deeply.

Have the group repeat these three words:

Hope ☉ Inheritance ☉ Power

Ask: “Which of these three truths do we most easily forget?”

Question 4 · Hope and Inheritance

Biblical hope is not uncertain wishful thinking.

It is confident expectation based on God’s promises.

We should not measure our true wealth only by:

money, health, status, or recognition.

Ask: “If everything we possess today were taken away, what would still remain ours in Christ?”

Question 5 · God’s Power

What is Paul’s great example of God’s power?

The resurrection of Christ.

But make one point clear.

God’s power at work in believers does not mean:

every difficulty will immediately disappear,

every sickness will certainly be healed,

or every desire will be fulfilled.

God’s power enables us to:

trust, endure, obey, change, serve, and stand firm.

Ask: “Are we looking only at our weakness, or also at the power of God at work in His people?”

Question 6 · Christ Above Every Power

Christ was: Raised ☉ Exalted ☉ Seated above every authority

Therefore, no earthly or spiritual power should be viewed as equal to Christ.

Ask: “If we truly believe Christ is above every power, how should that change the way we respond to fear?”

Question 7 · Christ Is Head of the Church

Whose church is it? Christ’s.

Pastors and elders serve under His authority.

People, traditions, money, programs, or preferences should not control the church.

Christ and His Word must have the final authority.

Ask: “In our church decisions, what has the final word—human preferences or Christ’s Word?”

Question 8 · Examining Our Prayers

Do not rush this question.

It is not wrong to pray for circumstances to change.

But Paul teaches us another important prayer:

“Lord, do not only change my circumstances. Change me by helping me know You more deeply.”

Ask: “What new prayer from this passage can you begin praying this week?”

Main Truth for Leaders to Remember

At the end of the discussion, make Paul’s prayer very clear:

“Lord, help them know You better and open the eyes of their hearts so that they understand what You have already given them in Christ.”

Have the group repeat the flow:

Enlightened eyes

- ☉ Seeing our hope
- ☉ Understanding our inheritance
- ☉ Knowing God’s power
- ☉ Seeing the risen and reigning Christ
- ☉ Submitting to Him as Head of the church

Final Question

We may know many Bible verses.

We may know many Christian teachings.

We may have attended church for many years.

We may even be involved in ministry.

But Paul’s prayer asks us something deeper:

Are the eyes of our hearts being opened?

Are we knowing God more deeply?

Are we seeing our hope more clearly?

Are we understanding the value of what we have in Christ?

Are we depending on God’s resurrection power in our weakness?

Are we living under the authority of the risen and reigning Christ?

Are we merely knowing - or are we seeing, trusting, and living accordingly?

5. Bible Study Lesson 4 Ephesians 2:1-10

From Death to Life by Grace

Context

Do you remember what kind of power Paul spoke about at the end of Ephesians 1?

He spoke about God's power that raised Christ from the dead (1:19-20).

Now in chapter 2, Paul shows us something wonderful.

What does that same power do in the lives of sinners?

First, Paul shows us our old condition.

Were we merely a little weak? Did we simply need some improvement?

Paul uses much stronger words:

"You were dead in your transgressions and sins" (2:1).

So our problem was not small. We did not merely need better advice. We needed life.

But everything changes in verse 4.

What two great words appear? "But God..."

We were dead in sin — but God made us alive.

We were deserving of God's wrath — but God showed mercy.

We were under the influence of the world, Satan, and sinful desires - but God gave us new life in Christ. We could not save ourselves - but God saved us by grace.

Notice the flow:

Dead in sin © World, Satan, sinful nature © God's wrath © But God © Mercy and love © Alive with Christ © Saved by grace © Through faith © Not by works © God's workmanship © Good works

This passage answers several great questions:

What were we like?

What controlled us?

What did we deserve?

What did God do?

How are we saved?

Why are we saved?

1. Dead in Transgressions and Sins Ephesians 2:1

How does Paul begin?

"You were dead in your transgressions and sins."

First, what is sin?

Does sin mean only major crimes such as murder, theft, or adultery? No.

Why did God create us?

To know Him, love Him, obey Him, and live for His glory.

But what have we done?

We have turned away from God's way and chosen our own way (Romans 3:23).

Sin affects every part of life:

our thoughts, desires, motives, attitudes, words, actions,
and even our failure to do the good we should do.

What is a transgression?

God has set a boundary, and we knowingly cross it.

Remember Genesis 3.

God clearly gave Adam and Eve a boundary. They knowingly crossed it.

So what is our deepest problem? Not merely that we occasionally make mistakes.

Sin has broken our relationship with God.

That is why Paul calls our condition spiritual death.

Can a dead person give himself life? No.

Can spiritually dead people make themselves spiritually alive? No.

God must give life.

Christianity is therefore not mainly about bad people becoming a little better.

It is about spiritually dead people being made alive in Christ.

Ask: “Do I think of sin only as the terrible things other people do, or do I also recognize sin in my own thoughts, desires, motives, words, and actions?”

2. Dead - Yet Walking in a Certain Way Ephesians 2:2-3

There is something interesting here.

Paul says they were spiritually dead, yet they were still “walking” in a particular way of life.

What influenced that life?

Paul points to three things:

Around us — the world

Against us — Satan

Within us — sinful desires

The World

Paul says they once followed “the ways of this world.”

Does “the world” here mean God’s created world? No.

It refers to values, ideas, and priorities that live independently of God.

What does the world often tell us?

“Money is everything.” “Success gives you value.” “Do whatever feels right.”

“Put yourself first.” “Everyone is doing it, so it cannot be wrong.”

If we hear these messages constantly, what may happen?

We may begin to accept them without asking whether they agree with God’s Word.

So ask: “What is shaping my thinking more—the culture around me or the Word of God?”

Satan

Paul also speaks about “the ruler of the kingdom of the air.”

This refers to Satan.

Is Satan real? Yes.

Is he equal to God? No.

He is a created being and remains under God’s authority.

What does Satan do? He deceives. He tempts. He accuses. He twists God’s truth.

Jesus called him “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).

What did Satan first do in Genesis 3?

He created doubt about God's Word.

Then? He created doubt about God's goodness.

Should Christians live in fear of Satan? No.

Why?

What did we already see in Ephesians 1?

Christ is far above every rule, authority, power, and dominion (1:21).

Sinful Desires

Paul then turns inward.

Is our problem only outside us? No.

There are also sinful desires within us that pull us away from God.

So we cannot simply say: "The world made me do it." "Satan made me do it."

Those things can influence us.

But our own sinful desires are also part of the problem.

Remember the three influences:

The world pressures from outside ✂ Satan deceives ✂ Sinful desires pull from within

Ask: "What is driving my decisions—God's Word, the world's thinking, Satan's lies, or my own sinful desires?"

3. Objects of God's Wrath Ephesians 2:3

The problem is not only that sin influences us. Sin also has consequences.

Paul says:

"We were by nature deserving of wrath."

What is God's wrath?

Is it uncontrolled anger like human rage? No. It is the holy and just response of God against sin.

God is holy. Therefore He does not treat sin lightly.

This may not be an easy truth to hear.

But remember:

If we do not understand how serious sin is, we will not fully understand how great grace is.

So far, what is our condition?

Dead in sin • Influenced by the world • Deceived by Satan • Drawn by sinful desires • Deserving God's righteous judgment

Can the dead make themselves alive? No.

Can the guilty remove their own guilt? No.

Where, then, is hope? Here comes the great turning point.

4. The Great Turning Point • But God Ephesians 2:4

Notice what Paul does not say.

He does not say:

"But you tried harder." "But you made a better decision." "But you became religious." "But you changed your own life."

What does he say?

"But God..."

What a great turning point!

Who begins the story of salvation?

Us? No.

God.

Why did God act?

Paul gives two reasons:

He is rich in mercy. He loved us with great love.

What is mercy?

When we deserve judgment because of sin, God shows compassion toward us.

Even when we were unable to save ourselves, His love came toward us.

Ask: “Who is the hero of my salvation story — me, my decision, my effort, or God?”

5. From Death to Life Ephesians 2:5

What did the God of mercy and love do?

“He made us alive with Christ.”

When did God make us alive?

After we became good? No.

After we fixed all our sins? No.

After we became very religious? No.

Paul says:

“Even when we were dead in transgressions.”

Then he immediately says:

“It is by grace you have been saved.”

What is grace?

God’s undeserved favor toward people who have not earned it.

Salvation is not a salary.

It is not God saying:

“You performed well, so here is your reward.”

Salvation is God’s gift.

Do you remember the connection with chapter 1?

God raised the dead Christ (1:20).

Now: God makes spiritually dead sinners alive with Christ (2:5).

What did we need for salvation?

A little improvement? No.

Life.

6. Made Alive, Raised, and Seated with Christ Ephesians 2:6-7

Did God stop after making us alive? No.

Paul says God: made us alive with Christ

☉ raised us with Christ

☉ seated us with Christ.

With whom is our new life completely connected? Christ.

Our old identity was in sin.

Where is our new identity? In Christ.

Why did God do all this?

So that in the coming ages He might display the incomparable riches of His grace.

So salvation is not only for our benefit.

What should our changed lives display?

How great God's grace is.

When people look at our lives, whose glory should finally be seen?

Ours? No.

God's.

7. Saved by Grace Through Faith Ephesians 2:8

Paul now states it very clearly:

"It is by grace you have been saved, through faith."

Let us remember three important words.

Grace

Where does salvation begin?

With God's undeserved favor.

Salvation

From what does God rescue us?

From sin and its judgment.

Faith

What do we do?

We trust in Christ and receive what God gives.

Is faith another good work by which we earn salvation? No.

Think of faith as an empty hand receiving a gift.

Can the empty hand say: "I earned the gift"? No.

So ask: "What am I trusting in—my goodness, my religious life, my service, or Christ and His finished work?"

8. Not by Works · No Room for Boasting Ephesians 2:8-9

Paul becomes even clearer:

"It is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

What would happen if salvation depended on our works?

One person might say: "I prayed more."

Another: "I gave more."

Another: "I lived a better life."

Then we could compete about who deserves more credit.

But is there room for boasting at the cross? No.

We are all sinners who need grace.

Then an important question arises:

"If good works do not save us, are good works unnecessary?"

Paul answers immediately in verse 10.

9. We Are God's Workmanship Ephesians 2:10

Paul says:

"For we are God's workmanship..."

What does "workmanship" mean?

Something God has made.

Something being shaped by His hands.

Compare verses 1 and 10:

2:1 — Dead in sin.

2:10 — God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.

Who produced this great change? Us? No.

God.

Salvation is not God simply painting over our old life to make it look better.

It is new life in Christ. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, anyone in Christ is a new creation.

When we see a beautiful work of art, whom do we ultimately admire?

The artist.

Likewise, what should a transformed Christian life display?

God's grace. God's goodness. God's wisdom. God's transforming power.

This truth protects us from two dangers.

Pride · I changed my own life. · We cannot say that.

Despair · I will never change. ·

We do not need to say that either.

Why?

We are His workmanship. He is still at work in us.

10. Saved for Good Works Ephesians 2:10

Why has God created us anew in Christ? "To do good works."

Do good works have a place in the Christian life? Absolutely.

But the order is crucial. Is it: We do good works @ God saves us? No.

It is: God saves us by grace @ gives us new life @ that new life produces good works.

Remember it simply: We are not saved **by** good works. We are saved **for** good works.

The order is: Grace @ Faith @ Salvation @ New creation @ Good works

Ask: "If I am God's workmanship, what is He changing in me right now? What good work might He have prepared for me to do today?"

How Does the Whole Passage Fit Together?

Where did we begin? Dead in sin.

What influenced us? The world @ Satan @ Sinful nature

What did we deserve? God's righteous judgment.

Did the story end there? No.

"But God..."

What did He do?

He showed mercy. He loved us. He made us alive with Christ. He saved us by grace. He created us anew in Christ.

He prepared us to live in good works.

Remember: Death @ World/Satan/Sinful nature @ Wrath @ But God @ Life @ Grace @ Faith @ God's workmanship @ Good works

Application

This passage challenges us in several ways.

Are we taking sin too lightly?

Paul does not say that we were merely weak. He says we were dead in sin.

Do we blame Satan for every sin?

Paul gives us three influences:

the world, Satan, and our own sinful desires.

So we cannot push all responsibility outside ourselves.

Are we overestimating our own ability?

Did salvation come from us? No.

Are we underestimating grace?

Who loved those who deserved judgment? God.

Are we depending on good works?

Salvation is not by works. It is by grace through faith.

Are we discouraged and saying, "I can never change"?

Whose workmanship are we? God's workmanship.

He is still working in us.

Are we saying, "I am saved by grace, so it does not matter how I live"?

That is also wrong.

Why were we created anew? For good works.

So remember the gospel order:

Not:

Obey @ then God saves you.

But:

God saves you by grace @ makes you new @ then transforms you into a life of obedience.

Gospel Connection

Ephesians 2:1–10 gives us a very clear picture of the gospel.

What was our condition? Dead in sin.

Could we save ourselves? No.

What did we deserve? God's righteous judgment.

What is the beautiful turning point? "But God..."

Because of His great love and mercy, He acted.

He made us alive with Christ.

But how could guilty sinners be forgiven?

Paul already told us in Ephesians 1:7:

Through Christ's blood we have redemption and forgiveness of sins.

Christ died for our sins.

God raised Him from the dead.

Now, in Christ, those who were spiritually dead are made alive.

So what is the gospel first about?

Not: "What must I do for God?"

But: "What has God done for me in Christ?"

Does grace leave us unchanged? No.

Not saved by good works

⊗ Saved by grace through faith

⊗ Created anew for good works.

Bible Study Questions · 8

1. Read Ephesians 2:1–10. What do verses 1–3 say about our old condition? What do verses 4–10 say about what God has done? What is the great turning point between these two sections?
2. Why does Paul describe us not merely as "weak" but as "dead in sins"? What does a dead person need?
3. According to verses 2–3, what three influences shaped our old life? How can the world, Satan, and sinful desires still work in people's lives today?
4. What does "deserving of wrath" (2:3) mean? How does understanding the seriousness of sin help us understand the greatness of God's grace?
5. Why are the words "But God" in verse 4 such an important turning point? According to verses 4–5, why did God act toward us?
6. According to verses 8–9, how are we saved? What is the place of grace, faith, and works?
7. What does "we are God's workmanship" (2:10) mean? What is the difference between being saved by good works and being saved for good works?
8. Which truth in this passage challenges or encourages you most? What specific change should that truth make in your thinking or life this week?

Help for Leaders · Each Question

First, allow members to read the passage. Do not give the answer immediately.

Use short questions such as: "Which verse gives us that answer?" "Why is this phrase important?" "What else do you notice?" "How does this apply to our lives?"

Question 1 What Were We? What Did God Do?

Verses 1–3 show our old condition:

Dead in sin ⊗ World ⊗ Satan ⊗ Sinful desires ⊗ God's wrath

Verses 4–10 show God's action:

Mercy ⊗ Love ⊗ Life ⊗ Grace ⊗ Salvation ⊗ New creation ⊗ Good works

What is the great turning point?

"But God."

Ask: "Who is doing most of the action in this passage—we or God?"

Question 2 · Why · Dead · ?

A weak person needs help. But what does a dead person need?

Life.

Paul is showing us how deep our spiritual problem is.

We do not merely need: better advice, education, religious activity, or self-improvement.

God must give life.

Ask: "If a dead person cannot give himself life, who must give spiritual life?"

Question 3 · Three Influences

Remember:

Around us — The world

Against us — Satan

Within us — Sinful desires

The world makes values contrary to God seem normal.

Satan deceives through lies.

Sinful desires pull us from within.

Do not blame all sin only on the world or Satan.

Our own desires are also part of the problem.

Ask: "What ideas are widely accepted in our society today even though they may contradict God's Word?"

Question 4 · God's Wrath

God's wrath is not uncontrolled rage.

It is the holy God's just response to sin.

God does not ignore evil.

But do not teach this merely to frighten people.

It should also make grace shine more clearly.

What words become especially beautiful when we understand the seriousness of sin?

"But God."

Ask: "Can we fully appreciate grace if we do not understand what judgment we deserved?"

Question 5 · But God

Paul does not say: "But you..."

He says: "But God..."

Who performs the decisive work in salvation? God.

Let the group identify the reasons in verses 4–5:

Mercy, Great love, Grace

This passage does not say God saved us because He saw some great worthiness in us.

He acted because of His own character — His love, mercy, and grace.

Ask: "Who is the hero of our salvation story — us or God?"

Question 6 · Grace, Faith, and Works

Help the group see the order: Grace → Faith → Salvation → Good works

Grace — salvation originates in God.

Faith — we trust Christ and receive God's gift.

Salvation — God's gift.

Works — not the price of salvation.

Faith is not another achievement that earns salvation. It is like an empty hand receiving a gift.

Ask: "Can prayer, giving, baptism, church attendance, or Christian service pay the price for salvation?"

Question 7 · God's Workmanship and Good Works

Compare verses 1 and 10:

2:1 — Dead in sin 2:10 — God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus

Who made the change? God.

Remember two simple words: BY — We are not saved BY good works. FOR — We are saved FOR good works. Good works are not the root of salvation. They are the fruit of salvation.

Ask: "Does a tree first produce fruit and then grow roots, or does fruit come because the tree is already alive and rooted?"

Question 8 · What Should Change in My Life?

There is no single answer. Give members time to examine themselves.

You may ask: "Am I still trying to earn God's acceptance through good works?"

"Are the values of the world shaping my decisions?"

"Do I always blame other people or Satan for my sin?"

"Am I discouraged because I think God cannot change me?"

"How should knowing that God saved me for good works change my daily life?"

Finally ask: ·What one clear change will you make this week?·

Important Things for Leaders to Remember

There are two errors that should be avoided when teaching this passage.

1. Legalism ·If I do enough good works, God will accept me.·

This is contrary to Ephesians 2:8–9.

Salvation is God's gift. It is not by works.

2. Careless Living

"I am saved by grace, so it does not matter how I live."

This is contrary to Ephesians 2:10.

Why were we created anew? To do good works.

Paul teaches neither error.

His order is: Dead in sin ◎ But God ◎ Alive with Christ ◎ Saved by grace through faith ◎ God's workmanship ◎ Good works

Good works are not the price of salvation.

But good works are not unrelated to salvation either.

They are the fruit of salvation.

Main Truth for Leaders to Remember

At the end, have the group repeat this great movement:

"You were dead..." (2:1) ◎ "But God..." (2:4) ◎ "Made us alive with Christ." (2:5) ◎ "We are God's workmanship." (2:10) We did not save ourselves.

God acted because of His mercy, great love, and grace. He made us alive in Christ.

He saved us by grace. Now He is shaping us as His workmanship to live in the good works

He has prepared for us.

Final Question: Am I still trying to earn God's acceptance through my good works?

Or am I resting in what God has done for me in Christ and allowing His grace to transform the way I live?

Bible Study Lesson 5 Ephesians 2:11-22

Context

What did we see in Ephesians 2:1-10?

We were dead in our sins. We could not save ourselves. But God, because of His great love, mercy, and grace, made us alive with Christ.

How were we saved?

Not by our works, but by grace through faith.

Now another question arises:

Does God save people one by one and then say, "Now live the Christian life alone"? No.

In Ephesians 2:11-22, Paul moves from personal salvation to life together as God's people.

Does Christ only reconcile us to God? No.

He also reconciles us to one another.

He not only brings us near to God; He also joins us to God's people.

So the gospel changes not only our relationship with God, but also our relationship with other believers.

Remember the flow:

Far away ◎ Brought near ◎ Peace ◎ Made one ◎ Family ◎ Cornerstone ◎ Built together ◎ God's dwelling

1. ·Remember What You Once Were· Ephesians 2:11-12

What does Paul say first?

"Remember."

Why should we remember our past?

To remain trapped in guilt?

To keep thinking about our old sins? No.

We remember so that we may understand how great God's grace is.

Paul describes the former condition of the Gentiles very seriously.

They were:

- separate from Christ,
- excluded from God's covenant people,
- foreigners to the promises,
- without hope,
- and without God in the world.

Put simply: Without Christ · Without hope · Without God.

A person may have a good family, education, a good job, money, respect, and even religious practices. Yet it is still possible to be far from God without Christ.

What should remembering our past produce in us? Pride? No.

Humility. Thankfulness. Compassion toward others.

We too were once people who needed grace.

Ask: ·Do I remember God's grace more than I remember my own goodness?·

2. ·But Now in Christ Jesus· Ephesians 2:13

What great words did we see in 2:4? “But God...”

Now in 2:13 Paul gives us another great turning point: “But now in Christ Jesus...”

Once they were what? Far away.

Now? Brought near.

How? Through religious ceremonies? No.

Through good works? No.

Through our righteousness? No.

Through our effort? No.

Paul says clearly:

“By the blood of Christ.”

Our sin separated us from God. Could we build our own way back to Him? No.

So Christ came to us. Through His death on the cross, He paid the price for our sin and brought us near to God.

So what is the most important question?

Only:

“Do I feel close to God today?”

Our feelings change.

The deeper question is:

“What has Christ done to bring me near to God?”

3. Christ Himself Is Our Peace Ephesians 2:14

Notice what Paul does not merely say.

He does not say: “Jesus gives you some peace.”

He says: “He himself is our peace.”

That is very important.

Does biblical peace mean only feeling calm inside? No.

True peace is found in a Person: Jesus Christ.

In Paul’s time, there were deep divisions between Jews and Gentiles—religious barriers, social barriers, cultural barriers. There was even contempt between the groups.

What did Christ do?

He made the two one and destroyed the wall of hostility.

Does the gospel simply say: “Try to get along better”? No.

It does something much deeper.

It gives us a new identity in Christ.

So ask: “Which is stronger—our old differences, or our new identity in Christ?”

4. The Cross Reconciles Us to God and to One Another Ephesians 2:15-18

Paul now explains how this peace came.

Through the cross, Christ created Jews and Gentiles into one new humanity.

He also reconciled both to God in one body.

Notice the order.

Is human conflict our deepest problem? No.

What is even deeper?

Our hostility toward God because of sin.

What does Christ do first? He reconciles us to God.

Then what happens? Those who have been reconciled to the same God enter a new relationship with one another.

At the cross, does anyone have room to boast? No.

Because we are all sinners, we all need the same Savior, we are all saved by the same grace, and we all come to God through the same Christ.

Notice the beautiful truth in verse 18:

Through the Son ☉ By one Spirit ☉ To the Father

Here we see the work of the Triune God.

If we all come to the same Father, should we rebuild walls between ourselves?

What kinds of walls?

Caste. Ethnicity. Language. Money. Education. Family background. Social status. Denomination.

Ask: ·Why should we rebuild walls that Christ has torn down?·

5. No Longer Foreigners · Members of God's Household Ephesians 2:19

Paul now uses another beautiful picture.

He says: "You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household."

Notice the change:

Foreigners ☉ Fellow citizens

Outsiders ☉ Members of the household

Far away ☉ Brought near

Does the gospel simply forgive our sins and give us a place in heaven? No.

It also gives us a new family.

God saves us personally.

But does He leave us alone? No.

He brings us into His household.

Can someone say:

"I love Jesus, but I do not need His church"?

Does that fit this passage? No.

Going to church does not save us.

But where does Christ normally bring those He saves?

Among His people.

Belonging to Christ means learning to live with His people: loving, serving, forgiving, learning, and growing together.

Ask: "Do I see the church merely as a place I attend on Sunday, or as the family God has given me?"

6. Christ Is the Cornerstone Ephesians 2:20

Paul now moves from the picture of a family to the picture of a building.

God's people are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

But who is the most important stone?

Christ Jesus Himself, the cornerstone.

Why was the cornerstone important in an ancient building?

It helped determine the direction of the building, its alignment, and how the other stones should fit.

So who should determine the direction of the church?

Culture? No.

Public opinion? No.

Tradition? No.

A wealthy person? No.

An influential family? No.

A gifted pastor? Not even him.

Christ is the cornerstone.

What is the foundation?

The truth about Christ revealed through the apostles and prophets.

Where do we now have that apostolic truth? In Scripture.

So every church should ask: "Are we changing Scripture to fit our traditions, or changing our traditions and preferences to fit Scripture?"

7. We Are Being Built Together Ephesians 2:21-22

Finally, Paul describes believers as stones in one building.

In Christ, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

Then Paul says: "And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit."

Notice one important word: "Together."

Is Christianity merely: "Jesus and me"? No.

God is building a people.

Can one stone by itself become a building? No.

In the same way, God's normal pattern is not for believers to remain permanently separated from other believers.

In the Old Testament, God's presence was especially associated with what? The temple.

What great truth does Paul now teach?

God's people together are being built by the Holy Spirit into God's dwelling place.

So what is the church? A building where Christians meet?

That is only the meeting place.

God's people are the building.

How should we then see one another?

Only as: "People I like" and "people I do not like"? Or as:

"Brothers and sisters whom God is building together with me into His dwelling"?

How Does the Whole Passage Fit Together?

Where were we at first? Far from God.

What happened? Through Christ's blood, we were brought near.

What did Christ become? Our peace.

What did the cross accomplish? It reconciled us to God.
It also reconciled us to one another.
What are we now? A new people. Members of God's family.
What is our foundation? Apostolic truth.
Who is the cornerstone? Christ.
What is God doing now? Building us together into His dwelling place.

Remember: Far away ☉ Brought near ☉ Peace ☉ Made one ☉ Family ☉ Cornerstone ☉ Built together
☉ God's dwelling

Application

This passage does not only ask: "How is my relationship with God?"
It also asks: "How is my relationship with God's people?"
First, remember where we came from.
Do we remember that we too were once far from God?
What should that produce? Humility.
Do we then have any reason to look down on others? No.

Now examine our relationships.
Are there walls in our hearts toward other believers because of caste, language, education, money, region, family background, denomination, or social status?
Do we draw close only to believers from backgrounds we prefer and keep others at a distance?
Where do all of us stand at the cross? On the same level.
We all need the same Savior.

How do we think about the church?

Is it merely a convenient place to attend, a Sunday program, or a place to hear a sermon?
Or do we understand:
"God has made me a member of His family and part of the building He is constructing"?
A healthy church is not built around one personality.

What should it be built around?

Christ ☉ His Word ☉ The gospel ☉ God's people loving one another

Gospel Connection

What great truth stands at the center of this whole passage?
"You who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13).
Sin separated us from God.

Could we build our own way back? No.
Christ came to us. Through His death on the cross, He paid the price for our sin.
He reconciled us to God.
Did He stop there? No.
Those saved by His blood are also made one new people, one body, one family.
So the gospel takes us: From far away ☉ To near
From strangers ☉ To God's family
From hostility ☉ To peace
From separation ☉ To one body
From outsiders ☉ To God's dwelling place

Who stands at the center of it all? Jesus Christ. He is our peace. He is our cornerstone.

Bible Study Questions - 8

1. Read Ephesians 2:11–12. How does Paul describe the condition of the Gentiles before Christ? Why does he tell them to remember their past?
2. What great change takes place in 2:13? How were those who were “far away” brought near? What place do our good works have in this?
3. What does “He himself is our peace” (2:14) mean? How is biblical peace more than simply feeling calm?
4. According to 2:15–18, with whom does the cross reconcile us? How are peace with God and peace with one another connected?
5. According to 2:19, what new identity do believers receive? How should being “members of God’s household” change our life in the local church?
6. What does it mean that Christ is the “cornerstone” in 2:20? Who should finally determine the church’s direction, teaching, and decisions?
7. What does “being built together” mean in 2:21–22? How do these verses challenge the idea, “Jesus is enough for me; I do not need the church”?
8. In what ways are we in danger of rebuilding walls that Christ has torn down? What is one clear change we should make in response to this passage?

Help for Leaders - Each Question

First, let the group read the passage. Do not give the answer immediately. Use short questions such as: *“Which verse gives us that answer?” “Why is this word important?”*

“What change do you see here?” “How does this apply to church life?”

“Did anyone notice something else?”

Question 1 · Why Remember the Past?

The Gentiles were separate from Christ, outside the covenant people, foreigners to the promises, without hope, and without God.

Remembering the past is not meant to trap us in guilt.

Why do we remember?

To see the greatness of God’s grace.

That should produce humility, thankfulness, and compassion toward others.

Ask:

“If we remember that we too came only by grace, can we look down on others?”

Question 2 · From Far Away to Near

Compare the two phrases in 2:13:

Once — Far away

Now — Brought near

How? By the blood of Christ.

Our good works, rituals, or moral achievements did not bring us near to God.

Christ’s work is the basis.

Ask: ·What is the basis of my access to God·my works or Christ·s blood?·

Question 3 · ·He Himself Is Our Peace·

Peace is not merely a feeling.

Christ Himself is our peace.

He removed the hostility between us and God.

He also broke down the hostility between Jew and Gentile.

Ask: “What is the difference between peaceful circumstances and true peace in Christ?”

Question 4 · The Cross Works in Two Directions

Our deepest problem was first with God.

Because of sin, we were alienated from Him.

Through the cross, Christ reconciles us to God.

Then He brings those reconciled to the same God into one body.

Have the group repeat the pattern from verse 18:

Through the Son ◎ By one Spirit ◎ To the Father

Ask: “If we come to the same Father, can we continue treating one another like strangers?”

Question 5 · God·s Family

What change do we see in 2:19?

No longer foreigners ◎ Fellow citizens

No longer strangers ◎ Members of God’s household

Salvation is not merely an individual experience.

God joins us to His people.

Therefore church life should include love, service, fellowship, forgiveness, responsibility, and mutual growth.

Ask: “Does being part of a family mean merely appearing once a week? What should being part of God’s family involve?”

Question 6 · Christ the Cornerstone

The cornerstone determined the direction and alignment of the building.

Likewise, who should not be the final authority in the church?

The pastor. A wealthy person. An influential family. Tradition. Public opinion.

None of these is final.

Christ is the cornerstone.

The apostolic truth about Christ is now given to us in Scripture.

Ask: “Do we adjust the Bible to fit our preferences, or adjust our preferences to fit the Bible?”

Question 7 · Built Together

One stone by itself is not a building.

In the same way, God is not merely growing isolated believers. He is building His people together.

The temple here is not primarily a physical church building.

God’s people together are His dwelling place by the Holy Spirit.

So the statement: “I need Jesus, but I do not need His people”

does not fit the picture Paul gives here.

Ask: “If God is building me together with other believers, what kind of relationship should I develop with them?”

Question 8 · Rebuilding the Walls

Do not allow the discussion to remain only as criticism of society.

Bring it personally.

Ask: “Is there anyone in Christ’s body whom I keep at a distance or quietly consider inferior?”

What walls can appear?

Caste. Language. Money. Education. Region. Social status. Family background. Denominational pride.

What practical responses may be needed?

Welcome believers from different backgrounds. Seek reconciliation. Forgive. Serve in the local church. Let go of pride.

Ask: “Which wall that Christ has broken down am I rebuilding in my own heart?”

Important Things for Leaders to Remember

The unity in this passage does not mean that all differences disappear.

Neither is Paul saying:

“Doctrine does not matter. Just stay together somehow.”

Where is true Christian unity built?

In Christ ☉ Through the cross ☉ On apostolic truth ☉ With Christ as the cornerstone

So Christian unity is not created by putting truth aside.

It is built around the truth of the gospel and our shared identity in Christ.

Also, “peace” does not mean ignoring serious sin, injustice, or abuse.

Biblical peace includes truth, repentance, forgiveness, justice, and holiness.

Main Truth for Leaders to Remember

At the end, have the group repeat this progression:

“Once you were far away”

☉ “But now in Christ...”

☉ “You have been brought near by the blood of Christ”

☉ “He Himself is our peace”

☉ “Members of God’s household”

☉ “Being built together.”

Christ does not merely save isolated individuals.

Through His blood, He brings sinners near to God.

Then He reconciles them to one another.

He makes them one family.

He builds them together into one dwelling place.

Through the Holy Spirit, they become God’s temple.

Final Question: If the blood of Christ has brought all of us to the same Father, what we have to rebuild the walls that Christ has already torn down?

The Mystery of Christ and the Church

Context

What did we see in Ephesians 2?

The Gentiles were once far from God, but Christ brought them near through His blood.

Do Jews and Gentiles now need to remain two separate peoples? No.

What has Christ made them?

One body, one family, and one dwelling place for God.

Now in chapter 3, Paul explains this great truth in more detail.

He uses a special word: "Mystery."

Does "mystery" mean something that can never be understood? No.

In this context, a mystery is a truth that was not fully revealed before, but has now been made known clearly by God.

What is this mystery?

Through the gospel, Jews and Gentiles are equally included among God's people in Christ. They are: co-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers together in the promise.

God gave Paul the responsibility of proclaiming this great gospel to the Gentiles.

Remember the flow:

Prisoner ◎ Mystery ◎ Together ◎ Grace ◎ Riches ◎ Church ◎ Wisdom ◎ Purpose ◎ Access ◎ Suffering

1. A Prisoner of Christ Jesus Ephesians 3:1

Notice how Paul begins:

"For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles..."

Who was Paul physically imprisoned by? The Roman authorities.

Then why does he describe himself first as a "prisoner of Christ Jesus"?

Because Paul did not see his imprisonment as an accident outside God's control.

Was prison easy? No.

It involved real suffering.

But Paul did not think: "God's plan has now stopped."

What did he believe?

That even in this difficult situation, God could continue fulfilling His purposes.

When suffering comes, what question often comes first?

"Why has this happened to me?"

That is a natural question.

But can we also ask: "How might God still use me in this situation?"

This does not mean we must immediately discover a specific reason for every difficulty.

Neither does it mean suffering should be treated lightly.

But we should remember: Difficulty does not mean God has lost control.

2. The Mystery Now Revealed Ephesians 3:2-6

What does Paul say?

God revealed to him “the mystery of Christ.” Do we need to guess what the mystery is? No.

Paul explains it clearly in verse 6.

Through the gospel the Gentiles are: co-heirs, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Do you notice an idea that keeps appearing?

Together. Together as heirs. Together in one body. Together in God’s promise.

Are Gentile believers second-class Christians? No.

In Christ they receive: the same inheritance, the same place in the body, and the same promise.

This is very important.

Does the gospel merely reconcile an individual to God? No.

It also creates a new people.

What does this say to our churches today?

Can we look down on people because of caste, language, money, education, social status, region, or ethnicity?

Can we treat some members of the one body as spiritually inferior? No.

Remember: One Savior. One gospel. One body. One inheritance.

There is no room for spiritual superiority or inferiority in Christ.

3. A Servant of the Gospel by Grace Ephesians 3:7-8

How does Paul describe his ministry?

“I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace.”

Notice what Paul does not say.

He does not say: “I am very important, so God chose me.” “My talent earned me this ministry.” “This is my position.”

What does he say? ·It is grace·

Paul sees ministry not as his achievement but as a gift from God.

That is why he speaks humbly about himself.

Yet God also gave him a great responsibility.

What was it? To proclaim to the Gentiles “the boundless riches of Christ.”

What a beautiful phrase!

Can we ever learn so much about Christ that one day we say:

“There is nothing more to discover about Him”? No.

Can we completely measure His grace, His love, His wisdom, His glory, His sufficiency, His riches? No.

Every Christian worker should therefore ask:

“Do I see ministry mainly as my position, or as a privilege God has given me by grace?”

4. Ministry Is About Christ, Not the Minister

Paul had a great calling. He had great responsibility.

But did he make ministry revolve around himself? No.

What was his task?

To proclaim the boundless riches of Christ.

This is an important warning for every Christian leader.

What can ministry slowly begin to revolve around?

Position. Recognition. The platform. Influence. Followers. Control.

What is the danger?

People may begin looking more at the leader than at Christ.

But how did Paul see himself?

Not as the owner of the message.

He saw himself as a servant entrusted with a message from God.

Every teacher should therefore ask:

“After I teach, do people leave more impressed with me, or more amazed by the riches of Christ?”

5. God's Wisdom Is Displayed Through the Church Ephesians 3:9-10

Paul now says something remarkable about the church.

What is God's purpose?

That “through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known.”

What, then, is the church?

Merely a place where people come on Sunday, sing songs, hear a sermon, and go home? No.

Paul gives us a much bigger picture.

God is bringing together people who would not naturally belong together.

Jews and Gentiles. Rich and poor. Different language groups. Different cultures. Different ages.

Different occupations. Different social backgrounds. All of them may belong to the same church.

How should they treat one another?

Not as rivals. Not as enemies. They should love one another, serve one another, worship together, pray together, share meals, forgive one another, and care for one another's needs.

When this happens, what does it display?

The power of the gospel.

The church should not merely talk about what the gospel can do. It should live out what the gospel has done.

6. The Manifold Wisdom of God

What does “manifold wisdom” mean?

It means God's wisdom has many beautiful dimensions.

Is God's wisdom displayed by making everyone exactly the same? No.

God brings different people together in Christ.

Do they all need the same language? No.

The same culture? No.

The same age? No.

The same occupation? No.

The same personality? No.

What must disappear?

Hostility. Pride. Superiority. Inferiority.

Christian unity does not mean that everyone becomes identical.
It means different people are united in one Christ through one gospel.

So ask: “When people look at our local church, can they see the many-sided wisdom of God?”

7. The Church Is Part of God’s Eternal Purpose Ephesians 3:11

Paul says all this happened:

“according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Was the church an afterthought in God’s plan?

Was it an emergency solution after human beings sinned? No.

The church belongs to God’s eternal purpose.

Think about how much dignity this gives to the church.

A local church may look small by worldly standards. It may appear weak. It may have little influence or recognition. It may even have many problems.

But how does God see His church?

As part of His eternal purpose.

So we should not think of the church merely as an organization that holds weekly meetings.

It is a people through whom God displays His wisdom and glory in Christ.

8. Bold and Confident Access to God Ephesians 3:12

Paul now describes another great result of the gospel.

Through faith in Christ, what can we do?

We can approach God with freedom, boldness, and confidence.

Why are we able to come near to God?

Because we lived very well this week?

Because we prayed enough?

Because we read enough Bible?

Because we served enough? No.

We come through Christ.

Our confidence is not in our spiritual performance.

Where is it? In Christ.

Sometimes we may think: “I am too weak.” “I have failed.” “Would God really allow someone like me to come near Him?”

What does the gospel say?

Through Christ, you have access to the Father. So our confidence does not come from looking at our record. We look to Christ and come boldly to God.

9. Do Not Be Discouraged by Suffering Ephesians 3:13

What does Paul say?

“I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you.”

What might the Ephesian believers have thought?

“Paul is God’s servant. Why is he in prison?”

“If God is with him, why is he suffering?”

Do we sometimes think the same way?
“If God is with me, everything should go smoothly.”
But what does Paul’s life show?
That is not always true.
Paul is suffering.
Yet God is still using him.

Does suffering prove that God’s plan has failed? No.
Suffering and faithful service can exist at the same time.
Even while Paul is imprisoned, the gospel continues to advance.
Do we always know the specific reason for every suffering? No.
So we should not invent explanations.
But we do know this: Suffering does not mean God’s purpose has failed.

How Does the Whole Passage Fit Together?

Let us follow the flow.

What does Paul call himself? A prisoner of Christ.
What has God revealed? The mystery.
What is that mystery? Jews and Gentiles are brought together into one body.
How did Paul receive his ministry? By grace.
What does he proclaim? The boundless riches of Christ.
What is God displaying through the church? His manifold wisdom.
How old is this plan? It belongs to God’s eternal purpose.
What do we receive through Christ? Access to God.
And when suffering comes? Do not lose heart.

Remember:

Prisoner ◎ Mystery ◎ Together ◎ Grace ◎ Riches ◎ Church ◎ Wisdom ◎ Purpose ◎ Access ◎ Suffering

Application

Let us examine our own lives.
How do we look at other believers?
If God has made us one body, do we still look down on people because of caste, language, education, money, occupation, or social status?
Are there second-class Christians in Christ? No.
How do we view ministry?
Is it about my title, my name, my platform, or my influence?
Or is it a service God has given by grace?
Through our ministry, whom should people see most clearly?
Christ.
How do we view the church?
Only as an organization that conducts meetings?
Or as a people through whom God displays His wisdom by bringing different people together in Christ?
How do we view prayer?
Do we think we must first make ourselves worthy before approaching God?
Or do we believe: “Through Christ I have access to the Father”?

How do we view suffering?

When difficulty comes, do we immediately think: “Something must have gone wrong”?

Or can we also trust: “Even here, God can continue accomplishing His purpose”?

Gospel Connection

Who is at the center of this whole passage? Jesus Christ.

Through the gospel, what happens to divided people? They become one body.

Through Christ, what happens to outsiders? They become co-heirs.

Through Christ, what do we share? God’s promise.

Through Christ, what does the church display? God’s wisdom.

Through faith in Christ, where can we come? To the Father.

So the gospel does not only answer: “How can I be saved?”

It also answers: “Who are my people now?”

What is the answer?

Everyone who belongs to Christ belongs to the same family and the same body.

Bible Study Questions - 8

1. Read Ephesians 3:1–6. Why does Paul call himself “a prisoner of Christ Jesus”? What does the word “mystery” mean in this passage?
2. According to verse 6, what is the mystery God has revealed? What do the words “co-heirs, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise” teach us?
3. How does Paul view his ministry in verses 7–8? What does the phrase “the boundless riches of Christ” teach us about Christ?
4. How can Christian ministry slowly become leader-centered instead of Christ-centered? What should leaders learn from Paul’s example?
5. According to Ephesians 3:9–11, what is God displaying through the church? How can a church made up of very different people display the manifold wisdom of God?
6. According to verse 12, how can we approach God with boldness and confidence? Is our confidence based on our good performance or on Christ?
7. According to verse 13, how does Paul view his suffering? Should we assume that suffering means God’s plan has failed?
8. How should this passage change the way we view church life, ministry, other believers, prayer, and suffering?

Help for Leaders - Each Question

First, allow members to read the passage and answer in their own words.

Do not give the answers immediately.

Use short questions such as: “Which verse gives that answer?” “Why is this word important?” “What does Paul say about himself here?” “How does this apply to our church?” “How should this change our lives?”

Question 1 · Prisoner and Mystery

Although Paul is physically a Roman prisoner, he sees his situation under the sovereign rule of Christ.

He does not view his suffering as something outside God's control.

A "mystery" is not a secret that can never be understood.

It is a truth that was not fully revealed before but has now been made known by God.

Ask: "Why are we sometimes quick to think that God has lost control when suffering comes?"

Question 2 Co-Heirs, One Body, Sharers in the Promise

Have the group repeat the three phrases:

Co-heirs @ Members together of one body @ Sharers together in the promise

Gentile believers are not second-class Christians.

In Christ they receive the same inheritance, the same place in the body, and the same promise.

Apply this to divisions involving caste, language, ethnicity, money, education, and social status.

Ask:

"If we are equally included in Christ, is there room for superiority and inferiority in the church?"

Question 3 · Ministry Is Grace

How does Paul view ministry? As a gift of grace.

He does not view it primarily as his personal achievement or status.

What should true ministry therefore produce? Humility. Gratitude. Dependence on God.

What are the "boundless riches of Christ"?

His grace, love, glory, wisdom, sufficiency, and abundance can never be completely exhausted.

Ask: "Should Bible study merely increase our information, or should it also increase our wonder at Christ?"

Question 4 The Danger of Leader-Centered Ministry

Some temptations in ministry include: position, platform, recognition, influence, followers, and control.

Where should a Christian leader direct people's attention? Toward Christ.

Ask: "Through my ministry, are people becoming more impressed with me, or more impressed with Christ?"

Question 5 · God's Wisdom Through the Church

The church is not merely a meeting place.

God brings together people who would naturally remain separate.

When they love, serve, forgive, worship, and care for one another, what becomes visible?

God's wisdom and the power of the gospel.

Unity does not mean that everyone becomes the same.

Its foundation is not one language, caste, culture, or social background.

Its foundation is: Christ and the gospel. The church is also not God's emergency plan.

It belongs to His eternal purpose.

Ask: "When others observe our church life, can they see what the gospel is able to do?"

Question 6 · Access to God

Through whom do we have access to God? Through Christ.

Prayer, Bible reading, service, and good works are important.

But do they earn God's acceptance? No. Christ is the basis of our access.

Ask: "When I pray, is my confidence based on how well I performed last week, or on Christ?"

Question 7 · Suffering and God's Purpose

Paul does not see imprisonment as proof of failure.

Two realities exist together in his life: Suffering and faithful service.

Do not invent specific reasons for every suffering.

Keep the main truth clear: Suffering does not prove that God's plan has failed.

Ask: "How would our perspective change if we trusted that God can still accomplish His purposes in difficult circumstances?"

Question 8 Personal Application

Bring the discussion into everyday life.

Ask: "Are there invisible walls in our church because of caste, language, money, or social status?" "Does my ministry point people toward Christ or toward me?"

"Is my confidence in prayer based on my performance or on Christ?"

"When suffering comes, do I immediately assume that God has abandoned me?"

Finally ask: "What is one thing I need to change in response to this passage?"

Important Note for Leaders

What kind of unity is Paul describing? Gospel unity.

It is not: "Stay together at any cost."

It does not mean: "Doctrine does not matter."

It does not mean ignoring sin. It does not mean that every religious group automatically belongs to Christ's body.

Paul is very clear: "In Christ Jesus" and "Through the gospel."

Therefore, Christian unity is centered on: Christ and the truth of the gospel.

Also, what does humility in ministry mean?

Does it mean avoiding responsibility? No.

Does it mean refusing to use the gifts God has given? No.

Paul was humble, but he was also clear about his calling.

Biblical humility means: faithfully using the gifts God has given while making ministry about Christ rather than about ourselves.

Main Truth for Leaders to Remember

At the end of the discussion, return to verse 6.

Have the group repeat: Through the gospel ◎ Co-heirs ◎ Members together of one body ◎ Sharers together in the promise ◎ In Christ Jesus.

Then connect this with verse 10:

God brings divided people together in Christ and displays His manifold wisdom through the church.

Does the gospel save individuals? Yes.

But does it leave them isolated? No.

It creates a new people in Christ.

Final Question : If the gospel has truly made us co-heirs, members of one body, and

together in God's promise, how should that unity become visible in our church?

In the way we welcome people? In our worship? In leadership? In sharing meals? In praying for one another? In caring for one another's needs? Does our church life truly display the power of the gospel?

Bible Study Lesson 7 Ephesians 3:14-21

Strengthened Within and Rooted in Christ's Love

Context

What did Paul explain in Ephesians 3:1–13?

Through the gospel, Jews and Gentiles have been brought together as one body in Christ. The church is part of God's eternal purpose. By bringing very different people together in Christ, God displays His many-sided wisdom through the church.

After explaining such a great truth, what does Paul do? He prays.

Why?

Is knowing correct doctrine enough? No.

The truth we know must go deeper into our hearts. It must change us and become visible in the way we live.

So Paul says: "For this reason I kneel before the Father" (3:14).

What does Paul pray for first?

Their health? Their finances? For all their problems to disappear immediately? No.

He prays for something deeper:

They should be strengthened inwardly through the Holy Spirit.

Christ should dwell deeply and fully in their lives.

They should be rooted and established in Christ's love.

They should understand how great that love is.

They should grow toward the fullness of God.

We can remember the passage like this:

Father ☉ Inner strength ☉ Christ dwelling within ☉ Rooted in love

☉ Christ's love ☉ God's fullness ☉ God's power ☉ God's glory

1. Kneeling Before the Father Ephesians 3:14-15

Paul says: "For this reason I kneel before the Father."

Where is Paul? He is a prisoner.

But does his prayer begin with himself?

Does he begin by saying: "Lord, release me immediately"? No.

His heart is concerned about the spiritual growth of God's people.

Notice something else.

How does Paul address God? "Father."

Why is that important? What has Paul already said in Ephesians 2:18?

Through the Son, by one Spirit, we have access to the Father.

So is prayer an attempt to persuade a God who does not want to listen to us? No.

Through Christ, to whom are we coming? To our Father.

Do we come as outsiders? No.

We come as children who have been brought into God's family by grace.

So ask yourself: When I pray, do I think of God mainly as distant, or as the Father who has received me through Christ?

2. Strengthened in the Inner Being Ephesians 3:16

What does Paul pray next?

That God would strengthen them “with power through his Spirit in your inner being.”

What do our prayers often sound like?

“Lord, remove this problem.” “Restore my health.” “Change this difficult situation.”

“Open this door.” Are such prayers wrong? No.

But Paul teaches us another kind of prayer:

“Lord, even if the situation does not immediately change, strengthen me inwardly.”

Sometimes God changes our circumstances.

At other times, the circumstances may remain difficult.

What can God do then?

He can strengthen us to remain faithful in the middle of them.

Physical strength may decrease. Money may disappear. Health may change. People may disappoint us. Circumstances may become difficult.

But what should happen within us?

Our inner person should be strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

This is not merely positive thinking: “I must be strong.” “I must think positively.”

It is strength that comes from God’s Spirit.

Ask: Am I asking God only to make my life easier, or am I also asking Him to make me spiritually stronger in difficult circumstances?

3. Christ Dwelling in Our Hearts Through Faith Ephesians 3:17

Paul continues:

“So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”

This raises an important question.

To whom is Paul writing? To people who are already believers.

So is he saying that they do not yet have Christ? No.

What, then, does “dwell” mean here?

It carries the idea of settling down, being at home, taking up full residence.

Paul wants Christ to have His rightful place in every area of their lives.

Imagine inviting an honoured guest into your house and saying:

“You may stay in the living room, but please do not open this room.”

Can we sometimes treat Christ in the same way?

“Lord, Sunday belongs to You—but not my money.”

“My prayer life belongs to You—but not my relationships.”

“My church life belongs to You—but not my secret thoughts.”

“My songs belong to You—but my anger, pride, and ambitions are my own business.”

So the deeper question is not only: “Is Christ in my life?”

But: “Is Christ truly at home as Lord in every part of my life?”

4. Rooted and Established in Love Ephesians 3:17

Paul now uses two beautiful pictures: “Rooted and established in love.”

What is the first picture? A tree.

What happens when a tree has deep roots? It receives nourishment.

It becomes stable. It can stand when heat and strong winds come.

What is the second picture? A building.

What happens when a building has a strong foundation?

It can remain standing when storms come.

What, then, should be the root and foundation of our lives? The love of Christ.

What happens if our security is rooted mainly in people's approval?

When they reject us, we may collapse.

What if money is our foundation?

What happens when money disappears?

What if success is our identity?

What happens when we fail?

What if health is our security?

What happens when our health declines?

But where can we put down deep roots and remain secure? In Christ's love.

Circumstances may shake us. But they do not have to destroy us.

Ask: Where are my security, identity, and joy really rooted?

5. How Great Is Christ's Love? Ephesians 3:18-19

What does Paul pray that believers will understand?

The width, length, height, and depth of Christ's love.

Do we need to give each measurement a separate hidden meaning? No.

Paul's main point is that: Christ's love is immeasurably great.

How wide is it? Wide enough to bring sinners from different nations, languages, and backgrounds into His family.

How deep is it? Deep enough for Christ to enter our broken world and give Himself on the cross for sinners.

Then Paul says something remarkable: "To know this love that surpasses knowledge."

How can we know something that surpasses knowledge?

The meaning is that we can truly know and experience Christ's love, but we can never completely measure or exhaust it. Think of a vast ocean. Can we enter it? Yes.

Can we experience its water? Yes. Can we go deeper? Yes.

But can we hold the whole ocean in our hands? No.

It is similar with Christ's love. We can truly know it. We can grow deeper in our understanding of it.

But we can never say: "Now I completely understand the love of Christ."

Ask: Is "Jesus loves me" merely a doctrine I know, or am I growing in understanding how great, costly, secure, and life-changing His love really is?

6. Filled to the Measure of All the Fullness of God Ephesians 3:19

Paul's prayer now reaches even higher:

"That you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

What does this mean? Does it mean human beings become gods? No.

Paul desires that God's presence and character increasingly fill and shape our lives so that we

become more like Christ.

Is spiritual maturity simply knowing more Bible information? No.

Biblical knowledge is very important. Sound doctrine is very important.

But that truth should transform our lives.

What should increasingly appear in us?

Love. Holiness. Patience. Forgiveness. Humility. Truthfulness. Kindness. Self-control.

So how should we examine ourselves?

Only by asking: "Do I know more about the Bible than I did five years ago?" No.

We should also ask: "Compared with five years ago, is the character of Christ more visible in my words, reactions, relationships, and decisions?"

7. God Can Do More Than We Ask or Imagine Ephesians 3:20

Paul now moves from prayer to praise.

He speaks of God as the One who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.

How great is God's power? Greater than our imagination.

But how should we not use this verse?

"I can ask for anything I want, and God must give it to me."

"I want a bigger house."

"My business must become very successful."

"Every sickness must disappear."

"Every dream I have must come true."

Is Paul giving us a blank cheque for every personal desire? No.

What is the context? What has Paul been praying for?

Inner strength. Christ dwelling within. Being rooted in love. Knowing Christ's love.

Growing toward God's fullness.

Notice another important phrase:

"According to his power that is at work within us."

Paul is not only talking about what God can do for us. He is also talking about what God is doing in us.

We may pray: "Lord, change this situation."

But sometimes God may do something even greater than we imagined:

He may deeply change us in that situation. That is not a small miracle.

8. The Final Goal - God's Glory Ephesians 3:21

How does Paul finish?

"To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!"

What is the final goal of this prayer?

Our comfort? No. Our reputation? No. Our success? No. Our ministry fame? No.

The final goal is: God's glory.

Where should His glory be displayed? In the church and in Christ Jesus.

What is God doing? He is bringing different people together in Christ. He is strengthening them through His Spirit. He is rooting them in Christ's love.

He is transforming them.

Why? For His glory.

Where did Paul's prayer begin? Kneeling before the Father.
Where does it end? With glory to God.

How Does the Whole Passage Fit Together?

Let us follow Paul's prayer.
To whom does Paul come? The Father.
What does he ask for? Inner strength through the Holy Spirit.
What follows? Christ dwelling deeply in their lives.
Then? Roots and a foundation in love.
Whose love? Christ's immeasurable love.
As they understand that love, toward what should they grow? The fullness of God.
How is this possible? Through God's power working within them.
What is the final goal? God's glory.

Remember: Father ◎ Strength through the Spirit ◎ Christ dwelling within ◎ Rooted in love ◎
Christ's love ◎ God's fullness ◎ God's power ◎ God's glory

Application

This prayer should change the way we pray.
We often pray: "Lord, remove my problem." That is a good prayer.
But can we also pray: "Lord, strengthen me through Your Spirit in the middle of this problem."
We pray: "Lord, change that person."
But can we also pray: "Help me understand Christ's love more deeply and change me so that I respond with that same love."
We pray for easier circumstances. But are we also praying for deeper faith, a stronger inner life, holiness, patience, humility, a forgiving heart, deeper roots in Christ's love, and greater Christlikeness?

So ask:

Do I merely know that Jesus loves me, or is my life actually rooted and established in His love?

Gospel Connection

Where do we see the width, length, height, and depth of Christ's love most clearly? At the cross.
Christ's love is not merely an emotion.
How did He demonstrate His love? By giving Himself for sinners.
Did He love us because we deserved His love? No.
He loved us while we were sinners. He died for us. He rose from the dead. Now He dwells among His people. Through the Holy Spirit, He strengthens them and transforms them into His likeness.
So Christian growth is not simply: "Try harder."

It is: Know Christ more deeply ◎ Be strengthened through the Holy Spirit ◎ Put deeper roots into Christ's love ◎ Let that love transform your life ◎ Live for the glory of God.

Bible Study Questions - 8

1. Read Ephesians 3:14–21. What are the main things Paul prays for? Why does his prayer focus more on their inner spiritual life than on outward circumstances?
2. In 3:14–15 Paul approaches God as "Father." What does this teach us about prayer? How should knowing that we come to the Father through Christ change the confidence with which we pray?

3. What does it mean to be “strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being” in 3:16? How should praying for changed circumstances and praying for inner strength work together?
4. What does it mean for Christ to “dwell in your hearts through faith” in 3:17? What areas of our lives are we sometimes tempted to keep from Christ’s full lordship?
5. What do the two pictures “rooted” and “established” in love teach us? What happens when our deepest roots are in people’s approval, money, health, success, status, or ministry achievement?
6. How should we understand the width, length, height, and depth and the “love that surpasses knowledge” in 3:18–19? Where do we see Christ’s love most clearly?
7. What does it mean to be “filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” in 3:19? How should spiritual growth become visible in our words, relationships, decisions, and character?
8. According to 3:20–21, what is God able to do by His power? Why should we not use this verse as a promise that every personal desire will be fulfilled? What is the final goal of God’s work

Help for Leaders - Each Question

First, allow the members to read the passage carefully. Do not give them the answers immediately. Help them discover the answers with short questions such as:

“Which verse gives us that answer?” “What is Paul praying for here?”

“Is he focusing on outward circumstances or the inner life?” “How does this apply to us?”

“How should this change the way we pray?”

Question 1 What Is Paul Mainly Praying For?

Help the group identify these main ideas:

Inner strength • Christ dwelling deeply within • Understanding Christ’s love • Growing toward God’s fullness

Where does all this finally lead? To God’s glory.

Ask: •Which of these things appears least often in our own prayers?•

Question 2 • God Is Our Father

Through Christ, believers have access to the Father (2:18).

Prayer is not trying to persuade an unwilling God to listen.

We approach the Father who has accepted us in Christ.

Ask: “If I truly know that God is my Father, how should that change my fear and confidence in prayer?”

Question 3 • Inner Strength

It is not wrong to pray for circumstances to change.

But Paul prays something deeper: “Strengthen them inwardly.”

Even when the outward situation remains difficult, the inner person can become stronger.

This is not merely mental determination. It is strength given by the Holy Spirit.

Ask: “If God does not change my situation immediately, what can I ask Him to change or strengthen within me?”

Question 4 • Christ Dwelling Deeply Within

These people are already believers.

So Paul is not talking about receiving Christ for the first time.

The idea is that Christ should have His rightful place throughout their lives.

Discuss areas such as: money, time, relationships, habits, ambitions, anger, unforgiveness, and secret thoughts.

Ask: "Is there any room in my life where I am saying, 'Lord, You may have the rest, but please do not enter here'?"

Question 5 · Rooted and Established in Love

The first picture is: Tree ☉ Roots ☉ Nourishment and stability

The second picture is: Building ☉ Foundation ☉ Stability

Where should our deepest security be? In Christ's love.

People's approval, money, health, success, status, family reputation, and even ministry success can change. Christ's love remains secure.

Ask: "What am I most afraid of losing because I feel I would collapse without it? Has that become my real foundation?"

Question 6 - Immeasurable Love

Do not force a separate hidden theological meaning onto each measurement.

The main point is: Christ's love is immeasurably great. We can know it. We can experience it.

We can grow in our understanding of it.

But we can never completely exhaust it. Where is that love seen most clearly? At the cross.

Ask: "What is the difference between knowing information about Christ's love and actually living securely in that love?"

Question 7 - The Fullness of God

Do not teach that human beings become gods.

The main idea is that God's presence and character increasingly shape our lives so that we become more like Christ.

What should become visible?

Love. Holiness. Patience. Forgiveness. Humility. Truthfulness. Kindness. Self-control.

Ask: ·As my Bible knowledge increases, is my character also changing?·

Question 8 · More Than We Ask or Imagine

Do not separate 3:20 from its context.

It is not a promise that:

"God will certainly fulfil every personal desire I have."

What has God been doing in the context? Strengthening believers inwardly.

Rooting them in Christ's love. Transforming them spiritually. Working in His church.

What is the final goal according to 3:21? God's glory.

Ask: "Do I look for God's power only in changing my circumstances, or can I also see His great power in changing me?"

Three Important Things for Leaders to Remember

1. “Christ May Dwell in Your Hearts”

This does not mean these believers did not previously have Christ.

They were already believers.

Paul’s desire is that: Christ should be fully at home as Lord throughout their lives.

2. “Filled to the Measure of All the Fullness of God”

This does not mean human beings become gods.

The main idea is: Our lives should increasingly reflect God’s character as He transforms us into Christlikeness.

3. “More Than All We Ask or Imagine” Do not use 3:20 as a blank promise for every dream about wealth, health, career, or ministry success.

Remember the context: Spiritual strength. Christ’s love. A transformed life.

God’s work in the church. God’s glory.

Main Truth for Leaders to Remember

Bring the discussion back to Paul’s prayer.

Help the group remember: Do not pray only for an easier life; pray also for a stronger inner life.

Repeat the flow together: Strength through the Holy Spirit ◎ Christ deeply at home within us ◎ Rooted in His love ◎ Knowing His love more deeply ◎ Becoming more like Christ ◎ God’s power working within us ◎ God receiving glory through His church

Final Question

What would happen to our prayer life if we prayed not only about health, jobs, money, examinations, and problems disappearing, but also about inner strength, deeper roots in Christ’s love, holiness, spiritual maturity, greater Christlikeness, and God receiving glory through His church?

Bible Study Lesson 8 Ephesians 4:1-16

Context

What has Paul mainly taught in the first three chapters of Ephesians?

He has explained what God has done for us in Christ.

We were dead in sins — God made us alive with Christ.

We were far from God — Christ brought us near.

We were foreigners — now we are members of God's household.

We were divided — Christ made us one body.

At the end of chapter 3, what did Paul do?

He prayed that believers would be strengthened inwardly through the Holy Spirit and rooted in the love of Christ.

Now, in Ephesians 4:1, an important word appears:

"Therefore..." Why "therefore"?

Because Paul is saying: Since God has done all this for you, how should you now live?

Paul is not saying: "Live a good life, and then God will save you."

He is saying: "God has called and saved you by grace. Therefore, live in a way that fits that calling."

The order is very important:

Grace first ☉ then obedience.

Salvation first ☉ then a changed life.

We can remember the flow of this passage like this:

Calling ☉ Character ☉ Unity ☉ Gifts ☉ Equipping ☉ Service ☉ Maturity ☉ Discernment ☉ Truth in love ☉ Every member serving ☉ Growth in Christ

1. Live a Life Worthy of Your Calling Ephesians 4:1

What does Paul say? "Live a life worthy of the calling you have received."

What does "worthy" mean?

Does it mean we must become worthy of God's grace through good living? No.

Can we earn grace? No.

What does Paul mean?

Because God has saved us, our lives should now reflect the salvation we have received.

We say that we belong to Christ.

Where should that be visible? Only on Sunday at church? No.

In our speech. In our anger.

In the way we use money. At work. In our families. In relationships. In the way we forgive.

In the way we use our time. The gospel should touch every part of life.

So the question is not only: "What do I believe?"

We should also ask: "Can what I say I believe be seen in the way I live?"

2. What Does a Life Worthy of the Calling Look Like? Ephesians 4:2-3

What does Paul mention first?

Great spiritual gifts? Teaching ability? Ministry success? No.

He begins with character.

What qualities does he mention?

Humility. Gentleness. Patience. Bearing with one another in love. Humility

Humility means we do not need to prove that we are greater than others.

Must I always win? Must my opinion always be the final word?

Must my name always receive recognition? Humility is the opposite of that.

Gentleness. Is gentleness weakness? No. It is strength under control.

We may have power, but we do not use it to crush or dominate others.

Patience Patience means giving others time to grow, even when they do not change as quickly as we would like.

Did we become perfect in one day? No.

Can we give others time to grow? Bearing with One Another in Love

Is every believer in the church perfect? No.

So what do we need if we are going to live together?

Love. Patience. Forgiveness.

Then Paul says: "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

Notice something important.

Do we create Christian unity ourselves? No.

The Holy Spirit has already united believers in Christ.

What is our responsibility? To preserve that unity.

Are churches divided only by major doctrinal issues? No.

Small things can also divide:

pride, jealousy, harsh words, unforgiveness, personal preferences, the desire to control, and the attitude, "My way must win."

Ask: "Am I protecting the unity Christ has given, or am I damaging it through my pride, words, or preferences?"

3. One Body, One Spirit, One Lord Ephesians 4:4-6

What word keeps appearing in these verses? "One."

Paul mentions seven things:

One body. One Spirit. One hope. One Lord. One faith. One baptism. One God and Father.

Why does he repeat "one" so many times?

Because Christian unity is not based merely on our preferences.

It is based on what God has done.

Are all believers exactly the same? No.

Our languages may differ. Our cultures may differ. Our caste, region, age, education, economic background, and personalities may differ.

But where is our deepest identity? In Christ.

Therefore: caste, language, region, status, denomination, and personal preferences must never become greater than our unity in Christ.

Ask: "Who am I first—a member of my caste or region, or a person who belongs to Christ?"

4. Unity Does Not Mean Everyone Is the Same Ephesians 4:7-10

Paul now makes an interesting change.

In verses 4–6 he repeatedly said: One. One. One.

But in verse 7? He speaks about different grace and gifts given to each believer.

True unity does not mean everyone must become identical.

Think about the human body.

What does the eye do? It sees. The ear? It hears. The foot? It walks. The hand? It works.

Would the body function well if every part did the same thing? No.

The same is true in the church.

Christ gives different gifts to different believers.

When does the problem begin? When we start comparing ourselves.

“Why don't I have that person's gift?” “Why does she receive more recognition?”

“Why does nobody notice me?” Instead, what should we ask?

“What has Christ given me, and how can I use it to serve His body?”

Spiritual gifts are not given for competition. They are given for service.

5. Why Did Christ Give Leaders to the Church? Ephesians 4:11-12

Paul speaks about apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

Why did Christ give them? So that they could do all the ministry themselves?

So that the members could sit and watch? No.

Paul says they were given: “to equip his people for works of service.”

The important word is: Equip.

Notice the pattern: Christ gives leaders @ Leaders equip believers @ Believers serve @ The body of Christ is built up.

So what should a healthy church ask?

Only: “How well does our pastor preach?” That matters.

But we should also ask: Are the members growing? Are they learning to understand Scripture?

Are they learning to pray? Share the gospel? Disciple others? Use their gifts? Serve?

Is the church a place where a few people perform on a platform while everyone else watches? No.

Every believer has a role.

6. The Goal · Spiritual Maturity Ephesians 4:13-14

Why should believers be equipped? Simply to run more programs? No.

What is the goal? Spiritual maturity.

We should grow in faith. We should grow in the knowledge of the Son of God.

We should become more like Christ.

Does God want His children to remain spiritual babies forever? No.

What is one mark of spiritual immaturity?

Being “tossed back and forth by every wind of teaching.”

What can this look like today?

A preacher speaks very confidently — we immediately believe him.

A video goes viral — we assume it must be true.

Someone says, “God told me” — we accept it without testing it.

Someone quotes a Bible verse — we believe the claim without checking the context.

Are these signs of maturity? No.

What does a mature believer ask?

“Where is this in Scripture?” “What does this verse mean in its context?” “Does this teaching fit

with the gospel?" "Does it agree with the whole teaching of Scripture?"

Spiritual maturity needs more than enthusiasm. It also needs discernment.

7. From Spiritual Childhood to Discernment Ephesians 4:14

What happens when we are not firmly grounded in biblical truth?

Every new teaching can move us. A confident speaker can easily influence us.

We may mistake emotional experiences for truth. We may accept popular teaching without examining it.

What, then, is maturity?

Being rooted in Christ and God's Word. This shows why faithful Bible teaching is so important.

What should be its goal? To make people dependent on the teacher? No.

It should help believers become increasingly dependent on God's Word.

So when we hear a new teaching, it is not enough to ask: "Who said it?"

The more important question is: "Is it faithful to Scripture?"

8. Speak the Truth in Love Ephesians 4:15

Paul now gives us a beautiful balance: "Speaking the truth in love..."

Some people speak truth.

But how? Harshly. In a way that wounds. In a way that humiliates.

They may say: "But I am only telling the truth!"

The truth may be correct. But without love? It can wound deeply.

Others emphasize love. But they are afraid to speak uncomfortable truth.

"They may feel hurt." "They may not like me." So they hide the truth. Is that true love? No.

We need both: Truth + Love

Remember: Truth without love can wound. Love without truth can mislead.

Before correcting someone, ask two questions:

"Is what I am saying true?" "Am I saying this for this person's good?"

What is the goal? To win an argument? To embarrass someone? No.

The goal is to help the person grow in Christ.

9. Christ Is the Head of the Church Ephesians 4:15-16

Toward whom should we grow?

A famous leader? A popular preacher? What does Paul say?

We should grow "into him who is the head, that is, Christ."

Who is the head of the church? Christ.

The pastor? No. The elders? No. An influential family? No. A denomination? No.

Christ alone is the Head.

A gifted pastor is valuable. Good programs can be useful. Budgets are necessary.

Organization is useful. But where does true spiritual life come from?

Christ. What danger does this truth protect the church from?

Person-centered ministry.

If a church collapses when one leader leaves, we should ask whether the church had become too dependent on that person rather than on Christ.

10. The Body Grows When Every Member Does Its Part Ephesians 4:16

Paul ends this section with the picture of a body.

What phrase is especially important? “As each part does its work...”

Who should do the work? Only the pastor? No.

Only the elders? No. Only those who preach? No. Each part. Every believer has a role.

One person prays. Another encourages. Another shows hospitality. Another gives.

Another shares the gospel. Another teaches. Another cares for the weak. Another teaches children.

Another discipled a new believer. Another comforts those who suffer.

What happens when every member does his or her part?

The whole body grows and builds itself up in love. So what should our question about church be?

Only: “What does this church give me?” No.

We should also ask: “How can Christ use me to build His church?”

How Does the Whole Passage Fit Together?

Let us follow the flow.

What has God done? He has called us.

Therefore? Live a life worthy of the calling.

What does that life look like? Humility, gentleness, patience, and love.

What does that protect? Unity.

Who are we? One body.

Does that mean everyone is the same? No.

Christ gives different gifts.

What do leaders do? Equip the members.

What do the members do? Serve. What is the result? Maturity.

What does maturity produce? Discernment.

How should mature believers speak? The truth in love.

Into whom should we grow? Christ.

Who must do his or her part? Every member.

What is the result? The whole church grows in Christ and in love.

Remember: Calling © Character © Unity © Gifts © Equipping © Service © Maturity © Discernment © Truth in love © Every member serving © Growth in Christ

Application: This passage connects our faith with everyday life.

What is my character like? I say I belong to Christ. But what is visible in my relationships?

Pride? Anger? Jealousy? Unforgiveness? Harsh words?

Or: Humility, gentleness, patience, and love? Am I preserving unity?

Is winning my argument more important to me? Or is the unity of Christ’s body more important?

Am I testing what I hear? Do I believe every popular message?

Do I forward every viral video? Or do I ask: “Does this agree with Scripture?”

How do I speak truth?

Do I wound people in the name of honesty? Or do I hide necessary truth in the name of love?

What is my role in the church? Am I mainly a spectator? Do I simply come, listen, and leave?

Or am I serving?

Spiritual maturity cannot be measured only by:

“How many years have I attended church?” “How many sermons have I heard?”

“How many Bible verses do I know?”

What else should we look for?

Humility. Love. Truth. Discernment. Service. Unity. Christlikeness.

Gospel Connection

Remember the great pattern of Ephesians:

Chapters 1–3 — What God has done for us in Christ.

Chapters 4–6 — How we should live because of what He has done.

What does the gospel not say? “Live a good life, and then God will save you.”

What does the gospel say? “God has saved you by grace. Now live in a way that reflects that grace.”

Did we create the unity of the church? No.

Through the gospel, Christ has made us one body.

Do we serve in order to earn salvation? No.

Christ saved us and gave us gifts so that we may serve His body.

Do we grow spiritually by our own strength? No.

Christ is the Head. From Him the whole body receives life, strength, and growth.

Bible Study Questions · 8

1. What important change does the word “therefore” in Ephesians 4:1 show? How are chapters 1–3, which describe what God has done, connected to chapters 4–6, which describe how believers should live?
2. According to 4:1–3, what does it mean to live a life worthy of our calling? How should humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with one another in love appear in our families and churches?
3. What are the seven “ones” in 4:4–6? What do they teach about Christian unity? What happens when caste, language, region, status, or denomination becomes more important than our unity in Christ?
4. According to 4:7–12, why has Christ given different gifts and leaders to the church? How do these verses show that ministry is not only the work of pastors or a few leaders?
5. According to 4:13–14, what does spiritual maturity look like? How can believers today be “tossed by every wind of teaching”?
6. When we hear a new teaching, prophecy, sermon, or spiritual claim, how should we test it? Why is “What does Scripture say?” more important than merely asking, “Who said it?”
7. What does “speaking the truth in love” in 4:15 mean? What happens when we have truth without love? What happens when we have love without truth?
8. According to 4:15–16, who is the Head of the church? What does “each part does its work” say to every believer? Are you mainly a spectator, or are you actively helping to build Christ’s body?

Help for Leaders · Each Question

First, allow members to read the passage.

Do not give the answer immediately.

Use short questions such as: “Which verse gives that answer?” “Why is ‘therefore’ important?”

“What would this look like in everyday life?” “What is Christ’s role here?” “What is the responsibility of each member?”

Question 1 · Grace First, Then Obedience

The first three chapters of Ephesians mainly answer: “What has God done?”

From chapter 4 onward, the question becomes: “How should we live?”

The order is: Grace first ☉ obedience follows.

We do not earn salvation through good living. We live differently because we have received salvation.

Ask: ·Is our obedience the cause of salvation, or the fruit of salvation?·

Question 2 · Character Worthy of the Calling

Remember four words: Humility ☉ Gentleness ☉ Patience ☉ Bearing with one another in love

Bring the discussion into everyday situations.

What happens when: someone criticizes us? family members disagree with us?

the church makes a decision we dislike? someone disappoints us?

Ask: “Are doctrinal disagreements the only things that damage church unity, or can our character also damage it?”

Question 3 · The Seven ·Ones·

Have the group identify them:

One body. One Spirit. One hope. One Lord. One faith. One baptism. One God and Father.

These show that our unity rests on what God has done.

Christian unity does not mean abandoning truth. It is unity in Christ and in the truth.

Ask: “Is there a danger in our churches that caste, language, or region can become more important than our one Lord?”

Question 4 · Why Are Leaders Given?

The key word is: Equip.

You may write this progression for the group:

Christ gives leaders ☉ Leaders equip believers ☉ Believers serve ☉ The body grows

Gifts are not given for status.

They are not given for competition. They are given for service.

Ask: “Are members in our church being equipped to serve, or are they becoming more dependent on a few leaders?”

Question 5 · Maturity and Spiritual Childhood

One sign of spiritual immaturity is: Being moved by every new teaching.

Examples today may include: a viral video, a famous preacher, someone saying, “God told me,” a verse quoted without context, or a strong emotional experience. These things should not automatically be accepted. They should be tested by Scripture.

Ask: ·Does speaking confidently prove that someone’s teaching is true?·

Question 6 · How Do We Test Teaching?

Help the group remember four questions:

1. What does the biblical text actually say?
2. What is the context?
3. Does this teaching agree with the gospel?
4. Does the rest of Scripture support it?

Whether the teacher is famous is less important than whether the teaching is faithful to Scripture.

Ask: “Why is ‘What does God’s Word say?’ more important than ‘Who said it?’”

Question 7 · Truth in Love

We need both: Truth + Love

Truth without love can become harshness.

Love without truth can leave people in error.

The goal is not to defeat the other person.

The goal is to help the person grow in Christ.

Ask: “When I correct someone, am I seeking that person’s good, or am I mainly trying to prove that I am right?”

Question 8 · The Head and the Work of Every Member

Who is the Head of the church? Christ.

What does every member have? A role.

Ministry is not only preaching.

It also includes: prayer, encouragement, hospitality, giving, sharing the gospel, teaching, discipling others, caring for those who suffer, and helping people in need.

Ask: “What is one thing I can do this week to build up the body of Christ?”

Important Things for Leaders to Remember

1. Unity Does Not Mean Abandoning Truth

Paul emphasizes unity. But he also warns believers not to be carried away by every wind of teaching. So true Christian unity must be: in Christ and in truth.

2. Different Gifts Do Not Create Different Levels of Christians

Gifts differ. Roles differ. But all believers belong to: one body.

A visible gift does not make someone more important than a believer who serves quietly.

3. Leaders Are Necessary — But Ministry Is Not Only the Work of Leaders

One of the main responsibilities of leaders is: to equip other believers for service.

Healthy leadership does not make members increasingly dependent on the leader.

It helps them become grounded in Scripture and able to serve others.

4. Maturity Is More Than Bible Knowledge

Bible knowledge is essential. But what else should grow? Truth. Love. Discernment. Service. Humility. Unity. Christlikeness.

If knowledge increases but character does not change, something is missing.

Main Flow for Leaders to Remember

At the end, have the group repeat this sequence:

We received grace ◎ We live worthy of our calling ◎ Christlike character grows ◎ We preserve unity ◎ We use our gifts ◎ Leaders equip believers ◎ Believers serve ◎ Believers grow in maturity ◎ They discern truth from error ◎ They speak the truth in love ◎ Every member does his or her part ◎ The whole church grows in Christ.

Final Question: What kind of church are we becoming? A group of people who simply

Come ◎ Listen ◎ Leave? Or a church where: every believer is growing in God’s Word, learning to discern truth, serving in love, using his or her gifts, and being equipped to help the whole body of Christ grow toward maturity?

Bible Study Lesson 9 Ephesians 4:17-32

Put Off the Old Self and Put On the New Self

Context

Do you remember what Paul taught in Ephesians 4:1–16? He said that believers should live a life worthy of their calling. He spoke about humility, gentleness, patience, unity, spiritual gifts, maturity in the church, and speaking the truth in love.

Now, in Ephesians 4:17–32, Paul becomes even more practical. Let us ask an important question: If Christ has given us new life, should there be a visible change in our everyday lives?

Can we say, “I believe in Jesus,” but continue thinking, speaking, getting angry, deceiving others, and refusing to forgive exactly as before? Paul’s answer is clear: No.

The gospel does not only change where we will go after death. It begins changing us now —our: thoughts, desires, words, relationships, and behavior. Remember the main pattern of this passage: Put off the old • Renew your mind • Put on the new

1. Do Not Live as You Used to Live Ephesians 4:17-19

What does Paul tell believers? Do not live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. Notice something important.

Does Paul begin with behavior? No.

He begins with thinking. Why? Because wrong living often grows out of wrong thinking.

What do we believe about God? What do we believe about ourselves? Where do we believe happiness can be found? What do we believe sin will give us? These beliefs influence our desires, choices, and behavior.

Notice Paul’s progression: Darkened thinking • Hardened heart • Uncontrolled desires • Sinful behavior So when fighting sin, is it enough to ask: “What did I do?” No. We should go deeper: “What did I believe?” “What did my heart desire?” “What thought led me to this action?”

For example, suppose I told a lie. Why did I lie? Was I trying to escape punishment? Did I want others to think highly of me? Did I believe that telling the truth would cost me too much? Then the problem is not only the lie. Behind the lie may be a false belief.

Biblical change therefore does not merely deal with outward behavior. It goes deeper —to our mind, heart, and desires.

2. That Is Not the Way You Learned Christ Ephesians 4:20-21

Paul now gives a powerful contrast: “That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ.” What a beautiful statement! He does not say: “You learned some new religious rules.” He points them to Christ.

Christianity is not merely learning a new set of rules. We know Christ. We learn Christ. We follow Christ. Is Jesus merely one part of the Christian message? No. He is the center.

Paul then reminds them that truth is in Jesus. So when making decisions, should our main questions be: “What does culture say?” “What is everyone else doing?” “What feels right to me?” “What does the majority accept?”

There is a more important question: “What is true according to Jesus? What does God’s Word say?” Our feelings change. Cultural values change. Popular opinion changes. But what is our final standard? Christ and His Word.

3. Put Off the Old Self Ephesians 4:22

Paul now uses a simple picture. What is it? Changing clothes. After bathing, would we normally put the same dirty clothes back on? No. We take off the dirty clothes and put on clean ones. In the same way, Paul says to put off the old self, which belongs to the former way of life.

What is the old self? It is the sinful way of life that characterized us apart from Christ. How does Paul describe sinful desires? Deceitful desires. Why are they deceitful? Because does sin tell us the whole truth beforehand? No.

Sin says: “This will make you happy.” “Just once will not hurt.” “No one will know.” “You need this.” “They hurt you, so you deserve revenge.” But does sin tell us what may come afterward? Usually not. It promises freedom but leads toward slavery. It promises pleasure but may leave guilt. It promises satisfaction but often creates a desire for more.

So when temptation comes, ask: “What is this desire promising me? Is that promise really true?”

4. Be Made New in the Attitude of Your Minds Ephesians 4:23

Put off the old self. Then what? Before Paul says to put on the new self, he places something very important in between: “Be made new in the attitude of your minds.” Why? Because Christian transformation is not merely controlling outward behavior. “Don’t lie.” “Don’t get angry.” “Don’t steal.” Will simply repeating “Don’t do this” produce deep transformation? No. Our thinking must change.

God’s truth must change the way we see: God, ourselves, sin, money, work, relationships, forgiveness, happiness, and success. Something is shaping our minds every day. What might it be? Social media. Movies. Advertising. Friends. Family expectations. Culture. Our own desires. Or God’s Word.

So ask: “What is shaping my thinking the most?” Renewing the mind does not mean merely: “Think positively.” It means allowing God’s truth to reshape the way we think.

5. Put On the New Self Ephesians 4:24

Does Paul only tell us to remove the old? No. What must replace it? The new self. The Christian life does not end with: “Stop doing bad things.” Something new must take their place. We begin living in a way that reflects Christ. Remember these three movements: Put off • Renew • Put on Paul now gives several very practical examples.

6. Replace Falsehood with Truth Ephesians 4:25

What is Paul’s first example? Lying. What should we do? Put away falsehood. What should replace it? Speak truthfully. Why? Because we are members of one another. We belong to Christ’s body. Imagine if the eyes sent false information to the brain. Would the body function properly? No. In the same way, what does dishonesty do in the church? It destroys trust. It damages relationships.

Does lying only mean directly saying something false? Not necessarily. It can also include: exaggeration, half-truths, deliberately hiding important facts, misleading statements, and

promises we have no intention of keeping. Ask yourself: “Can people trust my word?”

7. Do Not Let Anger Become Sin. Ephesians 4:26-27

Paul says: “In your anger do not sin.” Does that mean every kind of anger is sinful? No. We may rightly feel anger about injustice or evil. But where can human anger quickly lead?

Bitterness ☉ Hatred ☉ Revenge ☉ Harsh words ☉ Hurtful actions

Can we remain angry without shouting? Yes. We may punish someone with silence. We may refuse to speak. We may carry resentment for years. So Paul says: “Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.”

The main point is: Do not feed your anger. Do not give it a permanent home in your heart. Then Paul says: **“Do not give the devil a foothold.”** Unresolved anger can open the door to further sin. **So here is a difficult but necessary question:** “Am I still punishing someone in my heart for something that happened a long time ago?”

8. Replace Stealing with Honest Work and Generosity. Ephesians 4:28

Here we see how deep gospel transformation goes. What does Paul tell the thief? Stop stealing. Does he stop there? No. Work honestly. Is that all? No. Work so that you may have something to share with those in need.

Notice the progression: Stealing ☉ Honest work ☉ Generous giving What a transformation! The old question was: “What can I take from others?”

The new question is: “What can I give to others?” What does the gospel do to a person who once lived by taking? It begins making that person a giver. Is work only about earning enough for ourselves? No.

Work can also become one of the ways God enables us to bless others. So ask: “Is everything I earn simply about more for me and my family, or do I also ask, ‘Whom can I bless with what God has given me?’”

9. Replace Harmful Words with Words That Build Up Ephesians 4:29

Paul now speaks about our mouths. Does he merely say: “Don't use bad words”? No. What should replace harmful speech? Words that build others up according to their needs and benefit those who listen.

This is very practical. Before speaking, we can ask: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it helpful? Will it build this person up? Is this the right time to say it? Am I saying it in love? What can words do? They can wound - or heal. They can discourage - or strengthen. They can divide - or bring people together. Ask: “After people talk with me, do they usually feel strengthened or weakened?” This applies: at home, in church, on the phone, on WhatsApp, and on social media.

10. Do Not Grieve the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:30

Paul now says something deeply personal: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.” Is the Holy Spirit merely an impersonal power? No. He is the personal Spirit of God. Therefore, sin is not merely: “I broke a rule.” Whom do we grieve by our sin? The God who loved us, made us His own, and sealed us with His Spirit. But is there only a warning in this verse? No.

There is also great assurance. Paul reminds believers that they were: “sealed for the day of redemption.” So what is the basis of our obedience? Is it: “I must live well so that God will finally

accept me"? No. It is: "I already belong to God. Why would I want to grieve the Holy Spirit who lives in me?"

11. From Bitterness to Kindness, Compassion, and Forgiveness Ephesians 4:31-32

Finally, Paul gives a powerful contrast between the old life and the new life. What should we put away? Bitterness. Rage. Anger. Brawling. Slander. Malice. What should replace them? Kindness. Compassion. Forgiveness. But why should we forgive? Simply because forgiveness is a good habit? That is true, but Paul gives a much deeper reason: "Forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." When forgiving someone is difficult, should our first question be: "Does this person deserve my forgiveness?"

There is a deeper question: "How much has God forgiven me in Christ?" What does forgiveness not mean? It does not mean calling evil good. It does not mean pretending nothing happened. It does not mean that boundaries are never necessary. It does not mean justice is unnecessary. It does not mean church discipline can never be necessary. What, then, does Christian forgiveness involve? Giving up personal revenge and extending to others something of the grace we ourselves have received.

How Does the Whole Passage Fit Together?

Where does the old life begin? In wrong thinking. How does transformation happen?

Put off the old self ◎ Renew your mind with God's truth ◎ Put on the new self

Then Paul gives practical examples: Falsehood ◎ Truth Sinful anger ◎ Seek resolution Stealing ◎ Honest work ◎ Generosity Harmful speech ◎ Words that build up Bitterness ◎ Kindness ◎ Compassion ◎ Forgiveness Notice something important.

The goal is not merely to stop sinning. The old behavior must be replaced with a Christlike way of living.

Application

This passage gives us a very useful pattern for Christian transformation: Put off ◎ Renew ◎ Put on What does this look like in everyday life? Do not merely stop lying. Start speaking truth. Do not merely stop stealing. Work honestly and become generous. Do not merely stop angry words. Deal with the anger in your heart. Do not merely stop harmful speech. Speak words that build others up. Do not hide bitterness inside. Put on kindness, compassion, and forgiveness.

Christian growth does not mean becoming better at hiding our old nature. It means Christ changing us from the inside out. So ask two questions: "What old garment am I still wearing?" And then: "What Christlike quality should replace it?"

Gospel Connection

Where do we find one of the key gospel statements in this passage? At the end: "Just as in Christ God forgave you." Why do we forgive? Because we have been forgiven. Why do we speak truth? Because we belong to Christ and to His body. Why should our lives change? So that God will finally accept us? No. Because in Christ, God has already made us His own and given us new life.

The gospel does not say: "Change yourself, and then God will accept you." The gospel says: "In Christ, God has forgiven you and made you new. Now live according to that new identity." The order is very important: Forgiven ◎ Transformed life Not: Transformed life ◎ Forgiven

Bible Study Questions - 8

1. According to Ephesians 4:17–19, what does Paul say about the old way of life? How are wrong thinking, a hardened heart, sinful desires, and sinful behavior connected?
2. What do the words “That is not the way you learned Christ” and “truth is in Jesus” (4:20–21) teach us about the Christian life? Who or what is our final standard for truth?
3. What three movements does Paul describe in 4:22–24? Explain in your own words: Put off © Renew © Put on
4. In 4:25–28, what new behaviors should replace lying, sinful anger, and stealing? How deep is the transformation of the person who used to steal?
5. According to 4:29, how should our speech change? What questions can we ask ourselves before speaking?
6. What does “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit” (4:30) teach us about sin and our relationship with God? What assurance does the same verse give us?
7. According to 4:31–32, what must be put away, and what qualities should replace them? Why should Christians forgive others?
8. Apply this passage personally. What old thought, habit, or behavior do you need to put off? What lie behind it needs to be rejected? What truth of God should renew your thinking? What Christlike quality should you put on instead?

Help for Leaders - Each Question

Do not give these answers to the group immediately. First, let them read the passage. Allow them to observe the text and answer in their own words. Use these notes only when necessary.

Question 1 · How Does the Old Life Work?

What does Paul begin with? Not behavior. The mind. Help the group notice this progression: Darkened thinking © Hardened heart © Sinful desires © Sinful behavior When dealing with sin, do not stop with: “What did I do?” Also ask: “What did I believe?” “What did I want?” “What did I believe this sin would give me?” Ask further: “Why must our thinking change if our behavior is going to change deeply?”

Question 2 · Learning Christ

Christianity is not merely a collection of rules. Who is at its center? Jesus Christ. What is not our final standard of truth? Our feelings. Culture. Majority opinion. Popularity. Our final standard is: Christ and the Word of God. Ask: “If society says one thing and God’s Word says another, which one should shape our lives?”

Question 3 · Put Off, Renew, Put On

This is the main discipleship pattern of the lesson: Put off © Renew © Put on For example: Put off lying © Renew your mind with the truth that God is truthful and that you belong to Christ’s body © Begin speaking truth. Transformation does not stop at: “Don’t do this.” Something new must replace the old. Ask: “What may happen if we stop a sinful habit but never replace it with a new godly pattern?”

Question 4 · Replace the Old with the New

Help the group identify these contrasts: Falsehood ☉ Truth Sinful anger ☉ Deal with it rather than feeding it Stealing ☉ Honest work ☉ Sharing with those in need Pay special attention to 4:28. The person changes from: A taker ☉ A worker ☉ A giver This is more than stopping bad behavior. The direction of the heart is changing. Ask: "How does the gospel change the question 'What can I get?' into 'What can I give?'"

Question 5 · Words That Build Up

The goal is not simply to avoid bad language. What should our words do? Build up those who listen. Remember these questions: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it helpful? Is it loving? Is this the right time to say it? Ask for examples from home, church, WhatsApp, or social media. Ask further: "Can something be true but still hurt someone because we say it at the wrong time or in the wrong way?"

Question 6 · Grieving the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is not merely a power. He is the personal Spirit of God. Therefore, sin is not merely breaking a rule. It grieves the God who has made us His own. But notice the assurance: We have been sealed for the day of redemption. Our obedience is not an attempt to earn God's acceptance. We obey because we already belong to Him. Ask: "How does our view of sin change when we see it not merely as 'doing something wrong,' but as something that affects our relationship with God?"

Question 7 · From Bitterness to Forgiveness

Place the two lists side by side. Put off: Bitterness. Rage. Anger. Brawling. Slander. Malice. Put on: Kindness. Compassion. Forgiveness. Why does Paul say we should forgive? "Just as in Christ God forgave you." Did we earn God's forgiveness? No. We received it by grace. Therefore: Grace received ☉ Grace extended Forgiveness does not mean approving wrongdoing. Where necessary, there may still need to be boundaries, justice, accountability, or church discipline. Ask: "If we only ask whether the other person deserves forgiveness, what part of the gospel are we forgetting?"

Question 8 · Personal Application

Do not settle for a general answer such as: "I need to live a better life." Use these three questions: 1. What old thing must I put off? 2. What lie behind it must I reject, and what truth of God must renew my thinking? 3. What new Christlike quality or habit must I put on? For example: Put off bitterness ☉ Remember that God has forgiven me greatly in Christ ☉ Put on kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. Another example: Put off lying ☉ Remember that my security is not found in hiding the truth but in God ☉ Begin speaking truthfully.

Important Things for Leaders to Remember

1. **Renewing the Mind Is Not Positive Thinking** It does not mean simply telling ourselves: "Everything will be fine." It means allowing God's truth to reshape our thinking.
2. **Forgiveness Does Not Mean Calling Evil Good** It does not mean pretending nothing happened. It does not remove every necessary boundary. It does not reject justice. But we should not continue holding on to personal revenge.
3. **Not All Anger Is Sin** But what must govern our anger? Truth, love, and self-control. Feeding anger and allowing it to grow into bitterness leads toward sin.
4. **Christian Transformation Is Not Merely Suppression — It Is Replacement** This is one of the

main truths of the passage: Stop lying ☉ Speak truth Stop stealing ☉ Work and share Stop harmful speech ☉ Speak words that build up Put away bitterness ☉ Put on kindness, compassion, and forgiveness So keep returning to the pattern: Put off the old ☉ Renew your mind with God's truth ☉ Put on the new

Main Truth for Leaders to Remember

The gospel does not only change what we do. It also changes: how we think, what we desire, and the kind of people we are becoming. God has forgiven us in Christ. He has given us new life. He has sealed us with His Spirit. Therefore, we should not continue wearing the clothes of the old life. We are called to put on the new. Have the group repeat these three words at the end: Put off ☉ Renew ☉ Put on

Final Question

Because God has forgiven me in Christ and made me new: What old way of thinking or living am I still holding on to? What lie behind it do I need to reject? And what new, Christlike way of life should I put on in its place?

Walk in Love, Light, and Wisdom

Context

Do you remember what Paul said at the end of Ephesians 4? “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32). Now in chapter 5, Paul continues the same thought. God has loved us in Christ. He has forgiven us. He has made us His children. So what is the question now? What should the daily life of God’s children look like? In this passage, Paul describes the Christian life as a “walk.” Walking is not something we do only once. We keep taking one step after another. In the same way, the Christian life is not merely a few hours of experience on Sunday. It should be seen in our everyday: words, desires, relationships, use of time, choices, worship, and behavior.

We can remember this passage with four words: Love • Light • Wisdom • Spirit-filled life

1. Imitate God as Dearly Loved Children Ephesians 5:1-2

What does Paul say first? “Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children.” Notice the order. Does Paul say: “Imitate God so that He will love you”? No. What are they already? Dearly loved children. Therefore, they should now become more like their heavenly Father. Do children not often imitate their parents? They pick up their words, habits, attitudes, and behavior. So what should be seen in us as God’s children? Love. Kindness. Forgiveness. Holiness. Who is the greatest example of this love? Christ. Paul says: “Walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.” Is biblical love merely a warm feeling? No. Love gives. Love sacrifices. Love seeks the good of others. Did Jesus merely say: “I love you”? No. He gave Himself for us. So how should our love be seen? Only in words? No. Also in actions. Ask: “If I say I love someone, what am I willing to give or sacrifice for that person’s good?”

2. Love Is Not Lust Ephesians 5:3-7

Immediately after speaking about Christ’s sacrificial love, what does Paul discuss? Sexual immorality, impurity, and greed. Why? Because there is a great difference between true love and selfish lust. Remember it simply: Love asks: “What can I do for your good?” Lust asks: “What can I get from you for my satisfaction?” Love gives. Lust seeks to take. Greed also says: “I want more.” Is Paul speaking only about bodily behavior? No. He also speaks about our words: obscene talk, foolish talk, and crude joking. These are not fitting for those who belong to Christ. What should replace them? Thanksgiving. So what should the gospel change? Only our Sunday worship? No. It should change: our bodies, our desires, our words, our humor, our attitude toward money, and our relationships. Ask: “Just because society accepts something, does that make it right in God’s sight? Or do we belong to Christ and therefore live by a different standard?”

3. Once Darkness - Now Light in the Lord Ephesians 5:8 -10

Paul uses very strong language: “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.” Notice what he does not merely say. He does not say only: “You once walked in darkness.” He says: “You were darkness.” But now? “You are light in the Lord.” Again we see the same order: Identity first • behavior follows Did God make us light because of our good works? No. Our

identity has changed in the Lord. Therefore, how should we now live? As children of light. What is the fruit of light? Paul gives three things: Goodness. Righteousness. Truth. Then he gives a very practical instruction: "Find out what pleases the Lord." What questions do we often ask when making decisions? "Is this allowed?" "Is everyone doing it?" "Can I do this without anyone knowing?" "Is this illegal?" Are those questions enough? No. There is a better question: "Does this please the Lord?" The Christian life should not be guided only by: "How close can I get to sin without crossing the line?" But by: "How can I please my Lord?"

4. Light Exposes Darkness Ephesians 5:11-14

Paul says: "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them." What does light do? It makes hidden things visible. A room may look fine in the dark. What happens when the light is switched on? The dirt becomes visible. In the same way, God's light exposes what is hidden in our lives. Does this mean: "Go around looking for other people's sins"? No. Where should the light shine first? Into our own lives. So the first question is not: "What darkness should I expose in others?" But: "Is there anything in my own life that I do not want brought into God's light?" Is there something we want to hide? On our phone? In our relationships? In our finances? In our thoughts? In our speech? Verse 14 gives a wake-up call. Can a believer become spiritually sleepy? Yes. We can become careless. We can live on spiritual autopilot. We can lose sensitivity toward sin. So the call is: Wake up. Live in the light of Christ.

5. Walk Carefully and Wisely Ephesians 5:15-17

Paul now moves from love and light to what? Wisdom. He says: "Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise." What is wisdom according to the Bible? Knowing a lot of information? Having many degrees? Speaking intelligently? Those things may be useful, but biblical wisdom is more than that. Biblical wisdom means: Knowing God's truth and living according to it. So what does Paul immediately say? "Making the most of every opportunity." Why is time so important? Lost money may sometimes be earned again. A lost possession may be replaced. But can yesterday's hour ever return? No. So where is our time going? Do we know? Or are our phones, videos, meaningless conversations, and careless habits quietly consuming it? Does making good use of time mean reading the Bible every minute? No. We need rest. We need sleep. We need family time. We need work. Healthy recreation also has a place. The question is: "Am I using my time intentionally, or is it simply slipping away?"

6. Understand the Lord's Will Ephesians 5:17

Paul says: "Do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is." When we hear the words "God's will," what do we often think about first? "What job should I take?" "Whom should I marry?" "Which city should I live in?" "Should I do this or not?" These are important questions. But is God's will limited to those decisions? No. God has already clearly revealed many things in His Word: holiness, love, truth, thanksgiving, forgiveness, service, wisdom, and Christlike character. What do we sometimes do? We become very interested in discovering God's hidden will. But what about the will He has already revealed? We may ignore it. So before asking: "What more does God need to tell me?" we should ask: "What has God already told me that I am not obeying?"

7. Do Not Get Drunk · Be Filled with the Spirit Ephesians 5:18

Paul now gives a strong contrast: "Do not get drunk on wine... Instead, be filled with the Spirit."

Why does he compare these two things? The main idea is influence and control. Can alcohol influence a person? Yes. It can affect: thinking, speech, judgment, and behavior. Who should influence and direct the believer? The Holy Spirit. Does being filled with the Spirit mean only having a special emotional experience? No. How should it appear in everyday life? Our thinking should change. Our speech should change. Our decisions should change. Our attitudes should change. Our relationships should change. Our behavior should change. The influence of the Holy Spirit should touch the whole of life. So ask: "What is controlling me?" My anger? My desires? My fears? Other people's opinions? My habits? Money? The desire for praise? Or am I living under the influence of the Holy Spirit?

8. What Does a Spirit-Filled Life Look Like? Ephesians 5:19-21

Does Paul say: "Be filled with the Spirit" and then stop? No. He immediately shows what the result looks like. Worship Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. A Spirit-filled life is marked by worship shaped by God's truth. Heartfelt Praise Singing and making music from the heart to the Lord. Is worship only with the mouth? No. The heart should also be involved. Thanksgiving Giving thanks to God the Father. Only occasionally? No. Thanksgiving should become a way of life. Humility in Relationships "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Here is an important point. How do we recognize a Spirit-filled person? Only by how emotional that person sounds? Is that the only test? No. Paul points us to the fruit. Is the person becoming more thankful? More humble? More loving? More Christ-centered? More respectful toward others? So ask: "If I say I am filled with the Spirit, can others see the Spirit's influence in my words, attitudes, relationships, and decisions?"

9. Submit to One Another Out of Reverence for Christ Ephesians 5:21

How does Paul end this section? "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." This verse becomes the doorway into Paul's teaching about marriage, family, and other relationships. How should Christian relationships not operate? "My rights." "My way must win." "I must have the final word." "No one should question me." Not with that kind of pride. Why? Because who is Lord over all of us? Christ. Therefore, we should: respect one another, serve one another, and seek one another's good. Does this mean everyone has exactly the same role in every relationship? No. In the following verses, Paul explains different responsibilities. But what heart should lie behind all Christian relationships? Reverence for Christ ☉ humility and service toward one another

How Does the Whole Passage Fit Together?

Let us follow the flow. Who are we? God's dearly loved children. Therefore? Imitate the Father. How? Walk in Christlike love. What should we leave behind? Impurity, lust, greed, and corrupt speech. What is our new identity? Light in the Lord. Therefore? Live as children of light. How? In goodness, righteousness, and truth. Then? Walk wisely. What does that mean? Use your time well. Understand the Lord's will. Who should control and influence us? The Holy Spirit. What is the result? Worship. Praise. Thanksgiving. Humility. Healthy relationships. Remember: Love ☉ Light ☉ Wisdom ☉ Spirit-filled life Or: Who am I? ☉ How am I walking? ☉ What is controlling me? ☉ What fruit is visible in my life?

Application

This passage helps us examine our everyday lives. Am I walking in love? Am I thinking only about my own interests? Or am I also seeking the good of others? Am I walking in the light? Is there an area of my life that I do not want brought into God's light? Am I walking wisely? Where

is my time going? Am I making good use of the opportunities God gives me? Am I seeking God's will? If so, am I obeying what He has already clearly revealed? What is controlling me? My desires? Anger? Fear? Other people's opinions? Or the influence of the Holy Spirit? Where should Christian maturity be seen? In our words. In our humor. In sexual purity. In the use of time. In thanksgiving. In worship. In decisions. In relationships.

Gospel Connection

Does this passage begin with how much we love Christ? No. Where does it begin? With how much Christ has loved us. "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us" (5:2). That is the foundation. Does Christ love us because we walk in love? No. He loved us first. Therefore, we love. Do we become light by doing enough good works? No. In the Lord, He has already made us light. Therefore, we live as children of light. Do we earn salvation by living wisely? No. Because we belong to Christ, we now desire to live in a way that pleases Him. Can we produce a Spirit-filled life through our own strength? No. God has given us His Holy Spirit to transform us into the character of Christ. So what does the gospel not say? "Live well, and then God will accept you." What does the gospel say? "Christ loved you and gave Himself for you. Now, as God's dearly loved child, walk in love, live in the light, walk wisely, and live under the influence of the Holy Spirit."

Bible Study Questions - 8

1. According to Ephesians 5:1–2, why should we imitate God? Why are the words "dearly loved children" important? What is distinctive about the love Christ showed?
2. In 5:3–7, what does Paul present as the opposite of love? What is the difference between love and lust? Why does holiness matter in our bodies, desires, speech, and humor?
3. According to 5:8–14, what does "once darkness, but now light in the Lord" mean? What should the life of a child of light look like? Before exposing darkness in others, what question should we ask ourselves?
4. How can the principle "find out what pleases the Lord" (5:10) guide our everyday decisions? How is this deeper than merely asking, "Is this allowed?"
5. According to 5:15–17, what does it mean to walk wisely, make the most of our time, and understand the Lord's will? What role does Scripture have in understanding God's will?
6. Why does Paul contrast being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit in 5:18? What does being filled with the Spirit mean? What is controlling my life?
7. According to 5:19–21, what fruit should be seen in a Spirit-filled life? How do worship, thanksgiving, humility, and relationships reveal spiritual maturity?
8. Explain this passage using the sequence: Love • Light • Wisdom • Spirit-filled life. Which area of your life needs the most attention right now? What one clear step can you take this week?

Help for Leaders - Each Question

Do not give the answers immediately. First encourage the group to read the passage carefully, observe the text, and answer in their own words. Use short questions such as: "Which verse says that?" "Which comes first here—identity or behavior?" "What does Paul replace with something better?" "What would this look like in everyday life?" "What can we change this week?"

Question 1 · Dearly Loved Children and Sacrificial Love

Ask the group to notice the phrase: “Dearly loved children.” We do not imitate God in order to earn His love. We reflect His character because we are already loved as His children. How does love appear in 5:2? Christ gave Himself. Therefore biblical love is: not merely emotion, not merely words, but sacrificial love that seeks the good of another person.

Ask: ·What is my love actually costing me?·

Question 2 · Love and Lust

Keep the contrast simple: Love — seeks your good. Lust — uses you for my satisfaction. Greed moves in the same selfish direction: “I want more.” Do not limit purity only to physical actions. It also includes: desires, speech, humor, and relationships.

Ask: “Does something become holy simply because our culture has made it normal?”

Question 3 · From Darkness to Light

Notice the order: Not: Live well ☉ become light. But: You are light in the Lord ☉ therefore live as children of light. The fruit of light is: Goodness ☉ Righteousness ☉ Truth Do not use “expose the darkness” as an excuse to search for other people’s sins. The first question is: “Is there something in my own life that I do not want brought into the light?”

Ask further: “Can we be very clear about other people’s sins while remaining blind to our own?”

Question 4 · Pleasing the Lord

The Bible may not give a direct verse for every decision. So do not ask only: “Is this wrong?” or “Am I allowed to do this?” Also ask: “Does this please the Lord?” “Does it fit with goodness, righteousness, and truth?” This is not an attempt to earn salvation. It is the desire of people who already belong to the Lord.

Ask: “How does moving from ‘Is this sinful?’ to ‘Does this please the Lord?’ change our decisions?”

Question 5 · Wisdom, Time, and God’s Will

Wisdom means: Knowing God’s truth and living according to it. Making good use of time does not mean filling every minute with religious activity. It means living intentionally. Rest, work, family, sleep, and service all have a proper place. Do not limit God’s will to questions such as: jobs, marriage, or where to live. God has already revealed His will in Scripture concerning: holiness, love, truth, thanksgiving, forgiveness, and service.

Ask: “While I am asking God to reveal more, what has He already revealed that I am not obeying?”

Question 6 · Being Filled with the Spirit

The key idea is: Influence or control. Alcohol can influence a person’s: thoughts, speech, judgment, and behavior. Who should influence the believer? The Holy Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is not merely one emotional experience. It should be seen in our: thinking, speech, decisions, attitudes, relationships, and behavior.

Ask: “When difficulty comes, what directs me most—the Holy Spirit, or my anger, fear, and desires?”

Question 7 · The Fruit of a Spirit-Filled Life

Paul immediately points to several things: Worship ☉ Heartfelt praise ☉ Thanksgiving ☉ Humble relationships Therefore, do not measure spirituality only by dramatic experiences. Look at the

fruit. Is the person becoming: more thankful? more humble? more loving? more respectful? more Christ-centered?

Ask: “Why are our relationships such an important test of the Holy Spirit’s influence?”

Question 8 · Personal Application

Have the group repeat the four words: Love ☉ Light ☉ Wisdom ☉ Spirit-filled life Then help each person identify one area needing attention. For example: speech, humor, sexual purity, relationships, use of time, thanksgiving, decision-making, phone habits, or social media.

Finally ask: ·What one clear step will you take this week?·

Important Things for Leaders to Remember

1. “Imitate God” This does not mean that we can imitate God’s unique divine attributes. In this context, His: love, kindness, forgiveness, and holiness should be reflected in us.
2. “Expose the Darkness” Do not use this as permission for harsh, self-righteous criticism. First: Let our own lives come into God’s light.
3. “Understand the Lord’s Will” This does not mean looking for mysterious signs for every small decision. Many aspects of God’s will are already clearly revealed in Scripture. Therefore: Obedience to His revealed will comes first.
4. “Be Filled with the Spirit” Do not reduce this to one emotional experience. Paul immediately connects it with: worship, thanksgiving, humility, and relationships.
5. “Please the Lord” This is not about earning salvation. We already belong to God in Christ. Therefore: We do not live to gain acceptance — we live as people who have already been accepted in Christ.

Main Truth for Leaders to Remember

At the end of the discussion, help the group repeat this sequence: We have been loved by Christ ☉ therefore we walk in love ☉ we live as light in the Lord ☉ we use our time and lives wisely ☉ we live under the influence of the Holy Spirit ☉ and His influence becomes visible in our worship, thanksgiving, speech, and relationships. The Christian life is not merely: “Do not commit certain sins.” It is a new life that reflects: the love of Christ, the light of God, the wisdom of Scripture, and the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Final Question

If someone watched my ordinary life for one week — my words, private choices, relationships, use of time, humor, reactions, and priorities — would they be able to say: “This person is walking in love, in the light, in wisdom, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit”?

A Marriage That Reflects Christ and the Church

Context

Do you remember what Paul said in Ephesians 5:18? “Be filled with the Spirit.” In the following verses, Paul explains what a Spirit-filled life looks like: in worship, in thanksgiving, in humility, and in relationships. Now Paul turns to one of our closest relationships — marriage. Sometimes this passage is discussed mainly around questions such as: “Who has authority?” “Who should submit to whom?” But Paul gives us a much bigger picture. Who is at the center of this passage? Not the husband. Not the wife. Christ. A Christian marriage should be a small picture of something much greater. What should the husband’s sacrificial love reflect? Christ’s love for the church. What should the wife’s loving respect reflect? The church’s response to Christ. Remember the flow: Christ at the center ☉ Respect ☉ Sacrificial love ☉ Care ☉ One flesh ☉ Christ and the church ☉ A picture of the gospel

1. Marriage Begins Under the Lordship of Christ Ephesians 5:21-22

Should we begin this teaching only with verse 22? No. First notice verse 21: “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Who stands above all these relationships? Christ. Paul then addresses wives and tells them to submit to their husbands as to the Lord. But what does submission mean? Does it mean the wife has less value? No. Is she less intelligent? No. Is she spiritually inferior? No. In whose image were both husband and wife created? In the image of God. Therefore both have human dignity and value. What important phrase should we notice? “As to the Lord.” A wife’s respect for her husband ultimately belongs within her obedience to whom? Christ. Does the husband have independent, absolute authority? No. The husband is also under the authority of Christ. Therefore, the first question in marriage should not be: “What are my rights?” A better question is: “How can our marriage honor Christ?”

2. The Husband Is Called to Christlike Leadership Ephesians 5:23

Paul describes the husband as the head of the wife. Should we define “head” merely according to our culture? No. According to our personal preferences? No. Whom should we look at? Christ. How does Christ use His authority? Does He frighten His people? Humiliate them? Force them for His selfish benefit? Does He selfishly say: “I am Lord, so everything must happen my way”? No. Where does Paul immediately take us? To Christ’s sacrificial love. Therefore biblical leadership does not mean: “I am the husband, so whatever I say must happen.” Christlike leadership asks: “How can I use the responsibility God has given me for the good of my wife and family?” What does authority look like in Christ’s hands? Service. Responsibility. Protection. Care. Sacrifice. Not selfish control. A husband should therefore ask: “Does my leadership suppress my family, or does it serve their good?”

3. Wives · Submit with Respect Ephesians 5:22-24

Paul calls wives to respect the responsibility God has given their husbands. But this submission is always under whose higher authority? Christ’s authority. Can any husband take the place of God? No. Does a husband have the right to tell his wife to sin? No. Does submission mean that a wife must silently endure: violence, threats, humiliation, coercion, or serious abuse? No. This passage

does not teach fearful slavery. What picture does Paul give? The loving response of the church to Christ. Therefore submission does not come from inferiority. Neither should it come from fear. It should involve: respect, order, trust, and obedience to Christ. A wife may ask: "Do my words, attitude, and responses show respect toward my husband?" And more deeply: "Does my marriage relationship reflect my reverence for Christ?"

4. Husbands · Love as Christ Loved the Church Ephesians 5:25

Now notice the very high standard Paul gives husbands: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." When should a husband love his wife? Only when she agrees with him? No. Only when she respects him? No. Only when married life is easy? No. What is the standard? "As Christ loved the church." How did Christ love? He gave Himself up for her. Therefore Christlike love is not convenient love. It is: costly love, sacrificial love, giving love, love that seeks the good of the other person. So a husband's first question should not be: "Is my wife respecting me?" He should first ask: "Does my love resemble the sacrificial love of Christ?" What do my time, words, decisions, listening, service, and sacrifices reveal?

5. Christ's Love Seeks Our True Good Ephesians 5:26-27

Why did Christ give Himself for the church? Simply to make His people immediately comfortable? No. He desires to make His church holy. Christ's love therefore seeks more than our temporary comfort. It seeks our true and ultimate good. This gives us an important principle for marriage. True love does not ask only: "How can I keep my spouse happy with me?" It asks a deeper question: "How can I help my spouse grow closer to Christ?" Husbands and wives should help one another grow in: prayer, God's Word, forgiveness, holiness, service, and spiritual maturity. Is marriage only about companionship? No. It is also a place for mutual spiritual growth. Ask: "Is my influence helping my spouse grow closer to Christ, or making spiritual growth more difficult?"

6. Love Your Wife as Your Own Body Ephesians 5:28-30

Paul now uses another picture. How should a husband love his wife? As his own body. Why? Because marriage creates a deep unity between two people. What do we normally do with our bodies? We feed them. Care for them. Attend to them when they are hurt. Give them rest when they are weak. In the same way, a husband should lovingly nourish and care for his wife. Does this mean only earning money for the family? No. It can also include: listening, understanding, encouraging, protecting, serving, expressing love, praying, carrying responsibilities, and caring for the health of the relationship. What is contrary to Christlike love? Neglect. Humiliation. Threats. Indifference. Selfishness. A husband may ask: "Does my presence make my wife feel loved, valued, and cared for?"

7. ·The Two Will Become One Flesh· Ephesians 5:31

Paul now reminds us of Genesis 2:24: "The two will become one flesh." What is marriage? Simply two people living in the same house? No. Simply raising children together? No. Marriage is a deep covenant union established by God. The husband and wife may have different: family backgrounds, personalities, habits, strengths, and weaknesses. Yet they learn to build a life of "we" rather than merely "me." Where should this one-flesh unity be seen? In: time, money, sexual intimacy, decisions, family responsibilities, suffering, joy, priorities, and future plans. Marriage therefore challenges selfishness. The old question is: "What do I want?" The new question

becomes: “What is good for us?” Does “one flesh” mean losing individuality? No. It is not the destruction of personality. It is a deep and committed relational unity.

8. Marriage Points to Something Greater Ephesians 5:32

Paul now makes one of the most remarkable statements in this passage: “This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.” So is Paul ultimately speaking only about marriage? No. He is speaking about Christ and His church. This is the deeper meaning of the passage. What should Christian marriage show? The husband’s faithful, sacrificial love should point to Christ’s love for His church. The wife’s loving and respectful response should point to the church’s response to Christ. Does marriage therefore have a gospel purpose? Yes. Marriage is not only for the private happiness of two people. It can display: covenant faithfulness, sacrificial love, forgiveness, repentance, grace, and faithfulness. Must our marriages be perfect? No. But even imperfect marriages can point people toward the perfect Christ. Ask: “When others see the way we treat one another, can they see something of Christ and His church?”

9. Love and Respect Ephesians 5:33

Paul ends this teaching with a simple summary: Husband — Love. Wife — Respect. But how should we not use this verse? As a weapon against each other. Should the husband merely say: “The Bible says you must respect me!” No. Should the wife merely say: “The Bible says you must love me!” No. Whom should each person examine first? Themselves. The better question is: “What is Christ calling me to do, and am I doing it?” This passage should not become a weapon in our hands. It should become a mirror. Before examining our spouse’s failures, we should examine our own hearts.

10. Christlike Leadership Is Not Control

This passage uses words such as “head” and “submit.” Therefore, something must be made very clear. Christlike leadership never gives permission for abuse. What is not Christlike leadership? Domination. Threats. Humiliation. Emotional manipulation. Violence. Financial control. Sexual coercion. Spiritual abuse. Why? Did Christ lead His church in these ways? No. Using Scripture to justify selfish control is not biblical leadership. The biblical model is not: “I have authority, so you must do whatever I say.” It is: “How can I use the responsibility God has entrusted to me to serve, protect, care for, and seek the good of the other person?” That is Christlike leadership.

How Does the Whole Passage Fit Together?

Where did this teaching begin? With the Spirit-filled life. How does that life appear in relationships? In reverence for Christ. Then? In relationships marked by respect. What is the husband called to? Christlike sacrificial love. What does that love look like? Care, service, and seeking the other person’s good. What is the deep unity of marriage? One flesh. And what should this whole picture ultimately point to? Christ and the church. Remember: Christ at the center

◎ Respect ◎ Sacrificial love ◎ Care ◎ One flesh ◎ A picture of the gospel

Application

Before applying this passage to our spouse, what should we do? Examine ourselves. Before asking: “Is my spouse obeying this passage?” Ask: “Am I?” Husbands can ask: Is my leadership selfish or sacrificial? What does my wife experience from me? Love? Security? Respect? A listening heart? Service? Christlike care? Wives can ask: Do my words communicate respect? Does my attitude encourage? Are my responses wise? Does my marriage relationship show my obedience

to Christ? Both can ask: “Is our marriage helping both of us become more like Christ?” Is a Christian marriage perfect? No. Why? The husband is a sinner. The wife is also a sinner. Therefore, what does marriage need every day? Grace. Repentance. Forgiveness. Truth. Service. Faithfulness. Love.

Gospel Connection

The deepest message of this passage is not merely: “How can we have a good marriage?” What is the greater message? Christ and the church. Paul says: “Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (5:25). Where does that take us? To the cross. Did Christ love the church because His people were already perfect? No. Did He wait until they became worthy of His love? No. What did He do? He loved. He gave Himself. This is the great pattern for Christian marriage. It is not about demanding. It is not about controlling. It is not about keeping score: “I did this much. What have you done?” Instead: Give ☉ Serve ☉ Forgive ☉ Seek the other person’s good ☉ Remain faithful. Our marriages will always be imperfect. But whom can they point to? Jesus Christ, the perfect Bridegroom. He loved His people. He gave Himself for them. Therefore, the main question of this passage is not simply: “Who has authority?” The greater question is: “Does the way we live together show something of how Christ loves His church and how the church responds to Christ?”

Bible Study Questions - 8

1. Who is at the center of the teaching on marriage in Ephesians 5:21–33? How does “reverence for Christ” in 5:21 help us understand the whole passage?
2. What does a wife’s submission in 5:22–24 mean? How can we understand clearly that it does not mean inferiority, fear, blind obedience, or silently enduring abuse?
3. According to 5:23–25, what does Christlike leadership look like? How is it different from selfish control that says, “I am the husband, so what I say must happen”?
4. What standard does Paul give for a husband’s love in 5:25? What might “gave himself up for her” look like in everyday married life?
5. According to 5:26–30, how does true love seek the genuine good of one’s spouse? How can husbands and wives help one another grow in Christ?
6. What does “the two will become one flesh” (5:31) mean? How should this unity affect money, time, decisions, responsibilities, sexual intimacy, and future plans?
7. According to 5:32–33, what greater truth should Christian marriage display? How can a husband’s love and a wife’s respect reflect Christ and the church?
8. How can we use this passage to examine ourselves rather than to change or accuse our spouse? What is one specific change you can make this week in your words, love, respect, service, or forgiveness?

Help for Leaders - Each Question

First, allow group members to read the passage and answer in their own words. Do not immediately turn the discussion into: “This is what husbands must do.” or “This is what wives must do.” Keep asking: “What is this passage saying to me first?”

Question 1 · Christ at the Center

Do not begin the discussion merely with the husband’s authority or the wife’s submission. Remember the context of 5:18–21: Spirit-filled life ☉ Reverence for Christ ☉ Humility in

relationships Who are the husband and wife before anything else? Disciples of Christ. Who is the final authority in marriage? Christ. Ask further: "If both husband and wife first submit themselves to Christ, how might that change the way they handle disagreements?"

Question 2 · What Does Submission Mean?

Make this clear: Submission does not mean: less value, less intelligence, or lower spiritual status. Both husband and wife are created in God's image. And every human authority is under whose authority? Christ's authority. Therefore, things such as: being commanded to sin, violence, abuse, coercion, and threats cannot be justified in the name of submission. Ask: "What is the difference between obedience produced by fear and a respectful response flowing from obedience to Christ?"

Question 3 · Christlike Leadership

Explain "head" through the example of Christ. What kind of leader is Christ? A serving leader. A sacrificing leader. A protecting leader. A caring leader. Therefore, the husband's leadership is not selfish control. Ask: "How did Christ use His authority? How should that shape the way a husband leads?"

Question 4 · Love That Gives Itself

What is the standard for a husband's love? His wife's behavior? No. Christ's love. What might "giving himself" look like in everyday life? Giving time. Listening. Serving. Giving up selfish preferences. Admitting wrong. Apologizing. Carrying responsibilities. Remaining faithful during difficult seasons. Ask: "Is my Christlike love actually costing me anything?"

Question 5 · Seeking the Spouse's True Good

Christ's love did not seek only the church's comfort. It sought holiness and spiritual good. How can husbands and wives help one another? Pray together. Encourage one another in Scripture. Speak truth with grace. Confess sin. Forgive. Encourage one another in service. But spiritual growth should never become an excuse for controlling another person's conscience. Ask: "Is my life helping my spouse grow in Christ?"

Question 6 · One Flesh

"One flesh" is more than physical union. It is a covenant unity that touches the whole of life. Discuss areas such as: money, time, children, decisions, sexual intimacy, family responsibilities, aging parents, and future plans. Here selfishness is challenged. Ask: "In what area of our marriage does 'mine' need to become 'ours'?"

Question 7 · Marriage as a Gospel Picture

This is one of the central truths of the lesson. Paul says: "I am talking about Christ and the church." What should the husband's love show? Christ's love. What should the wife's respectful response show? The church's response to Christ. What else can marriage display? Faithfulness. Forgiveness. Repentance. Grace. Commitment. Ask: "When people observe our marriage, can they see something of the gospel?"

Question 8 · A Mirror, Not a Weapon

Bring this question to personal application. The husband should ask: "Is my love Christlike and sacrificial?" The wife should ask: "Do my attitude and words show respect and obedience to Christ?" Both should ask: "Does our marriage point others toward Christ?" Encourage each person to choose one specific step: Listen more carefully. Speak respectfully. Apologize. Forgive.

Express appreciation. Serve. Pray together.

Important Things for Leaders to Remember

1. **Submission Does Not Mean Inferiority** Husband and wife have equal human dignity before God. Their roles may differ. Their value does not.
2. **Human Authority Is Never Absolute** Who stands above every human relationship? Christ. Therefore, no one is required to obey something that is contrary to God.
3. **Headship Does Not Mean Domination** Who is the husband's model? Christ, who gave Himself up for His church. Therefore, the mark of Christlike leadership is: sacrifice and service —not merely giving orders.
4. **Love Does Not Mean Allowing Abuse to Continue** True love seeks: truth, holiness, safety, and the genuine good of the other person.
5. **Forgiveness Does Not Cancel Everything Else** Forgiveness does not mean: boundaries are unnecessary, accountability is unnecessary, justice is unnecessary, or appropriate action should never be taken.
6. **Never Hide Serious Abuse Behind Spiritual Language** Where there is violence, coercion, serious abuse, or danger, safety, truth, and appropriate help matter. Never use the command to "submit" to pressure someone into silently enduring serious harm.

Main Truth for Leaders to Remember

Bring the discussion back to this verse: "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." — Ephesians 5:25 The whole passage revolves around this pattern. The husband's calling: Christlike sacrificial love and responsible care. The wife's calling: A loving and respectful response under the lordship of Christ. The calling of both: To live as one flesh under Christ. Whom should their marriage ultimately display? Themselves? No. Christ and the gospel.

Final Question

When others look at our marriage, should they merely say: "They get along well"? Or could they see something greater and say: "There is sacrificial love here. There is respect. There is forgiveness. There is grace. There is faithfulness. This marriage shows us something of the way Christ loves His people."

Christ's Influence at Home and at Work

Context

Do you remember what Paul said in Ephesians 5? "Be filled with the Spirit."

Is a Spirit-filled life seen only in prayer, singing, and church meetings? No.

It should be seen in our closest relationships.

Paul first spoke about husbands and wives. Now he moves to children and parents, and then to workers and masters.

Why?

Because if we want to know what our Christian life is really like, where should we look?

Only at how we behave in church on Sunday? No.

How do we speak at home? How do we treat our children? How do we honor our parents?

How honestly do we work?

How do we treat people under our authority?

All these things reveal something about our spiritual life.

One great truth appears again and again throughout this passage:

Christ is Lord over every relationship. Children are accountable to Him.

Parents are accountable to Him. Workers are accountable to Him.

Employers and leaders are also accountable to Him.

Remember it simply:

Christ at home • Christ in parenting • Christ at work • Christ in the use of authority

1. Children - Obey Your Parents in the Lord Ephesians 6:1-3

Whom is Paul speaking to directly? Children.

What does he say? "Children, obey your parents in the Lord."

Which words are especially important? "In the Lord."

Why should children obey their parents? Simply because their parents are older?

Not only for that reason.

Their obedience is ultimately connected to whom? The Lord Jesus.

Then which commandment does Paul remind them of? "Honor your father and mother."

Notice a small difference between obedience and honor.

Young children and children still under their parents' care should obey them.

But what happens when we become adults?

Must we ask our parents for permission for every decision? No.

But does honor stop? No. Honor continues throughout life.

How might honor look when our parents grow old?

Speaking respectfully. Listening patiently. Giving them time. Expressing gratitude.

Helping them in their needs. Caring for them in weakness.

So we should ask: "As my parents grow older, do my words, patience, time, and attention show that I honor them?"

2. Honor Does Not Mean Obedience to Sin

The words “in the Lord” also teach us something else. Parental authority is real.

But is it absolute? No.

Who stands above parents? Christ.

What if parents clearly ask a child to do something contrary to God’s Word?

Who deserves our highest obedience? God.

But children must also recognize another danger.

Can they reject every instruction they dislike by saying: “God told me something different”? No.

That is not genuine spirituality.

What is the normal biblical pattern? Respectful obedience under the lordship of Christ.

So ask: “Does my obedience come from reverence for Christ, or do I obey my parents only when I agree with them?”

3. Fathers - Do Not Provoke Your Children Ephesians 6:4

Does Paul give responsibilities only to children and then stop? No.

Whom does he address next? Parents, especially fathers.

What does he say? “Do not exasperate your children.”

Does having authority mean parents can behave however they want? No.

Parents are also accountable to God for the way they use their authority.

What are some ways parents may provoke or discourage their children?

Constant criticism. Comparing them with other children. Impossible expectations.

Changing rules constantly. Favoritism. Humiliation. Constant shouting. Excessive punishment.

Refusing to listen. Never recognizing anything good they do.

A child may appear obedient outwardly.

But what may be growing inwardly?

Anger. Fear. Discouragement. Distance.

Parental authority is not God’s permission to pour our anger onto our children.

So when correcting a child, ask: “Am I helping my child grow, or am I simply expressing my frustration?”

4. Discipline Is Not the Same as Punishing in Anger

Does Paul say: “Never correct your children”? No.

What does he say? “Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”

What is the purpose of biblical discipline? To hurt the child? To take revenge? No.

The goal is correction and growth.

The child should understand:

“What did I do wrong?” “Why was it wrong?” “How should I respond differently next time?”

Punishment given in anger says: “You made me angry. Now I will make you suffer.”

Godly discipline asks: “Why was this wrong? How can I help my child understand it? How can I teach my child to respond rightly next time?”

Therefore, correction should be: clear, appropriate, consistent, loving, and without humiliation.

The goal is not merely a child who remains quiet. The goal is a child who grows in wisdom and godliness.

5. Bring Them Up in the Training and Instruction of the Lord Ephesians 6:4

Should Christian parenting be limited to saying:

“Study well.” “Get good marks.” “Get a good job.” “Earn well.”

“Bring a good name to the family”? No.

These things may be important.

But what is the greater goal? Our children should know God.

They should understand His Word. They should understand the gospel clearly.

They should recognize their need for Christ. They should learn to follow Him.

Can parents save their children? No.

Only God can give new birth. Then what can parents do?

Teach. Pray. Model a godly life. Correct with love. Encourage.

Continually point their children to Christ.

So parents should ask: “When I think about my children’s future, am I concerned only about their career, or am I equally concerned about their spiritual life?”

6. Children Learn Not Only from Our Words but Also from Our Lives

Do children learn only from Bible lessons? No.

They watch our lives every day.

How do we speak when we are angry? How do we treat our husband or wife?

How do we use money?

When we are wrong, do we say: “I am sorry. I was wrong”?

Do we forgive others? Do we speak badly about people behind their backs?

Do we pray only when difficulties come?

How do we speak to people who have less status than we do?

What do children learn? Only what we tell them? No.

They also learn from the way we live.

So here is a serious question:

“If my children learned Christianity only by watching my everyday life, what kind of Christian life would they learn?”

7. Workers · Work Honestly as Though Serving Christ Ephesians 6:5-7

Whom does Paul address now?

Slaves and masters in the world of his time. We need to remember something carefully.

The Roman system of slavery should not be treated as exactly the same as modern employment.

Nor should this passage be used to justify slavery.

But do Paul’s principles about work still have important applications today? Yes.

He says: “Just as you would obey Christ.”

And: “Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord.”

So why does a Christian work?

Only for salary? Only for promotion? Only to impress the boss? Only for recognition? No.

Even ordinary work can become service to Christ.

Office work. Cooking. Farming. Teaching. Business. Housework.

Ministry. Whatever our work may be, if we do it faithfully and honestly, whom can we ultimately serve through it? The Lord.

So ask: “Is my view of work centered only on salary, or do I see my work as another way of serving Christ?”

8. Do Not Work Well Only When Someone Is Watching

Paul identifies a particular problem.

What is it? Working well only when people are watching.

How might that appear today?

Looking very busy when the boss is present. Reducing our effort when the boss leaves.

Working carefully only when there is an inspection. Working enthusiastically only when praise is expected. Being lazy when nobody is watching.

Why is this a problem?

Because before whom is our work ultimately done? Christ.

People may not see us. But the Lord sees us.

So here is an important question:

“Who am I when nobody is watching?” Does this apply only to employees? No.

It applies to:

students, homemakers, businesspeople, teachers, farmers, ministry workers, professionals, and everyone else.

When is true faithfulness revealed? Even when nobody is watching.

9. Who Is Really My Master? Ephesians 6:7-8

What if we began each working day by thinking: “Today I am ultimately working for Christ.”

The work may be ordinary. Nobody may notice it. The employer may not praise us.

The customer may not say “thank you.” The salary may seem small.

But who sees? Christ.

Paul reminds us that the Lord sees the good done by His people and will reward faithfully.

This does not mean human appreciation is unimportant. But it does not need to be our main motivation.

So before beginning our work, ask: “If Jesus Christ were receiving this work directly from my hands, how would I do it?”

Would that question change our care, honesty, and quality of work?

10. Working for Christ Does Not Mean Accepting Exploitation

An important balance is needed here. Paul says to work as though serving the Lord.

Does that mean employers can exploit workers however they want? No.

Does Paul speak only to workers? No.

He immediately addresses those who have authority over them. So the gospel does not transform only one side of a relationship. It transforms both workers and employers.

How should the worker behave? Honestly. Diligently. Faithfully.

How should the employer behave? Justly. Respectfully. Humanely.
Does working for Christ mean silently accepting injustice forever? No.
When necessary, there may be appropriate boundaries, proper appeals, and lawful action.
But whatever our situation, our character should continue to reflect Christ.

11. Those in Authority Also Have a Master Ephesians 6:9

Now Paul speaks to masters.

What does he say? "Treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them."

Then he gives a powerful truth: "He who is both their Master and yours is in heaven."

You may be someone's employer. Someone's manager. Someone's pastor. Someone's teacher.
Someone's parent.

But do you also have a Master? Yes. Christ.

Therefore, authority does not ultimately belong to us.

It is a responsibility entrusted to us by God.

How should authority be used? To frighten people?

To use them for our own advantage? To strip them of dignity? No.

A leader should ask:

"One day I will answer to Christ for the way I treat those under my responsibility.

So how should I treat them?" What should this truth produce in leadership? Humility.

Justice. Accountability.

12. God Shows No Favoritism

Paul adds another important truth: God shows no favoritism.

How does society often measure people?

By money. Position. Education. Caste. Social status. Influence.

But does God measure people that way? No.

The person cleaning an office and the owner of the company must both stand before whom?

The same Lord.

Therefore, ordinary work is not worthless work. And human authority is never absolute.

So ask: "Do I treat people differently according to how wealthy, educated, influential, or useful they are to me?"

Every human being has dignity before God.

How Does the Whole Passage Fit Together?

Let us bring Paul's thoughts together.

Children - Honor and obey their parents in the Lord.

Parents - Do not provoke their children, but lovingly raise them in the instruction of the Lord.

Workers - Work honestly as though serving Christ rather than merely people.

Those in Authority - Do not threaten or exploit others, but act justly.

Why? Because everyone has the same Lord.

Remember: Christ at home @ Christ in parenting @ Christ at work @ Christ in the use of authority

Application

Where does this passage bring our Christian faith?

Only into the church building? No.

Into the home. Into the school. Into the office. Into the business. Into the field. Into the kitchen.

Into the shop. Into ministry.

Children should ask: ·Am I honoring my parents?·

Adult children should ask: “As my parents grow older, am I treating them with patience, gratitude, attention, and care?”

Parents should ask: “Am I preparing my children only for exams, careers, and earning money, or am I also helping them know God and follow Christ?”

Workers should ask: ·Do I work well only when someone is watching?·

Employers and leaders should ask: “Do I see people merely as tools for producing results, or as human beings who have dignity before God?”

Where is our spirituality tested? Only in church on Sunday? No.

Our Monday life also reveals our faith.

Gospel Connection

Several expressions appear repeatedly throughout this passage:

“In the Lord.” “As you would obey Christ.” “As if you were serving the Lord.”

“Your Master is in heaven.”

What does this tell us?

Christ is at the center of every relationship.

But do we earn salvation by living this way? No.

What have we already learned in Ephesians 1–3?

We are saved by grace through faith.

Therefore, obedience is not the price of salvation.

It is the fruit of a life that has been saved.

Will God save us because we raise our children well? No.

Do we receive salvation because we work honestly? No.

Do we earn God’s acceptance by becoming good employers? No.

What is the order?

Christ has saved us ☉ Now His character should be seen in our relationships.

Therefore: Christ at home. Christ at work. Christ in our authority.

Bible Study Questions · 8

1. Read Ephesians 6:1–9. Where do you find the words “Lord,” “Christ,” or expressions such as “as to the Lord”? How do these expressions reveal the main truth of the whole passage?
2. According to 6:1–3, what command is given to children? What is the difference between obeying parents while under their care and honoring them throughout life?
3. What does the expression “in the Lord” in 6:1 teach us about parental authority? Does honoring parents mean obeying them even when they clearly tell us to sin?
4. According to 6:4, what warning and responsibility are given to parents? What behaviors can provoke children? What does bringing them up “in the training and instruction of the Lord” look like?
5. Children learn not only from what we say but also from how we live. If your children copied your anger, prayer life, use of money, forgiveness, speech, and relationships, what kind of Christian life would they learn?
6. What principles about work does Paul teach in 6:5–8? What does working “as if you were

- serving the Lord” look like today in employment, education, business, home, or ministry?
7. According to 6:9, how should employers, managers, pastors, teachers, parents, and other leaders use authority? How should the truth “you also have a Master in heaven” transform leadership?
 8. Which part of this passage challenges you most—honoring parents, raising children, working faithfully, or using authority properly? What one specific step can you take this week?

Help for Leaders • Question by Question

First allow the group to read the passage and discover the answers themselves.

Do not immediately give them your answers.

Ask simple questions such as: “Where do you see that in the passage?” “What role does Christ have here?” “Under whose authority is this person?” “What would this look like at home?” “What would this look like at work?”

Question 1 • Christ Is Lord Over Every Relationship

Ask the group to identify expressions such as:

“In the Lord.” “To Christ.” “As to the Lord.” “Your Master is in heaven.”

These expressions are like a thread connecting the whole passage.

The main truth is: Christianity is not only for church meetings. Christ is Lord at home and at work.

Ask further: “If the people who live closest to us cannot see Christ’s influence in us, how genuine is the spirituality we display on Sunday?”

Question 2 • Obedience and Honor

Obedience applies particularly to children who are still under parental care.

But what about honor? It continues throughout life.

How can we honor aging parents? Speaking respectfully. Listening. Giving time. Showing gratitude. Helping when needed.

Ask: “After we become adults, how can honoring our parents continue even though obedience takes a different form?”

Question 3 • In the Lord

Parental authority is given by God. But it is not the highest authority. Christ is the highest authority. Therefore, if parents clearly ask someone to act contrary to God’s Word, the believer’s highest obedience belongs to God.

But children should not use this principle simply to escape instructions they dislike.

Ask: “How can we distinguish genuine obedience to God from selfish rebellion?”

Question 4 • Do Not Provoke Your Children

What may discourage or provoke children?

Constant criticism. Comparison. Favoritism. Inconsistent rules. Impossible expectations.

Humiliation. Shouting. Refusing to listen.

Paul does not merely say: “Do not do these things.”

What does he say? “Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”

This includes: Scripture, prayer, gospel teaching, discipline, conversation, and a godly example.

Ask: “When I correct my child, am I trying to reach the child’s heart and help them grow, or am I merely trying to control behavior?”

Question 5 · A Life Worth Following

Parents teach every day. Not only with words. They teach with their lives.

“Do what I say, not what I do” does not work.

Children observe whether we: admit when we are wrong, ask forgiveness, show kindness, use money wisely, and speak respectfully about others.

Ask: “Will my children remember my anger more than my prayers? What message is my life communicating more loudly than my teaching?”

Question 6 · Work Is Also Service to Christ

Do not treat Roman slavery as identical to modern employment.

But there are clear principles about work: Honesty ☉ Diligence ☉ Wholehearted service

☉ Faithfulness even when nobody is watching

Whom is the Christian ultimately serving? The Lord.

Ask: “If the quality of my work drops whenever my boss is absent, whom am I really working for?”

Question 7 · Those in Authority Also Have a Master

Paul does not correct only workers.

What does he say to masters? “Do not threaten them.”

What should Christian leadership include? Justice. Respect. Listening. Clear expectations.

Humanity. No favoritism.

The main truth is: Every human authority is under Christ’s authority.

Ask: “If I truly believe that the person working under me is valuable before Christ, how will that change the way I speak to that person?”

Question 8 · Personal Application

Do not end merely by saying: “That was a good Bible study.”

Encourage everyone to choose one specific step.

Ask: ·Whom do I need to speak to more respectfully?·

“What behavior toward my children needs to change?”

“Where do I need greater honesty or faithfulness in my work?”

“What needs to change in the way I use authority?”

Then ask: ·What are you actually going to do about it this week?·

Important Points for Leaders

1. Honor Continues; the Form of Obedience Changes
2. When children become adults, they do not necessarily have to obey every parental request. But respect, gratitude, and appropriate care should continue.
3. Parental Authority Is Not Permission for Abuse
4. Immediately after telling children to obey, Paul also warns parents: “Do not exasperate your children.” Authority always carries accountability.
5. Good Christian Parenting Does Not Guarantee Salvation. Parents should faithfully teach the gospel. They should pray. They should model godliness. But who gives new birth? God alone.
6. Do Not Use Ephesians 6:5–9 to Justify Exploitation
7. Workers are called to faithfulness. Those in authority are called to justice. To whom are both accountable? Christ.

Working for Christ Does Not Mean Ignoring Injustice

8. When necessary, there may be:
appropriate boundaries, proper appeals, and lawful action.
Christian faithfulness does not mean giving permission for exploitation.

Main Truth for Leaders to Remember

Bring the discussion back to this truth:

Christ is Lord at home and at work.

Therefore:

Children honor and obey

☉ Parents lovingly nurture

☉ Workers serve faithfully

☉ Leaders use authority humbly

☉ Everyone is accountable to Christ.

Where is Christian maturity truly tested?

Not only in church meetings.

In family life.

In our work ethic.

In the way we treat people.

In the way we use authority.

Final Question

If Christ is truly Lord of my life, could:

my family,

my children,

my parents,

my coworkers,

and those under my authority

look at my words, work, care, honesty, and use of authority and say:

“I can see the influence of Christ in this person’s life”?

Bible Study Lesson 13 Ephesians 6:10-24

The Full Armor of God

Main Theme

Where is our strength in spiritual warfare? Is it in ourselves? In our courage? In our experience? No. Our strength is in the Lord. Therefore, Paul calls us to: Be strong in the Lord ☉ Stand firm ☉ Put on the full armor of God ☉ Pray ☉ Proclaim the gospel boldly

Context

Paul has now come to the end of his letter to the Ephesians. What has he taught so far? He has explained who we are in Christ. He has shown how this new identity should transform our: church life, words, relationships, marriage, family, and work. Now he reminds us of another important reality. Is the Christian life always an easy journey? No. It also involves spiritual warfare. We face difficult circumstances. We encounter difficult people. Temptations come. Discouragement comes. False teaching comes. Fear comes. Division comes. We cannot say that every problem has the same cause. But Paul reminds us that there is also a real spiritual enemy. What does he try to do? To deceive, tempt, accuse, discourage, divide, and lead us away from the truth. How, then, should we stand? Does Paul say: “Make yourself strong”? No. He says: “Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power” (6:10). Remember this passage simply: Be strong ☉ Stand firm ☉ Put on the armor ☉ Pray ☉ Proclaim the gospel

1. Our Strength Is in the Lord Ephesians 6:10-11

What is Paul’s first command? “Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.” Which words are especially important? “In the Lord.” What is Christian strength not? It is not self-confidence. It is not positive thinking. It is not a strong personality. It is not merely the determination that says, “I can do anything.” Where, then, is our strength? In the Lord and in His power. What does Paul say next? “Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” Notice the word “schemes.” Does the enemy always come openly? No. How might he work? Through deception. Through temptation. Through accusation. Through discouragement. Through pride. Through division. Through false teaching. Through bitterness. Through fear. Therefore, the first question is not: “How strong am I?” The better question is: “Am I depending on the Lord’s strength?”

2. Who Is Our Real Enemy? Ephesians 6:12

What does Paul say? “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood.” Does that mean people never cause us problems? No. People may hurt us. They may act unjustly. They may oppose us. But should we see people as our ultimate enemies? No. Who may sometimes appear to be our enemy? Our husband or wife. Another church member. A leader. Someone who disagrees with us. But Paul takes our attention to a deeper spiritual battle. Does this mean we should ignore human sin? No. Should we leave injustice unaddressed? No. When necessary, we may need to: correct, set boundaries, practice church discipline, and seek justice. But we should not live with hatred toward people. So ask: “Am I treating a difficult person as my enemy, or am I responding with truth, love, wisdom, and prayer?”

3. The Spiritual Enemy Is Real • But Christ Is Greater

Paul speaks about rulers, authorities, powers of darkness, and spiritual forces of evil. Does the

Bible treat spiritual evil as imaginary? No. Should we therefore become obsessed with Satan or live in fear of him? No. Why? What has Paul already said in Ephesians 1:21? Christ is far above every rule, authority, power, and dominion. Therefore, the center of this passage is not: "How powerful is the enemy?" The center is: "Be strong in the Lord." Satan is real. But is he equal to God? No. Christ is greater than him. Therefore, our response should not be fear. Neither should it be carelessness. It should be watchful dependence on Christ.

4. Stand Firm Ephesians 6:13

One word appears repeatedly in this passage. What is it? "Stand." "Stand against." "Stand firm." Why? Does Paul mainly picture the Christian as someone running forward to attack the enemy? No. The main picture is a soldier who refuses to abandon the position entrusted to him. When temptation comes? Stand. When false teaching comes? Stand. When suffering comes? Stand. When discouragement comes? Stand. When pressure to compromise comes? Stand. But how? By our own strength? No. With the armor God provides.

The Full Armor of God

5. The Belt of Truth Ephesians 6:14

What did Jesus call the devil? "The father of lies" (John 8:44). Therefore, what do we need in spiritual warfare? Truth. Truth about what? About God. About ourselves. About sin. About Christ. About the gospel. About salvation. About God's promises. What might the enemy say? "God does not care about you." "This sin is not a big problem." "God will not forgive you." "You have completely failed." "God has abandoned you." What should we do then? Should we simply listen to our feelings? No. We must remember God's truth. So ask: "Do I know God's Word well enough to recognize lies when fear, accusation, or temptation comes?"

6. The Breastplate of Righteousness Ephesians 6:14

Righteousness reminds us of two things. First: Our right standing with God through Christ. Why does God accept us? Because of our goodness? No. Because of Christ. Second: What should flow from that relationship? A righteous life. Can we knowingly hold on to sin and still remain spiritually strong? No. Knowingly feeding sin weakens us. Therefore, spiritual warfare is not merely about saying: "Rebuke Satan." Spiritual warfare also includes: Confessing sin. Turning away from sin. Obeying God. Living honestly. Forgiving. Speaking the truth. So ask: "What sin am I still holding on to that God is telling me to leave?"

7. Feet Fitted with the Readiness of the Gospel of Peace Ephesians 6:15

A soldier needs good footwear in order to stand firmly. In the same way, what gives us stability? The gospel. What does the gospel remind us? Through Christ, we have peace with God. Our sins are forgiven. We belong to Him. Our hope is secure in Christ. But Paul also speaks about readiness. Is the gospel only for us? No. We should also be ready to share it with others. So ask: "Am I enjoying the gospel only for myself, or am I ready to share it with someone else?"

8. The Shield of Faith Ephesians 6:16

Paul speaks about "flaming arrows." How might they come today? Fear. Doubt. Temptation. Accusation. Discouragement. Lies about God's character. Does faith mean pretending that problems do not exist? No. Faith says: "Even though I do not fully understand what God is doing, I know who He is. I trust His promises." What is our confidence? Is it: "My faith is very strong"?

No. Our confidence is: "My God is trustworthy." Therefore, in difficulty, we should not ask only: "What is my situation saying?" We should also ask: "Who is God, and what has He promised?"

9. The Helmet of Salvation Ephesians 6:17

What part of the body does a helmet protect? The head. What does assurance of salvation protect? Our thoughts. What might the enemy say? "You have no hope." "Your past defines you." "God has abandoned you." "You cannot be forgiven." What does the gospel say? I belong to Christ. Through Him, my sins are forgiven. God has made me His own. My hope rests in Christ's finished work. Does assurance of salvation depend on our feelings? No. It rests on Christ and His finished work.

10. The Sword of the Spirit · The Word of God Ephesians 6:17

What does Paul clearly say? "Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." How did Jesus respond when He was tempted? "It is written..." He responded with God's Word. Is it enough merely to memorize a few favorite verses? No. Why? When Satan tempted Jesus, did Satan also quote Scripture? Yes. So what is the danger? A verse can be taken out of context and misused. Therefore, we must: read God's Word, understand it, study it in context, and apply it correctly. What does God's Word do? It exposes lies. It corrects error. It renews the mind. It changes our decisions. So ask: "Am I merely carrying the Bible in my hand, or is God's Word truly shaping my mind?"

11. The ·Full· Armor

What does Paul say? Not merely: "The armor of God." He says: "The full armor of God." Why? Can we say: "I pray, so I do not need the Bible"? No. "I know the Word, so I do not need prayer"? No. "I believe the gospel, so holy living is not very important"? No. Everything belongs together: Truth • Righteousness • Gospel • Faith • Salvation • God's Word • Prayer Is this some kind of magical armor? No. It is an ordinary, faithful Christian life filled with the truths of the gospel.

12. Prayer Throughout the Battle Ephesians 6:18

After explaining the armor, what does Paul say? "Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." Is prayer merely a small addition at the end? No. The whole spiritual battle must be surrounded by prayer. When should we pray? At all times. With how many kinds of prayer? With all kinds of prayer. For whom? For all God's people. How? By staying alert and persevering. Should spiritual warfare make us talk more and more about Satan? No. It should make us depend more and more on God. Therefore, prayer is not a sign of spiritual weakness. It is a sign that we are depending on God.

13. What Does ·Pray in the Spirit· Mean?

Is this only a special emotional state? No. Is it only a special method of prayer? No. What does it mean? It means praying with the help of the Holy Spirit, depending on God, and praying in agreement with His Word and purposes. Who inspired God's Word? The Holy Spirit. Would the same Spirit lead us to pray against God's Word? No. Therefore: The Word and prayer must go together. God speaks to us through His Word. We respond to Him in prayer. So ask: "Are my prayers filled with God's Word, or only with my own desires?"

14. Paul Asks for Prayer for Himself Ephesians 6:19-20

Where is Paul? In chains. What prayer might we expect him to request first? "Pray that I will be

released from prison.” That would be a natural request. But what does Paul ask? “Pray that I may proclaim the gospel clearly and boldly.” Is that not surprising? His first concern is not comfort. It is faithful witness. We may pray: “Lord, remove this problem.” That is not wrong. But Paul teaches us another prayer: “Lord, even if this situation does not change immediately, use me faithfully in it.”

15. Spiritual Warfare and Gospel Witness

Is the armor of God only for protecting ourselves? No. It is also connected with gospel witness. The enemy spreads lies. What do believers do? They stand in the truth. The enemy creates fear. What do believers do? They trust God. The enemy divides. What does the gospel do? It creates one body. The enemy binds people with lies. What does the gospel proclaim? Redemption in Christ. Therefore, two things belong together: Standing firm + Proclaiming the gospel. We are not merely to close ourselves off defensively. We must stand in the truth and proclaim Christ.

16. Final Words · Peace, Love, Faith, and Grace

Ephesians 6:21-24

With what words does Paul end the letter to the Ephesians? Peace. Love. Faith. Grace. How did Ephesians begin? With grace. How does it end? With grace. What a beautiful truth! How does the Christian life begin? By grace. How does it continue? By grace. How does it reach its final goal? By grace. Whose power enables us to stand in spiritual warfare? The power God provides.

How Does the Whole Passage Fit Together?

Let us look at the whole flow once more. First? Be strong in the Lord. Then? Recognize the real battle. Then? Stand firm. How? With truth. With righteousness. With the gospel. With faith. With assurance of salvation. With God’s Word. And what else? Pray continually. Then? Proclaim the gospel boldly. Remember it simply: Be strong ◎ Stand firm ◎ Put on the armor ◎ Pray ◎ Proclaim the gospel

Application

The armor of God is not something mysterious or magical. It is closely connected with our daily Christian life. What does putting on the armor of God look like? Know the truth. Do not live by lies. Live righteously. Do not knowingly hold on to sin. Stand firm in the gospel. Remember your identity, forgiveness, and hope in Christ. Trust God. Trust His character more than your circumstances. Remember your salvation. Look to Christ’s finished work rather than your feelings. Know God’s Word. Understand verses in their context. Pray continually. Not only for yourself, but for all God’s people. Share the gospel boldly. Tell others the truth in which you are standing.

Gospel Connection

Who is at the center of this spiritual battle? Are we? No. Christ. Jesus was tempted. What did He do? He remained obedient. How did He answer Satan’s lies? With truth. Then what? He bore our sin on the cross. He died. He rose from the dead. Is Christ still fighting to achieve victory? No.

Through His death and resurrection, He has already won the decisive victory. Therefore, what is Paul not saying? “Achieve victory through your own strength.” What is he saying? “Be strong in the Lord.” The gospel is the ground on which we stand. Remember the whole letter to the Ephesians: We were chosen in Christ. We were redeemed through His blood. We were forgiven. We who were dead in sin were made alive. We were brought near to God. We were made one body. We were sealed with the Holy Spirit. We received hope in Christ. Therefore, in spiritual warfare, we are not fighting to earn a new identity. We are standing in the identity we have already received in Christ.

Bible Study Questions · 8

1. According to Ephesians 6:10–13, where does our strength come from? What does it mean to be strong in the Lord? How is this different from self-confidence or personal determination?
2. What does “our struggle is not against flesh and blood” (6:12) mean? How should this truth change our response to difficult people, conflict, and injustice?
3. Why does Paul repeatedly tell us to stand? What does standing firm look like in temptation, false teaching, suffering, discouragement, and pressure to compromise?
4. How do truth, righteousness, and the gospel of peace in 6:14–15 protect us? What does putting them on look like in daily life?
5. How do the shield of faith and helmet of salvation in 6:16–17 confront fear, doubt, accusation, and discouragement? Is our confidence based on the strength of our faith or on the trustworthy character of God?
6. How should the sword of the Spirit—the Word of God—work in our lives? Why is memorizing a few verses not enough? Why is it important to understand Scripture in context?
7. According to 6:18–20, what place does prayer have in spiritual warfare? How should Paul’s request for boldness to proclaim the gospel, rather than merely for release, change our prayers?
8. What should putting on the full armor of God look like in your life right now? What lie must you confront with truth? What sin must you leave? In what area must you trust God? What prayer habit must change? With whom should you share the gospel?

Help for Leaders · Question by Question

First allow members to read the passage and discover the answers themselves. In this lesson, do not move into excessive speculation about the enemy. Stay with what the passage clearly teaches. Ask simple questions such as: “What is Paul’s first command?” “Where do you find that answer in the passage?” “What is our responsibility here? What does God provide?” “What does God’s truth say to this lie?” “What does this look like in daily life?”

Question 1 · Where Does Our Strength Come From?

Bring the discussion back to the first command: “Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.” Our strength is not: Personality. Self-confidence. Personal determination. Experience. Its source is: The Lord and His power. Ask further: “In difficulty, do I first look at my ability, or do I look to the Lord?”

Question 2 · People Are Not Our Ultimate Enemies

Do not use “not against flesh and blood” to remove human responsibility. When people sin, they are responsible. When necessary, correction, boundaries, discipline, and justice may be needed.

But hatred must not be our response. The main truth is: Do not treat people as your ultimate enemies. Ask further: "When I begin to see someone as an enemy, how do my words, prayers, and responses change?"

Question 3 · Standing Firm

Help members identify the repeated emphasis on standing. Standing means: Remaining faithful to Christ. Not abandoning the truth. Not giving in to temptation. Not compromising. The main picture is: A soldier who does not abandon his position. Ask further: "What pressure am I currently facing to step back or compromise?"

Question 4 · Truth, Righteousness, and the Gospel

Truth exposes the enemy's lies. Righteousness reminds us of our acceptance before God in Christ and calls us to a holy life. The gospel gives peace with God, stability, identity, and hope. It also prepares us to share the gospel with others. Ask further: "What lie am I currently believing that the gospel corrects?"

Question 5 · Faith and Salvation

The focus should not be: "How strong is my faith?" The focus should be: "How trustworthy is my God?" Assurance of salvation rests: not on our feelings, not on our performance, but on Christ's finished work and God's promises. Ask further: "When I fail, what do my feelings say? What does the gospel say?"

Question 6 · God's Word

God's Word: Recognizes deception. Shows the truth. Corrects error. Renews the mind. Why does context matter? Because Scripture can be misused. Satan also quoted Scripture when tempting Jesus. Therefore, all of these are necessary: Knowing the verse + Understanding its context + Applying it correctly. Ask further: "Am I only learning verses, or am I also learning what the Word means?"

Question 7 · Prayer

How does Paul tell us to pray? At all times ☉ With all kinds of prayer ☉ For all God's people ☉ Staying alert and persevering. What prayer does Paul request for himself? Release from prison first? No. Words to proclaim the gospel boldly. Therefore, our prayers may include both: "Lord, remove this difficulty." And: "Lord, use me faithfully even in this difficulty."

Question 8 · Personal Application

Do not stop with the general answer: "I need to put on the armor of God." Ask specifically: Truth: "What lie am I believing?" Righteousness: "What sin must I leave?" Gospel: "What gospel truth have I forgotten?" Faith: "In what area must I trust God?" Salvation: "When accusation comes, am I remembering Christ's finished work?" Word: "What change is needed in my Bible study?" Prayer: "For whom or for what should I pray more?" Witness: "With whom should I share the gospel?"

Important Points for Leaders

1. Do Not Make Satan the Center of This Lesson. Paul speaks about the enemy. But what is the main command? "Be strong in the Lord." The center is Christ and God's provision.
2. Do Not Say That Every Problem Is Directly Caused by the Devil. What has Paul already

discussed in Ephesians? Human sin. Wrong thinking. Sinful desires. Anger. Lies. Bitterness. Relationship problems. Personal responsibility. Therefore, do not attribute every problem only to the devil.

3. Do Not Make Spiritual Warfare Magical. The armor of God does not mean speaking secret words. It does not mean repeating verses without understanding their context. Paul's armor is: Truth Righteousness Gospel Faith Salvation The Word Prayer It is a faithful Christian life filled with the truths of the gospel.
4. The Entire Armor Is God's Provision. We did not create it ourselves. Therefore, there is no room for boasting. God provides it — we must put it on.

Main Truth for Leaders to Remember

Bring the discussion back again and again to the first command: "Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power." Then have the members repeat this sequence: Depend on the Lord ☉ Recognize the real battle ☉ Stand in the truth ☉ Live righteously ☉ Stand firm in the gospel ☉ Trust God ☉ Remember salvation ☉ Use the Word ☉ Pray continually ☉ Proclaim Christ boldly At the end of Ephesians, the question is not: "Am I strong enough for Christian warfare?" The real question is: "Am I standing in Christ, putting on the full armor God provides, and depending on His strength, His truth, His gospel, His Word, and prayer?"

ASF BIBLE STUDY NOTES

READ • UNDERSTAND • APPLY • TEACH

Read the passage carefully

Understand the context

Explain the text faithfully

Ask application questions

Look for the Gospel connection

Study • Practise • Teach

Ezra 7:10

*For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD,
and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.*

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