Ephesians

By: Brian Wright
Introduction

How to Study the Bible

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The Bible is a peculiar book. Words crafted in another language. Deeds done in a distant era. Events recorded in a far-off land. Counsel offered to a foreign people. It is a peculiar book.

It’s surprising that anyone reads it. It’s too old. Some of its writings date back five thousand years. It’s too bizarre. The book speaks of incredible floods, fires, earthquakes, and people with supernatural abilities. It’s too radical. The Bible calls for undying devotion to a carpenter who called himself God’s Son.

Logic says this book shouldn’t survive. Too old, too bizarre, too radical. The Bible has been banned, burned, scoffed, and ridiculed. Scholars have mocked it as foolish. Kings have branded it as illegal. A thousand times over it the grave has been dug and the dirge has begun, but somehow the Bible never stays in the grave. Not only has it survived, it has thrived. It is the single most popular book in all of history. It has been the best-selling book in the world for years!

There is no way on earth to explain it. Which perhaps is the only explanation. The answer? The Bible’s durability is not found on earth; it is found in heaven. For the millions who have tested its claims and claimed its promises, there is but one answer—the Bible is God’s book and God’s voice.

As you read it, you would be wise to give some thought to two questions. What is the purpose of the Bible? and How do I study the Bible? Time spent reflecting on these two issues will greatly enhance your Bible study.

What is the purpose of the Bible? Let the Bible itself answer that question.

_Since you were a child you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise. And that wisdom leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:15)_.

The purpose of the Bible? Salvation. God’s highest passion is to get his children home. His book, the Bible, describes his plan of salvation. The purpose of the Bible is to proclaim God’s plan and passion to save his children.

That is the reason this book has endured through the centuries. It dares to tackle the toughest questions about life: Where do I go after I die? Is there a God? What do I do with my fears? The Bible offers answers to these crucial questions. It is the treasure map that leads us to God’s highest treasure, eternal life.

But how do we use the Bible? Countless copies of Scripture sit unread on bookshelves and nightstands simply because people don’t know how to read it. What can we do to make the Bible real in our lives? The clearest answer is found in the words of Jesus.

_“Ask,” he promised, “and God will give it to you. Search and you will find. Knock, and the door will open for you” (Matthew 7:7)_

The first step in understanding the Bible is asking God to help us. We should read prayer-
fully. If anyone understands God’s Word, it is because of God and not the reader.

But the Helper will teach you everything and will cause you to remember all that I told you. The Helper is the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name (John 14:24).

Before reading the Bible, pray. Invite God to speak to you. Don’t go to Scripture looking for your idea, go searching for his. Not only should we read the Bible prayerfully, we should read it carefully. Search and you will find is the pledge. The Bible is not a newspaper to be skinned but rather a mine to be quarried.

Search for it like silver, and hunt for it like hidden treasure. Then you will understand respect for the Lord, and you will find that you know God (Proverbs 2:4).

Any worthy find requires effort. The Bible is no exception. To understand the Bible you don’t have to be brilliant, but you must be willing to roll up your sleeves and search.

Be a worker who is not ashamed and who uses the true teaching in the right way (2 Timothy 2:15).

Here’s a practical point. Study the Bible a bit at a time. Hunger is not satisfied by eating twenty-one meals in one sitting once a week. The body needs a steady diet to remain strong. So does the soul. When God sent food to his people in the wilderness, he didn’t provide loaves already made. Instead, he sent them manna in the shape of thin flakes, like frost ... on the desert ground (Exod. 16:14). God gave manna in limited portions. God sends spiritual food the same way. He opens the heavens with just enough nutrients for today’s hunger.

He provides “...a command here, a command there. A rule here, a rule there. A little lesson here, a little lesson there” (Isaiah. 28:10).

Don’t be discouraged if your reading reaps a small harvest. Some days a lesser portion is all that is needed. What is important is to search every day for that day’s message. A steady diet of God’s Word over a lifetime builds a healthy soul and mind.

A little girl returned from her first day at school. Her mom asked, “Did you learn anything?” “Apparently not enough,” the girl responded, “I have to go back tomorrow and the next day and the next....” Such is the case with learning. And such is the case with Bible study. Understanding comes little by little over a lifetime.

There is a third step in understanding the Bible. After the asking and seeking comes the knocking. After you ask and search, then knock. “Knock, and the door will open for you” (Matthew 7:7). To knock is to stand at God’s door. To make yourself available. To climb the steps, cross the porch, stand at the doorway, and volunteer. Knocking goes beyond the realm of thinking and into the realm of acting. To knock is to ask, What can I do? How can I obey? Where can I go?

It’s one thing to know what to do. It’s another to do it. But for those who do it, those who choose to obey, a special reward awaits them.

“The truly happy are those who carefully study God’s perfect law that makes people free, and they continue to study it. They do not forget what they heard, but they obey what God’s teaching says. Those who do this will be made happy” (James 1:25).

What a promise. Happiness comes to those who do what they read! It’s the same with medicine. If you only read the label but ignore the pills, it won’t help. It’s the same with food. If you only read the recipe but never cook, you won’t be fed. And it’s the same with the Bible. If you only read the words but never obey, you’ll never know the joy God has promised.
Is there anything more elegant than a wedding? Candles bathe a chapel in gold. Loving families fill the pews. Groomsmen and bridesmaids descend the aisles with bouquets of newness and rings of promise. What an occasion. And nothing quite compares with that moment when the bride stands at the top of the aisle. Arm entwined with her father’s, she takes those final steps with him and steps toward a new life with her groom.

Ahhh, the glory of a wedding. So to say I just saw the most beautiful one is no small thing. What made these nuptials so unforgettable? The groom. Usually the groom is not the star of the wedding. The fellow is typically upstaged by the girl. But this wedding was made special by the groom. It was enhanced by something he did.

And who he was made what he did even more startling. You see, he’s a cowboy: a stocky fellow who went to college on a rodeo scholarship. But the one standing in front of all the assembled witnesses was not a macho calf roper, but a pinch-me-i’m-dreaming boy who’d never seen a bride so gorgeous. He was composed as he walked down the aisle. He was fine as he took his place at the altar. But when he saw the bride, he wept. It was the moment he’d dreamed of. It was as if he’d been given life’s greatest gift—a bride in all her beauty.

By the way, those are the very words Paul uses to describe the church: a bride in all her beauty.

“He [Jesus] died so he could give the church to himself like a bride in all her beauty. He died so that the church could be pure and without fault, with no evil or sin or any other wrong thing in it” (Ephesians 5:27).

Ponder that verse. Jesus died for a bride. He died so he could be married. This passage anticipates the day when the groom will see his bride—when Christ will receive his church. Jesus’ fondest longing will be fulfilled. His Bride will arrive.

The letter to the Ephesians celebrates the beauty of the church—
the Bride of Christ.

From our perspective the church isn’t so pretty.
We see the backbiting, the squabbling, the divisions.
Heaven sees that, as well. But heaven sees more.
Heaven sees the church as cleansed and made holy by Christ.

Heaven sees the church ascending to heaven.
Heaven sees the Bride wearing the spotless gown of Jesus Christ.

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1. Overview of Ephesians

In Rome, Paul wasn’t free to move around. Although he was in official custody, he still continued to spread the gospel and direct the early church. The Romans could imprison Paul, but they could not stop the gospel and it’s inevitable result—the growth of the church. There were local churches gathering all along the route of Paul’s three missionary journeys. Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians to strengthen these gatherings, these assemblies of believers, these churches.

1. Author

   Read Ephesians 1:1, 3:1, 4:1, Acts 28:16

   - Twice in the letter, Paul named himself as the author of Ephesians.
   - The vocabulary and thought of the letter are typical of Paul, since he often emphasized justification by faith (2:8, Romans 5:1, Galatians 2:16, 3:24, Titus 3:7).
   - Paul’s interest in Ephesus flowed out of his extended stay there, during which he declared the Word of the Lord publicly and from house to house (Acts 19:10, 20:17-38).
   - The early church fathers were unanimous in crediting Paul with writing the letter to the Ephesians. The church at Ephesus had a reputation of being able to discern false apostolic claims (Revelation 2:2).
   - Even if the author hadn’t named himself as Paul, the fact that he describes himself as being imprisoned points to him being Paul, given that Luke describes Paul as being under house arrest in Rome in Acts 28.

2. Date

   Read Ephesians 3:1, 4:1, 6:20, Acts 28:16 Colossians 4:7-9

   - Paul’s imprisonment in Rome occurred around A.D. 60.
   - The content of Ephesians is similar to Colossians, and Tychicus delivered letters from Paul to both the Colossians and the Ephesians during the course of his journey to Colossae. These facts suggest that both letters were written during the same imprisonment.

3. Setting


   - Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia. Ephesus was a vital commercial center of the Roman Empire, due to its location at the meeting place of trade routes. Ephesus housed a famous temple for the fertility goddess Diana (one of the seven wonders of the ancient world).
   - Ephesus is an important city in early church history, because Paul used it as a center for his missionary work in surrounding regions.
   - At the end of his second missionary journey, Paul paid a brief visit to Ephesus. When he left, Priscilla and Aquila stayed to continue the ministry (Acts 18:18–28).
It was on Paul’s third missionary journey that he spent extended time in Ephesus—about three years (Acts 19). The Jews rejected his preaching in the Ephesian synagogue, so Paul taught both Jews and Greeks in the school of Tyrannus.

At Ephesus, Paul ministry included several Spirit-empowered miracles. Word got around, and the city became a place where those from the rest of Asia who heard and became interested in the gospel would come.

In fact, there was rioting in Ephesus, likely located in the theatre pictured below, because the livelihood of idol makers and sellers was threatened by so many people turning to Christ and renouncing pagan ways (Acts 19:21-35).

4. Recipients
Read Ephesians 1:1, 1:15, 3:2

Perhaps the Epistle to the Ephesians was originally a circular letter sent to several congregations in the province of Asia that surrounded Ephesus. The letter implies that Paul had never met the recipients of the letter, but had only heard of them (1:15 and 3:2).
• In a way, all the New Testament epistles are circular, since they eventually made their way to many churches. They are all useful for the general edification of the church.
• Unlike the letters to the Corinthians, which deals with specific local congregational problems, Ephesians lacks personal references, and the content/teaching is very general.
• What were the recipients like? There were those in the congregation who would cause problems, as Paul tells the elders to be alert and on the lookout (Acts 20:29-31). It is noteworthy that Paul did not consider the adversaries apart from a manner in which the door for the gospel would be opened wider (1 Corinthians 16:5-11).
• Eventually, the Lord Jesus Himself sent a letter to Ephesus through the apostle John (Revelations 2:1–7). In it, He commends the Ephesians for not tolerating false teachers, and told them they needed to rekindle the original love for God that they had when Paul brought the truth to them.
• Certainly there were wealthy recipients, such as Demetrius the silversmith (Acts 19:24). However, many people in the Roman empire were slaves.

5. Themes
• Paul emphasizes the truth that salvation cannot be accessed by human works or determination, but by faith alone.
• Ephesians beautifully paints a picture of the riches of God’s grace.
• Throughout the letter, Paul emphasizes the doctrine of the church, and solves the mystery so long hidden—that all believers are united in Christ because the church is the one body of Christ.
• Love Story—Doctrines, declarations, and indicatives for Christ’s followers are found in Ephesians 1-3:
  * Conceptual theologies—These chapters address the central teachings of the Christian faith, particularly focusing on the church.
  * Paul describes how through Jesus’ death and resurrection, God reconciles sinful people to Himself, and forms the church in one body (from Jews and Gentiles) with His Son as the Head.
  * Reconciliation with God, in union with Jesus Christ, begins with the renouncing of old beliefs and the embracing of truth.
• Life Story—Duties, obligations, and/or imperatives for Christ’s followers are found in Ephesians 4-6:
  * Paul describes how the spiritual truths of chapters 1-3 are to be reflected in a Christian’s behavior.
  * People who would normally be divided, interact differently with each other. Paul gives practical ways for church members to be united.
  * Each person has to display Christ’s love, patience, humility, and gentleness as they use their gifts to build up the church.
  * Many relationships are addressed including husband/wife, parent/child, employer/employee. Each person must relate in the way they have been taught for the whole body to function properly.

Paul speaks of “the riches of God’s grace” (1:7), “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (3:8), and “the riches of his glory” (3:16). Here are the terms he uses to describe our abundant resources:

- “riches” 5 times
- “grace” 12 times
- “glory” 8 times
- “inheritance” 4 times
- “fullness,” “filled up,” or “fills” 6 times
- “In Christ” 15 times

—John MacArthur
In “The Mystery of the Church”
(http://www.biblebb.com/files/mac/sg1901.htm)
The Israelites believed that when the Messiah came, it would be to rule on earth and save them from earthly authority. However, when Jesus did come to earth, it was not to rule yet, but to complete the one-time sacrifice for sins that would provide entry to the Kingdom of God forever. He will still be coming to rule on earth, but in the meantime, we live in an age that is referred to in the New Testament (NT) as a mystery—the church age.

One of the mysteries of the church age, unknown to Old Testament (OT) saints, is that Israelites (Jews) and non-Israelites (Gentiles) would be unified in one body, called the church. The church, and the details about it, were unknown, a mystery, prior to the New Testament.

All the same, there are fascinating similarities between Israel and the church, seen in the way the OT and NT refer to God’s people. Word pictures are used to describe both which show that they have similar characteristics. While the details (laws) of God’s people differ in letter and intensity between the OT and NT, the spirit remains the same. Study and think about these word pictures to better understand how God intends the church to look.

Bride:
Read Hosea 1:1-2, 3:1-5. How is Israel referenced? ________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Read Ephesians 5:22-33. How is the church spoken of as a bride? _____________
______________________________________________________________________________

Vine:
Read Isaiah 5:1-7. How is Israel referenced? ________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Read John 15:1-8. How does Jesus portray the metaphor of a vine? How does the metaphor of a vine impact the way the church functions? ______________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Flock:
Read Isaiah 10:11. How is Israel referenced? ________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

"The key to all the metaphors of the church is unity. We are one wife with one Husband, one flock with one Shepherd, one set of branches with one Vine, one kingdom with one King, one family with one Father, one building with one Foundation, and one body with one Head. But the Body is the most perfect illustration of how the church is to function, for it speaks of both diversity and mutual dependence."

~John MacArthur
In "The Mystery of the Church" @ www.biblebb.com/files/mac/sf1901.htm.
Read John 10:1-16. How does Jesus speak of His people? ____________

Kingdom:
Read Exodus 19:6. How is Israel referenced? _________________________

Read Colossians 1:13. How is the church spoken of as the kingdom? ______

Family:
Read Hosea 1:10. How is Israel referenced? _________________________

Read Ephesians 2:19. How is the church spoken of as a family? ______

Building:
Read Ezekiel 9:9, 43:10. How is Israel referenced? _________________________

Read Ephesians 2:20-22 and 1 Peter 2:5. In what ways is the church referred to as a building? _________________________

Body:
There are no Old Testament references to Israel as a body. The body is the metaphor that most closely links believers with Jesus Christ and each other. As parts of the body of Christ, His life flows through us to be His presence on earth.

Read Ephesians 4:11-13, Romans 12:3-8, and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. How does Paul make it clear that each person in the church is important? What happens when individual believers don’t take their part in the local church body? __________

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to individuals for one purpose— to build up the body of Christ in the world today. They are never about personal ministry. How are you exercising your gifts to build up the Body? _________________________

If you aren’t, the impact of Christ’s body in the world is being affected. How can you change that today? _________________________
3. Grace and Peace

Paul’s authority as an apostle

1. Before Paul’s conversion
   Read Philippians 3:5, Acts 22:3-5, Acts 7:58
   • Paul was born into the tribe of Benjamin.
   • He became a rabbi and a devout leader in Judaism, after being taught at the feet of the great teacher Gamaliel.
   • Saul (Paul) was at the forefront of the persecution of Christ’s followers.
   • The other disciples were involved in choosing Matthias, God alone chose Paul (Acts 1:15-26).

2. Paul’s conversion experience
   • Saul was met by the risen Christ, blinded by His dazzling light, and forever changed. Acts gives three accounts of Paul’s conversion experience.
   • Compare Paul’s meeting with Jesus Christ, with Isaiah’s experience in Isaiah 6:1-7.

3. After Paul’s conversion
   • After Paul’s conversion and initial meeting with the other disciples, he states that he spent time in Arabia and Damascus, and did not return to Jerusalem for 14 years (Galatians 1:17, 2:1).
   • Prior to his evangelistic years, he became part of the Antioch church. After a year there, the church leaders sent him and Barnabas out as missionaries.
   • Paul was called to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and he gave his life in doing so.

Paul writes to the faithful

1. To be faithful is an excellent reputation.
   Read Ephesians 1:1, Galatians 5:22
   • Definition of faithful = unwavering in belief by holding fast one day at a time, consistently loyal by faithfully obeying God in the details of life.
   • Being characterized as faithful is evidence of God’s Spirit at work.

Grace

1. What is grace?
   Read Ephesians 1:2
   • Grace (caris) = unmerited and unearned favor, the receiving of a gift that is never merit for work performed.
   • Grace flows from God’s character to change sinful man. Mercy flows from God.
God’s strength to save helpless man.  
- Grace is opposed to and excludes any manner of works for merit, blessing, payment, or receiving of love (Romans 4:1-5, 11:6).  
- Grace is the motivation by which Christ-like works are produced, and the method by which good works are empowered (Titus 2:11, 2 Timothy 2:1, 1 Corinthians 15:9-11).  
- Because of grace, the New Testament church has rules and imperatives by which to live (1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 6:14, Titus 2:11-14, Romans 5:20-6:1).  
- Grace reveals God’s glory and excellence (Ephesians 1:6, 2 Peter 1:2-4).  

Peace

1. What is peace  
   Read Ephesians 1:2  
   - Peace (eirw) = to join, to be in a state of harmony and well-being.  
   - Paul’s greetings always included grace and peace (and sometimes mercy). Through God’s grace sinners are not only saved but also live in resurrection power. One of the results of grace is peace. Grace always precedes peace.  

2. Various kinds of peace  
   - Peace with God through reconciliation (Ephesians 2:14-18, Romans 5:1, Galatians 6:12-16).  
   - Peace with others through harmony and unity (Ephesians 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:13).  
   - Peace of orderliness (1 Corinthians 14:40).  

Blessing

1. What are spiritual blessings?  
   Read Ephesians 4:3  
   - Blessed (eulogetos) = to speak well of someone.  
   - Spiritual (pneumatikos) = refers to the work of the Holy Spirit.  
   - Wherever we are in the world, whatever is happening in our lives, Christians must bless the Lord (Genesis 14:20, Revelation 5:13), and have the sense of blessings with Christ on high (Colossians 3:1-4).  
   - The Christian’s spiritual blessings are an unlimited resource, with no missing ingredients (1 Peter 1:3, Philippians 1:19). Blessings are not guaranteed health, wealth, or prosperity, they are spiritual blessings  
   - The issue is that we don’t exercise the blessings we have, we wait for more.  

2. Don’t be ignorant of the spiritual blessings you have been given  
   Read Ephesians 4:3, Romans 6:26  
   - Love (Romans 5:5).  
   - Peace (John 14:27).  
   - Joy (John 15:11).  
   - Strength (Philippians 4:13).  
   - We must ask for wisdom in understanding how to use these resources during our trials (James 1:3).
Making it personal:
Grace and Peace

Rewrite Ephesians 1:1-2 in your own words
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What is the most important concept in this passage for you today?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

How will you train to change your life accordingly?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

How will your changed life edify Christ’s body?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
1. I am so glad that our Father in Heav’n
Tells of His love in the Book He has giv’n;
Wonderful things in the Bible I see,
This is the dearest, that Jesus loves me.

* Refrain:
I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me;
I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves even me.

2. Oh, if there’s only one song I can sing,
When in His beauty I see the great King,
This shall my song through eternity be,
“Oh, what a wonder that Jesus loves me!”

3. Jesus loves me, and I know I love Him;
Love brought Him down my poor soul to redeem;
Yes, it was love made Him die on the tree;
Oh, I am certain that Jesus loves me!

4. If one should ask of me, how can I tell?
Glory to Jesus, I know very well!
God’s Holy Spirit with mine doth agree,
Constantly witnessing Jesus loves me.

5. In this assurance I find sweetest rest,
Trusting in Jesus, I know I am blest;
Satan, dismayed, from my soul now doth flee,
When I just tell him that Jesus loves me.

PHILIP BLISS 1871

Resources
Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 1:1-2. These sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

’ John MacArthur Study Bible notes
’ ESV Study Bible notes
4. An Eternal Body

Paul gives a glimpse into the plan of salvation—the great and vast blessings and treasures that belong to those who are in Christ Jesus.

1. God’s eternal purpose for the church
   • Ephesians 1:3-6a—the past, election.
   • Ephesians 1:6b-11—the present, redemption.
   • Ephesians 1:12-14—the future, inheritance.

2. Each passage centers on a person of the Trinity
   • Ephesians 1:3-6a—the Father.
   • Ephesians 1:6b-11—the Son.
   • Ephesians 1:12-14—the Holy Spirit.

   The Past—Chosen by the Father

1. Are you overwhelmed because God has sovereignly selected you for blessings? Do you bless God for choosing you to be in the body of Christ before the world began?
   Read Ephesians 1:3-4
   • Keep in mind that it does not say anywhere in the Bible that God predestined any soul to be lost (1 Timothy 2:4).
   • God has nothing to say about predestination to a lost world. His grace, bringing salvation, is for all men everywhere. Predestination has to do with the believer, as God has predestined that all believers be conformed to the image of his Son, whom He raised from the dead (Romans 8:28-30).
   • Predestination is not cold-hearted determinism or set fate, but a loving choice on God’s part.

2. Chosen before the foundation of the world
   • Christians have been chosen to be part of something cosmologically huge, that transcends time and creation.

3. Adoption as sons
   Read Ephesians 1:5-6a, 2 Timothy 1:9, 2 Timothy 2:10.
   • Adoption is not based on you. Christians are adopted because of God’s eternal purpose and grace.
   • There is nothing fragile or uncertain about God’s adoption of sons. It is firm and sure and unshakeable.
   • Jesus Christ is the complete and final source of His adopted family’s joy. When we are in eternity, we will be increasingly joyful—that’s the glory we are chosen for.

“The paradox of divine election and human decision can be reconciled only in the mind of God. It’s not our responsibility to be sovereign. We must allow God to be sovereign.”

~John MacArthur
The Present—Redemption through the Son

1. Redeemed
   Read Ephesians 1:7, Revelation 21:7
   - Redemption (lutroo) = release from captivity.
   - If someone wanted to free a slave, he would have to buy him and then grant him freedom via a written certificate.
   - This is what Jesus has done for us. He has bought us with His blood and when we look to Him in faith for forgiveness, he sets us free and writes our names in the Lamb’s book of life.

2. Sin is never neutral, never without consequence
   Read Romans 6:22-23, Ezekiel 18:24m John 8:34-36
   - Sin is man’s captor and slave owner, demanding a price for his release.

3. Redemption is limitless, according to the riches of God’s grace
   Read Ephesians 1:7
   - God’s forgiveness not only is given “according to the riches of his grace,” it is lavished upon us (1 John 3:1).
   - God’s gracious forgiveness always trumps sin (Romans 5:20).
   - If you still feel guilty after confessing and forsaking sin, it’s evidence of prideful thinking that seeks for a bigger ransom than the one determined by God.

4. The reason for redemption
   - God will gather His church to Himself, in complete unity, without any trace of evil.

The Future—Inheritance guaranteed by the Holy Spirit

1. God gives Christians full assurance, for the purpose of the praise of His glory.
   Read Ephesians 1:11-14, Romans 8:35-36
   - Paul was frequently exposed to much danger, opposed from every side, and weak with hunger and sleeplessness (2 Corinthians 11:25-28).
   - Paul’s power and stability came not from his circumstances, but from the lavish gift of God, by which His people are secure in His love and power.

2. Christians are sealed with the Holy Spirit
   Read Ephesians 1:13
   - Seals shut = faith in, unbelief and apostasy out (for example, Matthew 27:66, Revelation 20:3).
   - Seal of authenticity = God’s trademark, a sign of His divine reality (for example, Romans 4:11, 1 Corinthians 9:2).
   - Seal of God = bearing the mark of God’s protection (Revelation 7:3).

3. Christians are guaranteed by the Holy Spirit
   Read Ephesians 1:14
   - Guarantee = down payment, or symbol of commitment.
   - The Holy Spirit guarantees that Christians will one day receive an inheritance.
   - Like an engagement ring reminds a bride of her upcoming wedding, the Holy Spirit reminds us of our upcoming marriage supper where Christ is the bridegroom, and the church is the bride (Revel 19:7-10).

Note: The distinction between giving “out” of riches vs. “according” to riches. If we were to go to a bazillionaire and ask him to contribute to our building fund, he might give us a check for $25.00 “out” of his riches. If the same person were to give us a check for “$500,000.00, he would be giving “according” to his riches.”

~Brian Wright

“‘When God demands on the one hand, “Turn from sinning and you will die,” and on the other hand, “Feel eternally secure in my love and you will live,” He is not demanding two different things...The threats and promises of Scripture have one message: Seek your security in God alone.’”

~John Piper in “Sealed by the Spirit to the Day of Redemption” www.soundofgrace.com/piper84/050684.htm
Making it personal:
An Eternal Body

Rewrite Ephesians 1:3-14 in your own words

______________________________________________________________________________
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Ephesians 1:7 speaks of the redemption we have through Christ’s blood. In the Old Testament, a scapegoat driven into the wilderness symbolized the removal of people’s sins (Leviticus 16:27). In Christ, the fulfillment of the picture can be seen. Through His blood, Jesus literally takes away the sins of the world and deposits them so far away that they can never return (Psalm 103:11-12, Isaiah 44:22, Micah 7:18-19, Hebrews 9:13-14).

What does it mean to you that Jesus Christ is the scapegoat?

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Resources

Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 1:3-14. Some of the sermons or study helps listed below may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

- “Predestined for Adoption to the Praise of His Glory” by John Piper @ http://hopingof.org/sermon/predestined-adoption-praise-his-glory.
- “Sealed by the Spirit to the Day of Redemption” by John Piper @ www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1984/438.
- John MacArthur Study Bible notes, ESV Bible study notes
5. Prayer for Hearts

Thankful Prayer

1. Do you have a balance of faith and love?
   Read Ephesians 1:15
   - How did Paul hear of their faith and love? Four years have passed since he ministered there, and he is now in prison (Ephesians 3:1, 4:1, 6:20). People have been allowed to visit him, and must have reported (Acts 28:30).
   - Faith in Jesus Christ is the first mark of a true Christian (Philippians 2:10-11, Romans 10:9-10, Hebrews 11:6).
   - Faith is proven by love for all the saints (Philippians 2:2, 1 John 2:9-11, 1 John 3:17-18, John 13:35).

2. Paul prays for them with thankfulness.
   Read Ephesians 1:16
   - Thankfulness is a necessary part of the Christian’s thinking, and prayer (Romans 1:21, Philippians 4:6-7).

Paul prays for even more blessings to come the way of the members of Christ’s church.

1. “Wisdom” and “revelation” are not meant to be interpreted as “mystical.”
   Read Ephesians 1:17
   - Wisdom (sophia) = insight into the true nature of things.
   - Revelation (apokalypsis) = the communication of the knowledge of God to the soul of man.
   - The Holy Spirit is the divine and supernatural source of both wisdom and revelation. Please note that the wisdom and revelation of truth pertains to a knowledge of Jesus Christ, not a fresh granting of the Holy Spirit.
   - God gives the Holy Spirit to all Christians upon conversion (1 Corinthians 12:13, 6:19, Romans 8:9).
   - Answers to particular problems/situations are given not so much by rules and regulations, but by a closer, more intimate knowledge of God’s Son in whom are all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge.
   - We must pray for wisdom in decision making, and we should not be surprised when God provides a fuller knowledge of Christ as the answer.
   - When we know Jesus better, we will become more like Him and better able to understand His word of truth (Romans 8:29, James 1:18).

2. Enlightenment
   Read Ephesians 1:18
   - Enlighten (photizo) = to make bright, illuminate, shed rays, shine upon
   - Understanding (kardia) = eyes of our heart. Heart stands for man’s entire
mental and moral activity, the thinking and decision making element in us, the inner man. God appeals to our mind and will, not our emotions. Emotions respond to the mind.
- Paul prays that our hearts will be enlightened to understand not only the calling of Christ, but also what to expect. Expect in the biblical sense meaning hope.

3. Hope
Read Ephesians 1:18
- Do you have biblical expectations regarding your life and your faith? True faith involves suffering, persecution.
- Do you expect that trusting Christ will clear up the difficulties of your life? Instead, you may have even more difficulties.
- Pray that God will enlighten your heart to recognize the errors you used to think and live by, and replace them with wisdom.
- Christians have the responsibility to exercise wisdom, the skill to live in accordance with God’s created order. Thus, we show greater care in how we live, and we exhibit more cautious decision making than ever.
- Enlightened hearts have the hope that frees us from earthly discontentment and keeps our focus on eternal treasures (Hebrews 12:1-2, James 4:14).

4. The Power of God
Read Ephesians 1:19
- How great is the power of God that is available to conquer the problems of life? Paul uses four Greek words to describe the power of God toward us.
  - Power (dunamis) = inherent power, like dynamite
  - Working (energeia) = operative power, like energy
  - Mighty (kratos) = ultimate power, like dominion
  - Power (ischus) = endowed power, like an endowment
- The power that God provides for us to live for Him is the same power that God used to raise Jesus Christ from the dead. It is greater power than anything the evil one can throw at us (1 Corinthians 1:17-19, 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6, 12:7-10).
- We need to understand and draw upon this power by reading and living Scripture in answer to prayer.
- We must depend on God and eliminate the excuses that rob us of victory in Christ.

5. The Person of Christ
Read Ephesians 1:20-21
- Every Christian must focus less on personal problems, and more on the powerful person of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18, Hebrews 12:1-3).
- Christ is ranked the highest, above all angels (Hebrews 1:4-14), and over everything, including the church.
- All will bow at the name of Christ for eternity. We determine our eternal address during our time on earth, but our eternal activity has been determined for us (Philippians 2:9-10).
- God will be glorified for eternity, as we worship His glorious Son.
- The person of Jesus Christ is seen on earth in the church of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-23).

“Can I enter that moment [trial] and remind myself that I am empowered by Christ? That the most awesome power in the universe lives in me by His Spirit? In Christ, I can do this moment.”

~Paul David Tripp
Making it personal:
Prayer for Hearts

Rewrite Ephesians 1:15-23 in your own words

What is the most important concept in this passage for you today?
How will you train to change your life accordingly?

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How will your changed life edify Christ’s body?

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To better understand the weight and dimension of the prayer life of the early church, study the content of Paul’s two prayers in Ephesians 1:16-23 and 3:14-21. Paul has heard good things in general about the churches in Asia Minor.

Resources
Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 1:15-23. Some of these sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.


“His Body: The Fullness of Him Who Fills All in All” by John Piper @ www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1992/809.


John MacArthur Study Bible notes

ESV Study Bible notes

Blueletter Bible @ http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.
The Church and Christ’s authority

1. Christ’s headship over the church is at the very heart of His Father’s eternal purpose.
   Read Ephesians 1:20-21
   • Paul underscores Christ’s authority as supreme and sovereign Lord of all.
   • The church’s head is ordained to be the consummate authority in all the universe by God the Father himself.
   • By God the Father’s decree, Christ alone is head of the church, and all others must fall on their knees before Him (Colossians 1:18).
   • Apostates and false teachers actually think they are their own masters, proving it when they tamper with or attempt to tone down the gospel to make it more acceptable, trying to reinvent the church so it will be more pleasing (1 Corinthians 1:22-25, Galatians 1:10, John 15:18-19).

Until Christ returns for her, the church will not be outdated or unsuccessful.

1. The church is the body of Christ
   Read Ephesians 1:22-23
   • In the context of God’s power and Christ’s person, Paul brings the introduction of Ephesians to this triumphant statement regarding the church.
   • The church refers to the people of God, the disciples of Jesus Christ, the elect from all nations.

2. What is the church doing today?
   Read Ephesians 1:23, Ephesians 4:6-12
   • Christ is now filling every spot in the universe exactly as He pleases, with the church, His chosen body.
   • The church is Christ’s chosen vehicle, to proclaim the glory of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the world today. How does this happen? Read Ephesians 4:6-7 for the answer. The specifics are found in Ephesians 4:10-12.

The Church and the Resurrected Christ

1. Christ is the risen ruler over all things, including the church
   Read Ephesians 1:22-23, Matthew 28:18-20
   • When Christ rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, He was given His seat at the ruling place, the right hand of Almighty Father God (Ephesians 1:20, 3:11, Romans 8:34, Hebrews 1:13, Psalm 110:1, Matthew 22:43).

2. Four things regarding the Son of God and the church
   Read Ephesians 1:20-22
• God raised Him from death (v. 20).
• God gave Him the seat of kingly authority (at His right hand).
• God puts everything in the universe, including every present or future evil, in subjection to Him (v. 21-22).
• God gave to the church His Son, with all the universes power and authority, as the head (v. 22).

3. What does it mean for Christ to have authority, or rule, over all things?
   Read Ephesians 1:22-23
   • Christ asserts his rule and authority in all things, as fully as he pleases. This is sovereign rule.
   • While it appears that there are governments or royalties that rule earthly countries, the reality is that Christ rules all.
     ✓ Jesus Christ is above all rule (vs. 21).
     ✓ Jesus Christ is over every name (vs. 21).
     ✓ God put all things under His feet (vs. 22).
     ✓ Jesus Christ is head over all things (vs. 22).

The Church and Christ's fullness

1. The church is Christ’s chosen method of filling all things.
   Read Ephesians 1:23
   • The wisdom of God is being made known (by the church) to the satanic, demonic powers in the universe, over whom Christ is now seated with His feet on them (Ephesians 3:10, Ephesians 1:22).
   • The church is the vehicle by which the rest of the world understands who Jesus is (John 17:23)

2. The church is Christ’s presence in the world today.
   Read Ephesians 1:20-23
   • By God’s authority, the church is the vehicle to showcase Christ’s perfection in the whole universe, from the demonic world to our neighborhoods and homes.
   • Like a head and body are unified, Christ and His church (all who are part of His body) are unified. This is how Christ fills the universe with Himself.
   • Christ has chosen to radiate Himself to the world through the church, with each Christian an important part of it.

The Church and Christ’s authority

1. The church is Christ’s chosen method of filling all things.
   Read Ephesians 1:23
   • Cosmic mission of the church-The wisdom of God is being made known (by the church) to the demonic powers in the universe and to the angelic beings in the heavens (Ephesians 3:10).
   • Earthly mission of the church-The Son of God is being made known (by the church) to the watching world (John 17:23). The church is God’s chosen vehicle to communicate who Jesus Christ is.
   • Jesus Christ is now seated with all things (universal—earthly and heavenly) under His feet (Ephesians 1:22).
Making it personal:
What is Church

Ephesians 1:22-23

Rewrite Ephesians 1:22-23 in your own words

What is the most important concept in this passage for you today?

How will you train to change your life accordingly?

How will your changed life edify Christ’s body?
Study Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-31. How are you exercising your gifts to build up the Body of Christ?

Resources

Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 1:22-23. Some of these sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

“His Body: The Fullness of Him Who Fills All in All” by John Piper @ www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1992/809. This resource includes great discussion questions for small groups and suggestions for prayer focus.

Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1979).


John MacArthur Study Bible notes

ESV Study Bible notes

Blueletter Bible @ http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.
7. Resisting the Devil

How are Christians to deal with the prince of the powers of the air, the spirit that works disobedience?
Adapted from David Powlison’s teaching in “Power encounters” (MI: Baker Books) 1995.

1. What does the Bible say?
   - There’s a recent popularity with “casting out” of demons, where sin gets blamed on demonic activity.
   - Old Testament
     - Instances of demonic activity stressed the sovereign power of God while minimizing Satan and maximizing human responsibility
   - New Testament
     - Jesus did not cast out sin, only demons.
     - “Casting out of demons” completely disappears after Acts.

2. Is the church to use the “command-control” pattern for casting out demons?
   - At times Jesus ministered through the command-control pattern. Command control = “I say it, it happens.”
   - The Gospel accounts give us at least 11 instances of his command-control ministry. At the same time, Jesus, and the epistle writers, teach the church to use other methods of responding:
     - Catching fish (Luke 5:4, John 21:3-6). The apostles fished in the command-control manner only when they were the audience of Jesus’ direct command.
     - Walking on water (Matthew 14:24-33, Hebrews 11:6). Jesus clearly connects Peter’s walk on water to faith.
     - Feeding hungry, giving drink to thirsty (John 6, John 13:29, Acts 20:34, Ephesians 4:28). The command-control method of feeding people has been replaced by the method that requires physical work.
     - Speaking with authority (Matthew 28:18-20). When we speak with authority, we must point to the One who has been given all authority.
     - Calling people to ministry (Acts 9:6, Acts 13:1-4, 1 Timothy 3). Jesus used both the command-control method and the manner that His followers use—he called disciples to follow him directly, then prayed all night before selecting apostles.
     - Forgiving sins (John 12:31-32, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13). Jesus forgives directly because he paid the sacrifice. We forgive only as we have been forgiven. Jesus forgives authoritatively and objectively, we forgive personally and subjectively (subject to our being forgiven).
     - Confronting and cursing sin (Matthew 21:18-22, Matthew 23, Mark 11:25). Jesus declared divine curses with no grace. The church is to preach the Word, confront and warn evil doers, and carry out church
discipline.


❖ Controlling the weather (Psalm 107:29, Mark 4:38-41, James 5:17-18). Jesus spoke and the weather obeyed. The church prays for deliverance from the sufferings that result from weather.

❖ Healing the sick (Matthew 4:23-24, 12:22). Jesus compassion was evidenced by command-control healings. The church is taught to evidence compassion for the sick by (Matthew 25:31-46, James 5:14-16):
   1. Hands on and personal care for the sick.
   2. Taking advantage of opportunities that sickness provides—counseling, ministering the grace of Christ, encouraging confession of sin, helping sick people grow in glorifying God.
   3. Encouraging the use of medical methods, with faith in the Lord (James 1:14, 1 Timothy 5:23).
   4. Praying fervently.

2. After Acts, continuing on in the New Testament, three different times, through three different writers, the Holy Spirit teaches us to “resist the devil.”

   - Ephesians 6:10-20
   - 1 Peter 5:6-11
   - James 4:7

Resist the devil

1. Paul teaches those being beguiled by lies how to resist the devil
   Read Ephesians 6:10-20 (See the last chapter)

2. Peter teaches those facing oppression how to resist the devil
   Read 1 Peter 5:6-11
   • In the face of oppression, we must maintain practical obedience with clear headed dependency on God.
   • We are to resist the devil by:
     ❖ Trusting God’s proper time of deliverance (1 Peter 5:6).
     ❖ Taking refuge in God’s care (1 Peter 5:7).
     ❖ Keeping an alert hold on reality when the lion strikes (1 Peter 5:8).
     ❖ Setting our hopes fully on the grace of Jesus (1 Peter 5:9-10).
     ❖ Worshipping the One who will rule forever (1 Peter 5:11).

3. James links the problem with sinful hearts
   Read James 4:7
   • If Paul addressed the carrot of lies being dangled in front of a donkey, and Peter addressed the stick beating the donkey, James addresses the donkey itself—the human heart (James 1:12-15).
   • Demonic folly is seen in:
     ❖ A fire-starting tongue (3:1-12)
     ❖ Demanding and self-exalting hearts that produce chaos (3:14-16)
     ❖ Desires that produce interpersonal conflict (4:1-3)
     ❖ Pride (4:6)
     ❖ Double-minds and dirty hands (4:8)
     ❖ Playing god and forgetting God’s sovereignty (4:11-17)
   • James teaches us to repent and draw near to God (4:6-10).
Making it personal:
Resisting the Devil

Rewrite Ephesians 2:1-3 in your own words

What is the most important concept in this passage for you today?
Think of someone who is merciful. What typifies his or her life?

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What is something you did in the past but would never do now specifically because you are a Christian?

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Why does sin anger God?

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Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones died in 1981. He was a great preacher at the Westminster Chapel in London for 40 years. The year before his death when he was 81 years old, Christianity Today asked him, "Do you have any final word for our generation?" He answered simply by quoting 1 Thessalonians 1:10, "Jesus delivers us from the wrath to come."

Resources

Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 2:1-3. Some of these sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

“Why We Need A Savior: Dead in Sins" by John Piper @ http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1985/521_Why_We_Need_a_Savior_Dead_in_Sins/


Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1979).


ESV and John MacArthur Study Bible notes

Blueletter Bible @ http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.
8. Being Rich in Mercy

Helpless children of wrath

1. Dead in sin, hopeless and helpless without Christ
   Read Ephesians 2:1, 1 Timothy 5:6
   • A physically dead person cannot respond to stimulus, no matter how loving the touch. A spiritually dead person is not able to respond to God’s love.
   • A spiritually dead person is alienated from the life of God, and therefore, from the life of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:15-18).
   • Living for earthly pleasure results in being dead while we live, as described in 1 Timothy 5:6.

2. Man’s sin requires God’s wrath
   Read Ephesians 2:1-3
   • What is sin? Sin is not so much an issue of degrees (i.e. hatred vs. murder). Think of degrees of decay in death—not every dead body is in the same state of decay, but every dead body is in the state of being dead. Similarly, sin is a state of death.
     ✤ Sin (hamartia) means to miss the mark.
     ✤ Trespasses (paraptoma) means to slip, fall, or go in the wrong direction.
   • Being dead in sin is not so much about what we do, but what we fail to do (Matthew 5:48, 1 Peter 1:16, Leviticus 11:44). Failure to glorify (honor) and thank God is sin (Romans 1:21, 3:23).
   • As sons of disobedience, we are sinners by nature. Rebellion, disobedience, self-glory, and ingratitude runs in our genes (Colossians 1:21).
   • God, in His perfection, has to punish sin (Ecclesiastes 12:11-12).

3. It’s important to remember that we alienate ourselves from God, that we are in need of a Savior, and that God provided what we need.
   Read Ephesians 2:1-3
   • The purpose of remembering is to realize that we were not just in the doghouse, we were in the morgue—dead in every thought, feeling, and action.
   • Ephesians 2:11-12 commands us to remember who we were. Part of ongoing life with Christ includes remembering Ephesians 2:1-3. We do not remember so that we will feel bad, but rather so that, in Christ, we will rejoice.

Merciful God of Love

1. Begin rich in mercy
   Read Ephesians 2:4
   • Rich (plousis) = overabounding, overflowing.
• Mercy (eleos) = “it is the outward manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it.” (Vines expository Dictionary of OT & NT Words)
• Every human being deserves God’s wrath, but God’s mercy is so rich that He holds back what we deserve. If we think about what is just, as we are taught in Philippians 4:8, we will remember that we deserve God’s wrath, but at the cross we receive His mercy.
• Why? Because of God’s intrinsic and essential attribute of love.

2. God’s loving mercy results in purposeful life Read Ephesians 2:5-6
• In Christ’s resurrection, God provides what dead men need—life (Romans 6:4-8).
• Our purpose in being given life is not about this world—this world is fallen and decaying (Philippians 3:20).
• As a result of receiving God’s mercy, our minds operate in a new realm. All our blessing are in heaven, not on earth. Heaven, not earth, is our world (Psalm 137, Colossians 3:1-4).

• Because of God’s attribute of intrinsic and essential love, He wants to be kind to us forever.
• God saves us, then shows us off for His glory. God’s glory is revealed as He lavishes His grace, kindness, love, mercy.

The grace through faith that produces good

1. By grace through faith Read Ephesians 2:8-9
• The moment you look to Christ on the cross for forgiveness of your sins, is the moment you exhibit faith (John 3:14-15, Numbers 21:1-6).
• Faith begins with knowing you have a sin problem you can’t resolve, but God can and did (John 19:30).
• Salvation is a gift that flows out of God’s grace.
• “Faith is simply breathing the breath that God’s grace supplies as He leads you by His Word and Spirit in the way of conviction of sin and trust in Christ alone as Saviour from sin.” ~Hans Overduin

http://www.frcna.org/Banner/Archive.ASP?Message=33

• Human effort has absolutely nothing to do with salvation (Romans 3:20, Galatians 2:16, 1 Corinthians 1:31).
• Our salvation is something only God can do. It is His powerful, creative work in us.

2. Masterpieces of good works Read Ephesians 2:10
• Workmanship (poiema) = work of art, masterpiece
• God produces good works in His workmanship, salvation always results in good works.
• Before time, God determined good works for His children, that conform us to Christ, and prove our salvation (Romans 8:28-30, John 15:8, James 2:14-17, Ephesians 2:10).
Making it personal:
Being rich in mercy

Rewrite Ephesians 2:4-10 in your own words

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Describe an act of mercy you have seen recently.

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Think of a time when you had the opportunity to show mercy but didn’t. Why didn’t you?

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If God were not merciful, what would our lives be like?

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What is the danger of a faith based on works?

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How can we as Christians show the great riches of God’s grace?

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In what sense is “spiritually dead” an accurate description of life without faith in Christ?

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Why do we sometimes perceive salvation to be related to our own efforts?

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Who should be given the credit for any and all of the good works that we are able to do? Who arranged for them to be accomplished in the first place?

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Resources

Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 2:1-10. Some of these sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

“Why We Need A Savior: Captive to an Alien Power, by Nature Children of Wrath” by John Piper @ http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1985/522_Why_We_Need_a_Savior_Captive_to_an_Alien_Power_by_Nature_Children_of_Wrath/

“All of Grace” by C. H. Spurgeon @ www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/allgrace.text

“Salvation All of Grace” by C. H. Spurgeon @ www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/1064.htm


Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1979).


ESV and John MacArthur Study Bible notes

Blueletter Bible @ http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.
Once far off, now brought near

1. Remember the misery of our past estate
   Read Ephesians 2:11-12
   • Without Christ, there is no peace, rest, safety, hope.
   • Without Christ, all religious and “good” acts are dead, corrupt, and nothing but an abhorrence to God.
   • Without Christ, we have no blood covering, no-one interceding for us, no share in God’s glory.

2. See the church in oneness as it ought to be seen, through Jesus Christ
   Read Ephesians 2:11-13
   • Gentiles (ethnos) = this is the word we get “ethnic” from.
   • In Genesis 11, when God scattered the people by befuddling their languages, we see the beginning of the Gentiles, with many languages, cultures, peoples. In Genesis 12, God chooses Abram as the one whom He established His covenant with (Galatians 3:16).
   • Paul points out a serious gulf between Jews and Gentiles. Gentiles were:
     ✓ Separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel (12)
     ✓ Strangers to the covenant of promise (12)
     ✓ Having no hope and without God in the world (13).
   • But there’s good news! Both Jews and Gentiles who have been converted have been made one in Christ.
   • We (unless you are a converted Jew), are latecomers. We are the ones Paul is talking about, who were far off and drawn near by the blood.

Where do you get peace?

1. Jesus Christ Himself is our peace
   Read Ephesians 1:14
   • Jesus Christ is the essence of peace with God. Before we even think about making peace with man, we must be at peace with God. Right relationship with God always precedes right relationship with man (1 John 4).
   • Jesus Christ enables peace with man, by His blood. As we confess our prideful sin and selfishness to God, we are able to get right with man.

2. Dividing walls
   Read Ephesians 1:14-15
   • The gulf between Jews and Gentiles was so great, that it is spoken of as a “dividing wall”.
   • What was the dividing wall?
     ✓ God’s law ordered three walls (Court of Gentiles, Court of Women, Inner Court) in the Temple, beyond which Gentiles could not go.
Foreigners or Gentiles who entered beyond this wall were under the penalty of death (Ezekiel 44:7, Acts 21:27-29).

The Jews were privileged by God, having been chosen by Him. To their shame, this exclusivity became hatred and discrimination toward Gentiles on their part.

God’s intention for the wall was to separate a pure people, who stayed away from idolatries and observed God’s laws. To their shame, they made it a matter of racial and national pride.

3. Jesus Christ breaks down dividing walls
Read Ephesians 2:14-16
- Jesus Christ established peace by ending external religion, and replacing it with internal relationship with the Father.
- When we point to our righteousness as something we are doing that elevates us above others, that is pride. Jesus Christ says, “I came to break that down.”
- Jesus brought in something completely new, the reconciling that takes place as we confess our sin at the cross (2 Corinthians 5:14-21).
- If you have contention in your heart towards anyone because of their sin, go to God and get it right with Him (Romans 12:14, 17). Christ has removed all barriers to our peace.

Jesus preaches peace

1. Jesus Christ doesn’t just break down the wall, He recreates us.
Read Ephesians 2:16-19, 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Christ recreates us for the ministry of reconciliation.
- Peace (euangelizo) = means to evangelize or preach the gospel (Ephesians 2:17, 6:15, Acts 10:36, 1 Corinthians 7:15).
- Don’t judge a Christian by how well they perform; judge them by how well they show the peace of Jesus. Let Colossians 3:12-15 explain what it looks like to let the peace of Christ rule in your heart.
  - Compassion—Do you care enough to act by serving someone who is suffering?
  - Kindness—Do you have a tender heart that pulls people towards you instead of pushing them away?
  - Humility—Do you realize that you are nothing, absolutely nothing, apart from Jesus Christ? And so, you never put yourself in front of others?
  - Gentleness—When you have the right to accuse someone who has wronged you, do you refuse because Jesus has tamed you?
  - Patience—Do you hang in there, and never give up on people? Do you pray unceasingly for them?
  - Bearing with one another—Do you hold up brothers and sisters who are tired? Do you let them hold you up?
  - Forbearing—Whatever complaint you have against another, do you have forgiveness toward them? If you are thinking or talking about it, you are not forgiving like you have been forgiven.
  - Thankful—Have you thanked God today for your relationship with Him (at the cost of Christ’s blood) and for your relationships with people?

2. Peace can be considered an internal referee
Read Ephesians 2:8, Romans 8:6
- We always have access to the Father by the Holy Spirit. When you do not have abundant life and peace, your mind is set on yourself.
Making it personal:
The Peace of Christ’s Body

Rewrite Ephesians 2:11-18 in your own words

List some of the many blessings of being a Christian

Describe some of your best family memories. Study Romans 8:13-17, which speak of the intimate relationship God has granted to us as His children.
List some distinctives between Jew and Gentiles:

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In what ways is Christ our “peace”?

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In vs. 12 Paul speaks of being separate from Christ, an outcast. Have you ever felt like an outcast? Ever felt like an outsider, like you didn’t belong? Paul says we used to be foreigners. Read 1 Peter 2:11. This verse seems to say that we are currently foreigners. Which is it? Are we currently foreigners or not? How do we come to experience the nearness of God on a daily basis?

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What does “the two” refer to in vs. 14? What is the barrier in the same verse? The peace that is referred to in this verse, who is that peace between? Look at verse 17. Who is this peace between?

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Vs. 15 speaks of creating one new man, speaking of the fact that God’s purpose was to create unity in the church. Why is the unity of the church important to God?

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Resources
Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 2:11-18. These sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

“A Solemn Deprival” by C. H. Spurgeon @ www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/solemn.text

“Our Glorious Transforming” by C. H. Spurgeon @ www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/3496.htm

“Formerly Far Off, Now Brought Near” by Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III @ http://www.fpcjackson.org/resources/sermons

“God So Loved the World” by Dr. Wayne Barber @ http://preceptaustin.org/new_page_14.htm

“The Unity of the Body, Part 3” by Dr. John MacArthur @ http://www.gty.org/Resources/Print/sermons/1911

Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1979).


John MacArthur and ESV Study Bible notes
Wretched outcasts become welcomed guests

1. Paul categorizes people.
   Read Ephesians 2:19-20
   • You are either a wretched, vile, rotten enemy of God whom He loves and died for but all the same an outcast because of your refusal to look to the cross, or a welcomed fellow citizen of Heaven passing through as a sojourner.

2. The local church is part of God’s kingdom
   Read Ephesians 2:19-20, 1:22, 3:10, Hebrews 3:6, 1 Peter 2:9-11
   • Christians are fellow citizens who must be committed to a local church because that is God’s kingdom.

3. The local church is God’s household
   Read Ephesians 2:19
   • Christians commit to the local church where there are personal and intimate relationships, and a sense of belonging.

4. Christians are being built into God’s holy tabernacle
   Read Ephesians 2:19-20, 1 Corinthians 6:19
   • The Jews had experienced the brilliant manifestation of the Shekinah glory of God in the tabernacle (Exodus 24:9-18).
   • In Jesus Christ, the church is God’s temple. When the local church gathers, it is where God is worshipped, and where He dwells.

The church is God’s kingdom, household, and dwelling

1. The foundation of the church
   Read Ephesians 2:20, Isaiah 28:16, Psalm 118:22, 1 Peter 2:4-8
   • God founded the church on the teaching of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ central to everything (Matthew 16:18-19).
   • The foundation stone is Jesus Christ. All the lines of the building come off that stone, or the building will be off. Does Jesus Christ define every thing for you?
   • A church never diminishes the person and work of Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:17), and a church never undermines or diminishes the authority and sufficiency of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21).

2. The forming and fitting of the church
   Read Ephesians 2:21, 1 Kings 6:7
   • God fits and grows the members of the church together into a holy temple.
   • “In whom” means this fitting & growing is fully dependant on Jesus Christ.
   • Stones must be chipped and smoothed before they become part of the building. God forms and fits us in the quarry of our lives. Paul’s quarry included prison. We can rejoice in our quarries, where the chisel hits the stone.
3. The function of the church
Read Ephesians 2:22, Colossians 2:2

- We are living stones, being perfected by the Master builder. Each living stone is growing in godliness, each one is being sanctified.
- New stones are being added, and when the building is done, the Lord Jesus will return.
- Spurgeon described the church’s functions as:
  - A building whose stones are being shaped, cut, chiseled, and polished. There are no mistakes by the Architect shaping this structure of hearts. Each sinner who has been saved is being changed into the living stone necessary for God’s perfect building (1 Peter 2:5).
  - A habitation where God dwells through the Spirit. This habitation of God is not only our place of conversion, instruction, devotion, and safety, but it is also His place of rest (Psalm 132:13-14).
  - God’s glorious temple. The true church is not in trouble. The true church is not a place of conflict and criticism, but rather of confession and change. It is the establishment of God, against which weapons cannot be formed (Matthew 16:18). (adapted from “The Tabernacle of the Most High” 1859)

What does it look like to be part of the church?

Being a church member includes a covenant before God with the local church.
(The first six points are adapted from Joshua Harris’s book “Stop Dating the Church”)

1. Join a local church that teaches God’s Word and exalts Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives and Savior from our sins.
Read Acts 2:41
- At FFC that begins with a 13 week “Introduction to FFC” class on Sun. am.

2. Make church your priority.
Read Acts 2:42
- Instead of putting work, school, or family first, when the church gathers, you gather with them.

3. Make your pastor’s work a joy.
Read Hebrews 13:17
- Pray for him and refuse to listen to slander against him.

4. Serve the church family.
Read Galatians 5:13
- Don’t wait to be asked, look for ways to serve.

5. Give.
Read 1 Corinthians 16:2
- Include giving to the Lord (with a cheerful heart that surrenders control) in your budget.

6. Connect with the church family.
Read Hebrews 10:24-27
- Get to know your church family on the deepest levels, considering how to motivate them to love and good deeds.

7. Confess sins, and pray for each other in your church family.
Read James 5:16
- Instead of looking at confession of sin as damaging, recognize it is the only way to be healed. If you take confession and forgiveness out of the church, it stops being a hospital for the healing of sinners and becomes a festering place for the self-righteous.
Making it personal:
Being Built Together

Rewrite Ephesians 2:19-22 in your own words

Vs. 19 speaks of citizenship. What are some of the privileges of citizenship? In a way we are like a country and we are citizens of that country.
In a way, the church is like a building. See verses 20-21. How are we like a building? How is a building different from a pile of bricks?

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What is the most important concept in this passage for you today?
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How will you train to change your life accordingly?
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How will your changed life edify Christ’s body?
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Resources
Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 2:19-22. The sermons or study helps listed below may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.
✓ “The Church: Why Marry It” by Steven J. Cole @ www.fcfonline.org/sermons
✓ “The Tabernacle of the Most High” by Charles Haddon Spurgeon @ http://www.biblebb.com/files/spurgeon/0267.htm
✓ “The Unity of the Body, Part 3” by Dr. John MacArthur @ http://www.gty.org/Resources/Print/sermons/1911
✓ Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1979).
✓ John MacArthur Study Bible notes
✓ ESV Study Bible notes
✓ Blueletter Bible @ http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.
11. The Mystery

Revelation of the mystery

1. Prisoner for a mystery
   Read Ephesians 3:1
   - Paul begins to pray for the Ephesians in vs. 1, but stops to explain something, and does not pick his prayer up again until vs. 14.
   - He explains the reason he had been a prisoner for five years, because of the mystery he had been preaching to the Ephesians and all Gentiles.
   - Paul never calls himself a prisoner of the ones imprisoning him, but a prisoner of Jesus Christ.
   - Note Paul’s perspective in the face of suffering. From a human standpoint, his suffering was unjust. Although he did not deserve what he was going through, he understood and affirmed the sovereignty of God over his sufferings.
   - God is sovereign over everything, including our trials (Exodus 4:11, Isaiah 45:7, Acts 17:24-27).

2. The gift of suffering
   Read Ephesians 3:2
   - Paul had been given (or dispensed) stewardship of the mystery, and it landed him a lot of suffering. However, Paul describes it as a dispensation or stewardship of “God’s grace.”
   - Paul repeats this phrase, showing us that he was amazed by the grace God had given him (3:2, 7, 8).
   - We can also be joyfully grateful for the trials God gives us by remembering and focusing on God’s grace.
   - Paul’s life evidenced his desire to be a faithful steward (1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 1 Peter 4:10). Does your life evidence faithfulness in the face of difficulty?

3. Everybody loves a mystery.
   Read Ephesians 3:3-4
   - Mystery (musterion) = that which God has hidden and only God can reveal.
   - Revelation (apokalupsis) = to take the lid off, uncover, pull the curtain back.
   - You can’t understand gospel grace by human reasoning, it is God who reveals it to you (1 Corinthians 2:7-10).
   - Paul entitles the mystery as “the mystery of Christ.”
**Explanation of the mystery**

1. **How was the mystery revealed?**
   **Read Ephesians 3:5**
   - Now (νῦν) = Now, at the present time. The revealing occurred at a point in time. It is now revealed, God isn’t constantly revealing.
   - It was revealed to the ones who were the foundation of the church (apostles and prophets).
   - All divine revelation is through the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

2. **What was the mystery?**
   **Read Ephesians 3:6-7**
   - Gentiles and Jews are fellow heirs (Galatians 3:29). Everything that was promised to Israel, has been given to the church today (Ezekiel 36:26-27).
   - Gentiles and Jews who believe are fellow members of the same body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).
   - Gentiles and Jews are fellow partakers equally of the gospel, God’s promise in Christ (Galatians 3:14, 22).
   - Paul is telling the Gentiles not to take the mystery for granted. Remembering the amazing grace we have been given puts God’s perspective on our trials. It removes bitterness, victimized thinking, blaming, and criticism.

**Proclamation of the mystery**

1. **Look who God chooses to unfold the mystery**
   **Read Ephesians 3:8-9**
   - The mystery of the church was hidden to the Old Testament. The prophets saw Christ coming and setting up his kingdom, but did not see the age in which we live (Isaiah 19:23-25).
   - They did not see a time when Jew and Gentile would be one in the church. At that time they were separated with great animosity and hatred.
   - They did not see a time where we would all be one in Christ, with Christ in us, the hope of glory. They did not see a time when the riches of God would be freely available to every person on earth.
   - It’s encouraging that God chose Paul, an enemy of the church to be reconciled to Himself and preach the mystery. There’s hope for all of us!
   - The Jews and Gentiles were so angry with Paul for preaching this mystery that he had been imprisoned and would eventually be killed.

2. **Paul, who had been given the job to preach these riches, prayed in 1:18 for our heart’s eyes to be opened to the riches of the church.**
   **Read Ephesians 3:8b**
   - Some of the riches of the church are:
     - **Goodness** and patience (Romans 2:4)
     - **Wisdom** and knowledge (Romans 11:33)
     - **Grace** (Ephesians 1:7)
     - **Mercy** (Ephesians 2:4)
     - **Person of God** (Ephesians 3:16)
     - **Love** (Ephesians 3:18-19)
     - **Assurance** (Colossians 2:2)
     - **Ministry of the Word of God** (Colossians 3:16)
     - **Blessings** (1 Timothy 6:17)
Rewrite Ephesians 3:1-8 in your own words.

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Look for what we can learn about Paul himself from this passage. Look for sentences where Paul says, "I am...."

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In verse 2, Paul talks about the dispensation of God’s grace, as translated by the NKJV. How does your translation have it?

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Paul had a job. He knew what the job was. Do you have an awareness of what God’s job is for you? Are you obedient in doing it?

Circle the word mystery each time it appears in Ephesians 3. What is the mystery?

Paul makes the point that in the past this was hidden; now it is made known. Is it completely known now, or are there still things about the faith that are mysterious to you? If you had half an hour to ask God anything you wanted, what would you ask Him?

In verse 6, Paul mentions that we are heirs. What is the difference between a heir and a hair and a hare?

When Paul says (vs. 8) that he was less than the least of the other apostles, do you think he really thought this, or do you think he was just acting humble? Can you be humble and confident at the same time?

Resources
Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 3:1-8. These sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

“Ephesians 3:1-3: God’s Divine Mystery” by Dr. Wayne Barber @ http://preceptaustin.org/new_page_16.htm

“The Mystery Revealed, Part 1” by Dr. John MacArthur @ http://www.gty.org/Resources/Print/sermons/1912

“The Mystery Revealed, Part 2” by Dr. John MacArthur @ http://www.gty.org/Resources/Print/sermons/1913

“Grateful for the Gospel” by Steven J. Cole @ www.fcfonline.org/sermons

Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1979).


ESV and John MacArthur Study Bible notes
The rich mystery of the church unfolds

1. The church age was planned by God in Christ and revealed in Christ. Read Ephesians 3:9-10
   • Church (οἰκιναμβία) = dispensation, stewardship, age
   • God had planned this age before time, but it had been hidden from understanding until now.
   • In the church age, all men can avail themselves of the riches in Christ. The only heritage necessary to be part of the church is to be a sinner saved by grace.
   • All who are in Christ can walk in unity. Paul will explain how in Ephesians 4:6.

Purpose and privilege of the mystery

1. Who are the “powers (rulers) and authorities in heavenly places”? Read Ephesians 3:10, 1 Peter 1:12, 1 Corinthians 11:10
   • “Heavenly places” is used 5 times in Ephesians. There is an audience watching our universe, a reality that Ephesians does not ignore.
   • Angels and demons are watching the church, and the church is revealing the mystery to them.

2. The church’s purpose is of cosmic significance. As we live in obedience, angels watch and see the wisdom of God. Read Ephesians 3:10
   • The purpose of the church is to glorify God, a glorious purpose that far exceeds our earthly realm (Revelation 19:1-8).
   • This purpose is eternal, cosmic, and universal. The church exists to give glory to the all-powerful, Almighty God of not just earth but the whole universe.
   • Our job is to show God’s wisdom to the watching angels. We do this by living out our roles as God intended us to, and by using our gifts to edify the church.
   • Manifold (πολυποικίλος) = multi-colored, many aspects or facets, like an intricately cut diamond (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).
   • One of the things the angels are watching for is whether women are submissive to their husbands (1 Corinthians 11:10). When angels see the church living in the harmony that can only be achieved by leadership and submission, they see God’s wisdom in action, and glorify Him.

3. What a privilege the mystery reveals. Read Ephesians 3:11-12
   • God’s grace to the church is a special privilege that is enjoyed in the church age.
   • No longer can only certain people (high priest) have access to God. Every
person in the church approaches Him boldly (Luke 1:8-10, Hebrews 4:16).

• You can approach God with freedom and confidence.

Therefore don’t get discouraged

1. How to weed out roots of discouragement.
   Read Ephesians 3:13
   • Lose heart (ekkakeo) = grow weary, be discouraged, be faint hearted.
   • We are not to be discouraged. The following five points are necessary to weed out discouragement (Wayne Barber).

2. Be excited about salvation!
   Read Ephesians 1, 2, 3:1-2.
   • We get discouraged because we have a low view of salvation.
   • Paul has just written about his salvation and redemption with awe and excitement. We lose heart when we forget that our salvation was planned for us before we were even created. We become faint hearted when we forget that we are brand new creations in Christ.
   • Is your greatest privilege in the world having your name written in the Lamb’s Book of Life?

3. Surrender yourself to God’s ministry for you in the church.
   Read 2 Corinthians 4:1, 2 Corinthians 3:5-6, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.
   • Paul’s ministry was not something he prayed for or trained for. God raised it up and defined it. For Paul it meant 5 years of prison.
   • God is already at work, initiating and working out His purposes through the church. Get involved in what He is already doing, in His strength, not yours.
   • When you have an idea for ministry, and it doesn’t work out the way you want it to, instead of falling into discouragement and the evil of a critical spirit, surrender it.
   • If you are critical of and not involved in the church’s work, are you trying to achieve something for God apart from surrender to Him? You can forget ministry. Surrender yourself to God for whatever ministry He does through you.

4. Remember that you serve people for God’s purposes—for His glory.
   Read 2 Corinthians 4:15-16, Philippians 4:11.
   • What’s your perspective? When it becomes about us and how we are being treated, we forget God’s purposes. We forget why we are serving others, we start to complain, and we become discouraged.
   • Maybe you don’t like it that the church tells you about gifts and then nobody plugs you in. Along the way you have forgotten that it is not about you, it is about God and His timing.

5. Persevere without focusing on earthly results.
   Read Galatians 6:9.
   • You reap later than you sow. Be willing to persevere, trust, and be faithful.
   • You reap more than you sow. If you sow sin, you are in big trouble (Proverbs 13:15).

6. Hang in there when the mundane loses excitement.
   Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13
   • Joy comes from doing whatever you do quietly, as unto the Lord.
Rewrite Ephesians 3:8-13 in your own words.

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Vs. 12 says we can approach God through freedom and confidence. How would you describe your prayer life in terms of freedom and confidence?

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What would it take to become people who routinely approach God with freedom and confidence?

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Paul asks that they not be discouraged. What kinds of things cause you to be discouraged?

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How do you treat yourself when you are discouraged?

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How should you treat yourself when you are discouraged?

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How do you beat discouragement? What steps will you take this week to root out discouragement?

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Resources

Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 3:8-13. These sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

“The Mystery Revealed” by Dr. John MacArthur
http://www.gty.org/Resources/sermons/1914

“Ephesians 3:13: Roots of Discouragement” by Dr. Wayne Barber

“Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians” (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1979).


John MacArthur Study Bible notes

ESV Study Bible notes

Blueletter Bible @ http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.
Prayer

1. Why does Paul pray this enabling prayer?
   Read Ephesians 3:14-15, 1:17-18
   • In chapter 1 Paul prayed for hearts to be enlightened to the riches in Christ. Now he prays for application of lives to the riches in Christ.
   • The reason he asks the Creator to do this work in Christians is so that they will not lose heart (Ephesians 4:13).

Strengthened inner beings

1. Our bodies are decaying outwardly, but our inner man must be strengthened with spiritual energy.
   Read Ephesians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 4:16, 2 Timothy 4:17
   • Often we exercise and take vitamins for outer man strengthening, but miss our inner man strengthener—God’s Word (Psalm 119:9-11).
   • Our inner man is only strong when controlled by the Word of God and the Spirit of God (Colossians 3:16, Galatians 5:16).

2. A strengthened inner being begins with weak, needy dependence.
   Read 2 Corinthians 12:9, Romans 8:26-27
   • Inner strength grows by faithfully drinking the Word, relying on Spirit power.

Indwelt by Christ

1. We need this inner strengthening so that Christ can be at home in us.
   Read Ephesians 3:17a
   • There’s a difference between living in a house and really being at home there.
   • Dwell (katoikeo) = oikeo means to live in a house, kata means down. Together they mean to be intensely at home, really settled down at home.
   • Are you so yielded to the Word of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit of God that your heart is repentant? Or does Christ have to constantly be fixing and adjusting and confronting and chastening?
   • Does Christ sit in the living room of your heart waiting and waiting for you to fellowship with Him?
   • Is there a hidden closet of sin that you don’t confess? If Christ is at home in you, you are not defensive, accusing, or critical. Instead, you let Him open the closet and shine His light, readily accepting and learning from rebuke.
   • In order to do that, it takes a strengthened inner man.
Transformed into love

1. With Christ at home in us, He transforms us into love.
   Read Ephesians 3:17b-19
   - Christ transforms our lives so that love is the root and ground of who we are (Matthew 22:37-38, 1 John 4:19-21).
   - When Christ is settled down in your heart, you are dominated by incomprehensible love — no matter how you are being treated (Proverbs 10:12, Proverbs 17:9, 1 Peter 4:8).
   - Christ’s love surpasses knowledge. It must be defined Scripturally, not according to personal perceptions of love that are skewed by culture, personal background, and religious traditions.
   - We can love as Christ does—limitless height and depth and breadth and width. Christ’s love extends as high as the heavens, with forgiveness that removes sin as far as east is from the west (Psalm 103:11-12).
   - Paul prays for experiential knowledge of this love. You can’t teach this, you have to live it by experiencing Christ’s love through forgiveness, then pouring His love onto first those in your home, then even to your enemies.

Filled with the fullness of God

1. Whatever you are filled with is what dominates you.
   Read Ephesians 3:19-20, 4:13, 2 Corinthians 3:18
   - What dominates, or controls you? What do you think about most? Is it God’s grace and truth?
   - Or, do you walk around faithlessly, as if inadequate or unable to live full of grace and truth (John 1:14, Colossians 1:19, Isaiah 40:28-31).
   - Filled (pleroo) = filled full, nothing else needed to satisfy (Acts 13:52 vs. Romans 1:29).

2. When the Holy Spirit strengthens our inner man, when Christ indwells us, when His love has mastered us, and His fullness overflows in us, then God’s ability will be manifested in our lives with exceeding abundance.
   Read Ephesians 3:20
   - Have you met the conditions necessary to claim this verse?
   - It is God who works ability in us that is beyond comprehension—He empties us of self and sin, and fully satisfies. He gives strength for trials, persistence in problems, and power for edification of the body.
   - When we play church, live in fear and worry, are dominated by self-pity, allow negative thoughts, think critically instead of excellently, etc., we have no right to expect the living God to do greater works in us (John 14:12-15).
   - When God governs our thoughts and requests, He puts into our hearts the things we then ask for that are above what we ever dared to think or imagine. This is His power at work in us. Anything less is mere religion.

God will be glorified in the church

1. Why would God do all of this? He wants and will get glory in the church.
   Read Ephesians 3:21, Philippians 3:3
   - We cannot live fickle, problem-focused lives and say we belong to God.
   - Our God is the mighty, powerful, transforming and saving God who shows Himself through the church. Unto Him be praise for eternity.
In v. 14, Paul mentions kneeling. What are our options as far as posture and prayer?

For what occasions might you kneel in prayer? Does God hear us better when we kneel? Would a person be any less spiritual if he never kneeled?

What kinds of things contribute to God hearing us or not? (Psalm 4:3, Psalm 10:17, Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 41:17).

Pal prays that out of God’s incredible power he would strengthen the saints in their inner being. To explore what this is, think about the opposite. What would be the opposite of a strong inner being?

Do we have anything to do with a strong inner being? Or is it just something God does for us as a gift?

Have you read the little book, “My Heart, Christ’s Home”? It is a metaphor of Christ dwelling in our hearts—the picture of a physical house that represents our hearts. As Christ indwells the study of our house, what does this imply? As God indwells the work shed of our lives, what does this imply? As God indwells the living room of our lives, what does this imply?

What difference would it make for us if we came to understand how deeply God loves us? What difference would it make in your life at 10 am tomorrow morning?
How do we communicate God’s love to a world that thinks God is either bored with them or mad at them?

What does it mean to be filled with the fullness of God? To what end has God filled me? Study Psalm 19:1, Isaiah 43:7, 5. What is God’s purpose in creation?

Describe a time when you were affected by the love of Christ.

List some ways Christ showed his compassion during His earthly ministry. For examples of Christ’s compassion, look at his responses to the crowds in Matthew 9:36–38, 14:13–14, and 15:29–39, and at his interactions with the two blind men in Matthew 20:29–34, with the leper in Mark 1:40–42, with the grieving mother in Luke 7:11–15, and with Jairus & the hemorrhaging woman in Luke 8:40–56.

Resources

Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 3:14-21. These sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

“Experiencing the Power of Christ” by Dr. John MacArthur @ http://www.gty.org/Resources/Print/sermons/80-121
“The Love of Jesus, What It Is, None but His Loved Ones Know” by Charles Haddon Spurgeon @ http://www.sermonaudio.com
“The Church and the Surprising Offense of God’s Love” by Jonathan Leeman (II:Crossway, 2010).
“Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians” (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1979).
ESV and John MAcArthur Study Bible notes
Moving from doctrine to duty

1. An appeal to worthy walking
   Read Ephesians 4:1-2
   • In chapters 1-3, Paul has set up the doctrine of Jesus Christ. He now moves to the duties of Christ’s followers.
   • Paul has made it clear that he is speaking to the church, and that the church is the vehicle in which Christianity is to be worked out.
   • After appealing to the calling that has been described and prayed about in ch. 1-3, Paul gives 4 specific commands in verse 2.
   • In verse three, he introduces the command that will be explained in the next three chapters—the command for unity in the body.
   • This is the command Jesus left us with, the command that shows a watching world who Jesus is (John 17:21-23)

2. Humility or lowliness
   Read Ephesians 4:2, Matthew 5:3-5
   • Humility (tapeinophrosynē) = lowly minded, not high and exalted, with a deep sense of one’s moral littleness.
   • We must each realize that we are not the most important person in the world after all, and that we live in deadness, with utter need for life-saving help (Ephesians 2).
   • Humility is willing to acknowledge personal sin and God’s grace, and is willing to do whatever it takes to serve others for God’s glory.
   • How does humility interacts with people?
     ✧ Was Elijah humble on Mt. Carmel when he contested and taunted the priests? Yes. In boldness and bluntness, He was defending the truth and honor of Almighty God (1 Kings 18:20-40).
     ✧ Was Elijah humble when crawled under a tree and stated that he wanted to die? No. He was groveling, but he had elevated himself above God’s plan (1 Kings 19:1-15).

3. Gentleness or meekness
   Read Ephesians 4:2
   • Gentleness (praotes) = mild, describes an animal that has been trained.
   • Unity is the overriding duty of Ephesians 4-6.
   • Relationships in the body of Christ are precious and fragile. Gentleness moves us from pushy self-absorption into being compassionately others-oriented.

4. Patience
   Read Ephesians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:13
   • Patience (makrothymia) = to be long burned, slowness in avenging wrongs, persevering, having a long fuse.
• The opposite of a long fuse is a short fuse, or a switch. Can you be switched on to anger quickly?
• We must guard unity from threats and divisions until Christ returns. Without patience we will give up on people, and become critical and disgusted.
• Patience means you have to be humble and gentle for a long time.

5. Forbearance, or bearing with one another
Read Ephesians 4:2, Colossians 3:12-13
• Forbearance (anecho) = hold up, sustain, bear
• We must be patient with people who do the same annoying things over and over.
• Unity will grow if we keep hanging in there with people even when we are annoyed and irritated by them.

Unity

1. The importance of unity
Read Ephesians 4:3-6
• Many metaphors about the church are used in the Bible. All of them, except the metaphor of the body, are repeated in both the Old Testament (referring to Israel) and New Testament (referring to the church). The metaphor of the body is unique to the church.
• It is a perfect illustration of how the church functions, with different parts (diversity) that need each other to function well (dependence).
• Believers are in Christ, and therefore in His body, the church.
• Ephesians focuses on the basic doctrine of the church—what it is and how believers function in unity, in one body.
• Only when we practice obedient unity does Christ come to full stature in His church (Ephesians 4:13).

2. How can we achieve unity amid individuality and uniqueness
Read Ephesians 4:3-6
• Body—unity is experienced in the fellowship of believers in the church body.
• Spirit—Unity is activated by the Holy Spirit who empowers fellowship.
• Hope—Unity is focused on the glorious future to which we are called.
• Lord—Unity is founded on our singular commitment to the Lord.
• Faith—Unity is based on the truths of God’s Word.
• Baptism—Unity is symbolized by this sign of entry into the body.
• God—Unity is willed by our Father, who keeps us for eternity.

3. Doctrine unites, opinions divide
Read Ephesians 4:3-6, Philippians 4:8
• The above list shows the areas in which Christians must all agree, on which we are to focus our thoughts (Hebrews 12:1-3).
• There is no room for opinion in the Ephesians 4:3-6.
• Petty differences in theology should never be allowed to dissolve unity.
• It is a focus on (a) person(s) or thing(s) other than the truths of God’s Word that divides unity. Thoughts that obsess on concepts other than these truths are sinful—resulting in self-absorption, self-righteousness, negativity, criticism, disunity. Focus instead on the glory of God and our task to edify His body.
Rewrite Ephesians 4:1-6 in your own words.

When Paul speaks of being a prisoner of Christ, is that a metaphor?

Vs. 1 speaks of the calling. What does the calling mean in this context?

Vs. 2 contains several commands. What exactly does it mean to be humble? Can you be humble and super confident at the same time? How do we go about developing humility? Does it take a long time? Is it hard?
Paul commands that we be gentle. Does gentleness come easily for you? What is the opposite of gentleness? Why is gentleness important? Is there ever time when we should not be gentle?

We are commanded to “be patient, bearing with one another.” Is this one quality or two? Does patience come easily for you? How have you learned lessons in patience?

The next few verses speak of unity. Why is unity important? As we grow in Christ, do we tend to become more alike, or more dissimilar? Read 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13.

How can we be unified, yet maintain our individuality and uniqueness?

Resources
Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 4:1-6. These sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

“Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians” (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1979).
John MacArthur Study Bible notes
ESV Study Bible notes, Blueletter Bible @ http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.
1. The price of Christ’s gifts.
Read Ephesians 4:7-10
- These grace gifts are not the same thing as talents or abilities, although they involve the use of talents and abilities. Gifts are always used in a manner that brings unity and edifies the body.
- The giving of grace gifts ties into Christ’s triumphant resurrection and ascension.
- Christ ascended into heaven, and now, as Lord of the universe, He fills all things. He qualifies to give these gifts (Psalm 68:18).
- Paul points to what it cost God for us to have these gifts—His Son on the cross. It is important it is for us not be critical of others’ use of gifts, but busy putting our own gifts to God’s use.
- Jesus had to ascend and descend before the gifts that make Him visible in the world today could be given.

2. The purpose of Christ’s gifts.
Read Ephesians 4:12, John 17:21-23
- What is the goal of these gifts of grace?
- The gifts are given so that they will be put to use, cause the church to function in unity, and bring Jesus Christ to visibility in the world (Ephesians 4:13).

3. The people of Christ’s gifts.
Read Ephesians 4:11, John 17:21-23
- These gifts are for men in leadership, whom God has given to the church.
- Apostles—Personally called by Jesus Christ, and received direct revelation from God in writing the New Testament.
  - The number of NT apostles equals the number of OT tribes (Luke 22:28-29, Matthew 19:28).
  - The apostles laid down the doctrine of the church from place to place (Acts 2:42). The last time we see them together is in Acts 15 at the Council of Jerusalem.
  - There are also apostello (plural) who differ from the 12 Apostles in that the church sent them, such as in 2 Corinthians 8:23. This is ongoing today as evangelists.
- Prophets—Lined up with the apostles and preached locally, sometimes receiving direct revelation.
  - They stayed in an area to establish local practical application of the doctrine that had been taught by the Apostles.
  - The twelve Apostles and these prophets are not in ministry today, having laid the foundation by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:5, 2 Peter 1:19-21).
- Evangelists—Similar to apostles who went from area to area bringing the doc-
trine of the Gospel.

- An evangelist is someone who presents Christ where Christ is not known, wins people to Christ, establishes and builds a church, ordains elders to take over leadership, and moves on.
- Pastors-teachers—Similar to prophets in that they stayed in one place in a teaching and shepherding role
  - It is a hyphenated word, better interpreted as shepherd-teacher.
  - The word interpreted pastors (Pōimen) is actually shepherd.
  - A pastor teaches, shepherds and builds the flock. A pastor’s two jobs could be described as “lead and feed” (Acts 20:28).

**Christ’s gifts at work**

1. Christ’s gifts and perfection.
   **Read Ephesians 4:13, Matthew 5:48**
   - There are three types of perfection in Scripture.
     - **Positional** perfection where we are perfect before God in Christ (1 Corinthians 2:6, Colossians 2:10, Hebrews 10:14).
     - **Ultimate** perfection when we have been taken to heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
     - **Practical** perfection where we experience God’s grace at work by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is what Paul is talking about (Ephesians 4:13).
   - The men to whom these gifts have been given cannot make us positionally perfect nor ultimately perfect, but they are used to help those in the church move towards practical perfection. This is not sinlessness, but a moving from infancy towards maturity.
   - The gifted men have this goal—to equip the saints. They are not responsible for how many, but for how they are equipped (Colossians 2:18, 4:12).
   - Every Christian should be engaged in spiritual service to the body of Christ throughout the week (1 Peter 4:10).
   - There should be no distinction between laity and clergy in who spreads the gospel and makes disciples. It is the pastors responsibility to teach the body how.

2. Christ’s perfection results in four things.
   **Read Ephesians 4:14-16**
   - **Unity**—Maturity brings unity. If you are out of temper, bitter, or resentful toward a brother or sister, bury it! It needs to be put off—crucified with Christ, and buried. In Christ’s resurrection power, put on forgiveness and love.
   - **Knowledge**—Maturity brings knowledge of Christ, deep fellowship with God (2 Corinthians 3:18, 1 John 2:13-14).
   - **Steadfastness**—Maturity brings discerning faithfulness and stability. Unlike children who run to every voice, with growth, Christians remain firm and faithful to sound doctrine. They are no longer swayed by compelling voices.
   - **Loving truth**—Maturity speaks the truth in love. Christians may not speak with cold, chilling indifference, but instead offer loving, caring, dynamic evangelism to the world.
Making it personal:

Body Life Gifts

Rewrite Ephesians 4:7-16 in your own words.

As part of Christ’s body, how do you reflect part of Christ’s character and carry out your special role in His work?

What are your spiritual gifts? How did you come to discover your spiritual gifts? Why is understanding your spiritual gifts important? How could we discover the gifts we have? What is the goal (see vs. 13).
What is the character of an infant? (see vs. 14)

What influences have moved you away from spiritual infancy?

Vs. 15 speaks of speaking the truth in love? Why is it important in relationships to speak the truth? Why is it important that we do so in love?

What is the most important concept in this passage for you today?

Resources

Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 4:7-16. These sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

“Building the Body of Christ, Part 2” by Dr. John MacArthur @ http://www.gty.org/Resources/sermons/1927

Life Application Study Bible


John MacArthur Study Bible notes

ESV Study Bible notes

Blueletter Bible @ http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.
Futility vs. meaningfulness

1. How to have a life of futility that lacks meaning.
   Read Ephesians 4:17-19
   - This term “Gentiles” is the term used for Gentile Christians, not pagans.
   - Paul explains a life without meaning in these verses, by addressing those other Christians who do not walk in the unity of Ephesians 4:12-16. He states the following about them:
     ✖️ Their thinking is futile—devoid of truth and appropriateness, perverse, depraved, wanting of vigor, full of frailty.
     ✖️ The understanding of their minds is darkened—they are deprived of light. This is the opposite of what Paul prayed for in Ephesians 1:18.
     ✖️ They are alienated from the life of God—this means they are shut out from fellowship and intimacy with God.
   - Reasons are given as to why this frightening, non-unifying thinking has happened:
     ✖️ The first reason is that there is ignorance in them—they lack knowledge about divine things and lack moral discernment.
     ✖️ The second reason is that their hearts are blind—the Greek word for blind means their hearts have become covered with a callous, their perception has dulled.
     ✖️ The third reason is that they have ceased to feel pain or grief. Instead of bearing the troubles of those in the body with compassion, a self-controlled insensibility to the pain of those in the body has taken over.
     ✖️ The next reason is that they have permitted themselves to be given or delivered or committed to unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence.
     ✖️ This work or endeavor or pain has had impure motives other than the building up of the body of Christ.
     ✖️ And finally, they have done this with a covetous or greedy or materialistic mindset.

Change Paradigm

1. How to have the abundant life that Christ gives.
   Read Ephesians 4:20-21, John 10:10
   - Hear Paul’s admonishing tone—"You have not so learned Christ."
   - Life with Christ is abundant, joyful, and free (John 10:10, Philippians 4:4, John 8:32).
   - Don’t miss the contingency phrase “if.” Life with Christ is not futile “if” you have heard him and have been taught by Him.
   - This is why the important gifts to the leaders of the church are evangelizing and teacher-shepherding. Notice the importance Paul places on doctrine.
• Paul goes on in Ephesians 4:22-24 to teach the three-part change paradigm that he echoes in Colossians 3 and Romans 12:1-2.

2. Put off
Read Ephesians 4:22
• Change begins with identifying sinful thoughts, choices, motives, actions, and beliefs.
• These belong to the old man, and must be put off (2 Corinthians 5:17).
• The root of these sins that must be put off, is found in deceitful desires.
• When you find yourself in patterns of interaction or behavior that don’t unify or edify the body, identify what you want so badly that you are willing to sin to get it.

3. Renew your mind
Read Ephesians 4:23
• Don’t miss this aspect of the change process. If you simply put off and put on, it is nothing more than behavioral modification.
• What Scripture speaks to the change you need to make?
• How does God’s Word address the thinking or behavior that needs to change?
• Have you memorized and meditated on this Scripture (Psalm 119:9-11)?
• Unless God’s Word renews your mind, the change will not last.

4. Put on
Read Ephesians 4:24
• Replace sinful, defeating, and destructive thoughts and behaviors with the new man.
• What you put on is Christ’s righteousness that has been imputed onto you. Put on the holiness without which you will not see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).

Putting Christ’s change paradigm into practice

1. Our Creator knows how to change us. No matter who it be, this is the only way.
Read Ephesians 4:22-24
• Whether it be a others-harmer or a self-harmer, a drug addict or an approval addict, a recalcitrant child or a rebellious adult—this is Christ’s paradigm for change.
• It is the paradigm that works in poverty stricken inner-city homeless shelters and wealthy suburban mansion-churches.
• Don’t miss the reason why the same paradigm works everywhere. The root of all problems is the same—a deceitful heart (vs. 22). The solution for all problems is the same—the righteousness and holiness of God in Jesus Christ (vs. 24).
• When someone is giving you a hard time, instead of trying to figure out what’s deceiving their heart, take a look at your own heart. Instead of trying to figure out what Christ’s righteousness would look like in their lives, put it into practice in your own.
• Paul will now move into a list of specific areas in which believers need to deal with sin. First he tackles 5 common areas where the church struggles in speaking the truth in love with one other, and how the change paradigm will look in that instance (4:25-32). Then he tackles moral problems and the necessity of walking in light (5:1-22). Finally, he moves in areas where authority is often undermined (5:23-6:9).
Rewrite Ephesians 4:17-24 in your own words.

What do you think Paul means by futility in vs. 17?
What are some examples of futile thinking in our world today?

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Look at Vs. 19. Are the people referred to in this passage ever satisfied?

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What is meant by the old self, in verse 22?

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Vs. 23 speaks of a new attitude. How would you describe the new attitude of life in Christ?

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What attitudes or actions do you need to renew your mind about so you can put off the old and put on the new?

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Resources
Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 4:17-24. These sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

“The Changed Life” by Steven Cole @ http://www.fcfonline.org/content/1/sermons/030908M.pdf

“Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians” (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1979).


John MacArthur Study Bible notes

ESV Study Bible notes

Blueletter Bible @ http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.
17. Body Life Talk

When you put on the new man you communicate for unity

1. Christian communication comes from Christian heart attitudes
   Read Ephesians 4:1-6
   • Do you have these concerns in mind when you communicate with others?
     - Are you concerned about setting a good example of Christ (4:1)?
     - Our primary concern must be holding Christ’s name high, not ours.
     - Are you concerned about being completely humble (4:2)? Are you willing to sacrifice all interests and desires (Luke 9:23)?
     - Are you concerned about being gentle (4:2)? Are you firm while tenderly watching out for the one you are speaking with?
     - Are you concerned with patience (4:2)? Patience removes curt, caustic, or cynical speech.
     - Are you concerned about harmony in the church (4:3-6)? Kingdom purposes need to come above your personal preferences.
   • Christian verbal communication requires the practice of “putting off” and “renewing the mind” and “putting on.”

2. Verbal communication
   Read Ephesians 4:25-32
   • Put off falsehood and put on speaking the truth (vs. 25).
     - The renewed mind recognizes that speaking lies separates the body of Christ.
     - Masked deception can include: exaggerating in order to make a point that wins the argument, changing the subject if you don’t want to address a subject that needs to be addressed, promising without making an effort to keep the promise, or creating a diversion or delay for your intents and purposes.
   • Put off bitterness and put on speaking reconciliation (vs. 26-27).
     - The renewed mind understands that bitterness gives the devil a foothold.
     - Note that Paul does not condemn all anger, only sinful anger that gives the devil a landing pad. When the devil gets this ground, a wedge comes between brothers and sisters in the church, and unity is compromised.
     - Bitterness can take many forms that include: clamming up but still rehearsing the offense in your mind, or responding coldly to the person with whom you disagree.
   • Put off unwholesome speech and put on edifying speech (vs. 29-30).
     - The renewed mind realizes that ungracious speech grieves the Holy Spirit.
     - Unwholesome speech includes: any choice of words that does not build up the individual, calling names, shifting blame, lewd or degrading remarks, empty flattery or catering to perceived “felt needs.”
Instead, help people see how the Bible frees us from our desires.

- Put off malicious speech and put on gracious, thoughtful speech (vs. 31-32).
- The renewed mind does this because it imitates Jesus Christ, the head of the body.
- Malicious speech includes: explosive agitation, loud protests, words that damages another’s reputation—all from a desire to hurt the other person.
- Do you say “whatever it takes” to promote your views? Are people tense or afraid around you? It’s time to focus on what Christ did on the cross, and extend the pardon He gives you to others.

Forgiveness

1. Cultivating forgiveness in the body of Christ.

Read Ephesians 4:32

- Forgiveness is absolutely essential to relationships. We cannot have a relationship with Christ apart from it, nor with man.
- We must create an atmosphere of forgiveness. Unless the habits and practices of bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking and malice are deliberately put off, the atmosphere is polluted.
- We must choose an attitude of forgiveness. Attitudinal forgiveness grows in a tender heart that is soft to self-sins and ready to interact in sorrowful humility. An attitude of forgiveness is a quiet thing, a thing that happens between God and the person who has been hurt or offended.
- Forgiveness is never based on the actions of the other person, rather on the blood of Christ. Forgiveness flows from the cross, as we kneel there in recognition of our own sin instead of in focus on other’s sin (2 Timothy 2:24).
- We must perform the actions of forgiveness—frankly, frequently, freely, fully, and finally (The 5 f’s are adapted “When Holy Wedlock turns to Holy Deadlock” by Dr. David Jeremiah).
  - Forgive frankly. This requires honest acknowledgement of the sin rather than vague “if I sinned” or “if I offended you” statements (Eph. 4:25).
  - Forgive frequently. Jesus tells us to forgive seven times a day (Luke 17:3-4) or seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22). Whatever it takes.
  - Forgive freely. Forgiveness does not place contingencies on a person. They will still sin against us until they are dead, because we live in a fallen world.
  - Forgive fully. God forgives us fully, and that is the way we are to forgive others (Colossians 3:13, Psalm 103:15).
  - Forgive finally. Maybe we can’t forget, but we must decide not to remember, we must choose not to dwell on the sins of others in our minds and not to speak of them again (Isaiah 43:25).

Generosity

1. Put off stealing and put on hard work.

Read Ephesians 4:28

- The renewed mind desires to help those in need—generosity, then, is to be our motivation for working.
- God, in the most generous act of all time, gave up His Son so we could be saved.
- Sacrificial generosity imitates God.
Rewrite Ephesians 4:25-32 in your own words.

Vs. 25 speaks of speaking truthfully. Name some of the ways there are to lie.

How does it bring glory to God and benefit me to be scrupulously honest? Does it ever hurt me to be honest?

Vs. 26 speaks of anger. How long can anger last? How long are we allowed to be angry? Read Psalm 37, proverbs 19:11, Proverbs 27:4, Ecclesiastes 7:9.

What does vs. 27 mean about giving the devil a foothold? What are some ways we could give the devil a foothold?
What is the goal of work according to vs. 28? What are 5 ways you could steal?

What are some examples or categories of unwholesome talk? The verse speaks of our talk benefiting those who listen. What would be a specific example of how someone’s talk benefited you?

Look at vs. 30. What are some ways we could grieve the Holy Spirit?

Look at vs. 31. What are six things we need to take out of our lives like trash? How do each of these point the person who holds on to them?

Who have you known that has exemplified Ephesians 4:32? What is the basis of our love and forgiveness for each other?

What do the words “kind” and “tenderhearted” and “forgiving” mean? By your actions, what do they mean?

What is the most important verse in this passage for you today?

Resources
Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 4:25-32. These sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

“When Holy Wedlock Turns to Holy Deadlock” Dr. David Jeremiah @ http://www.davidjeremiah.org/shop/p-1880-holy-wedlock-turns-to-holy-deadlock.aspx

Blueletter Bible @ http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.
18. Body Life Walk

Imitators

1. Imitate God
Read Ephesians 5:1-2
• Imitate (mimetes) = to mime someone means that you exaggerate them without a saying word.
• In other words, we don’t talk about love, rather we walk it, live it, express it, show it—with Christ in our minds at all times.
• The only way to walk in love is as God’s beloved, forgiven children who are ready to forgive as we’ve been forgiven (Ephesians 4:32).
• Walking in love, as an imitator of God’s self-sacrificial giving of Christ on the cross, shows up in how much you forgive (Colossians 3:13).
• The sin offerings in Numbers were repugnant-smelling. When we love, it is a fragrant offering, a sweet smelling aroma that God likes (Philippians 4:18).

Pick heavenly partners

1. Replace sexual sin with sexual gratitude.
Read Ephesians 5:3-5
• Put off—sexual sin.
• Renew your mind—Sexually casual banter or joking is not proper for Christians.
• Put on—gratitude to God for your present right sexual situation.
• The unmarried are to thankfully put 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 into practice (more serving the Lord). The married are to thankfully put 1 Corinthians 7:2-5 into practice (more sex).
• God is serious about this command to put off sexual sin. Not to do so removes the hope of heaven (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 5:5).
• Throughout the Old and New Testament, the people of God are called to remove idolatry from among themselves. Worshipping the idol of sexual desire must be replaced with grateful worship of God (Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 6:4-7, 1 Thessalonians 4:5).
• Protecting the heart from sexual sin requires more than just hanging with the right crowd, it begins by walking in love with Christ’s love in mind at all times.

2. Since the believer’s unity is with the body, it can’t be with the world.
Read Ephesians 5:6-7
• Take note of this serious warning about the influence of the company we keep.
• Relationships with people of the world cannot include partnering with their idolatrous systems of thought and practice. To escape the wrath of God, we may not be influenced by them.
• Although we are not called to remove ourselves from the world, our partnerships must be within the body of Christ.
• Unless those who influence us are in unity with the body of Christ, they are being deceived and will in turn deceive us.

3. Partnering with unified believers
Read Ephesians 5:7, Hebrews 3:13, Hebrews 10:24-25
• The pursuit of holiness in the church demands vigilance in relationships.
• Our corporate growth in imitating Christ will be noticed by the world.

Walk in light

1. The church is God’s lamp.
Read Ephesians 5:8-13
• We are not the light, we are children of light, but only as we please God by bearing the fruit of His Spirit—goodness, righteousness, truth (1 Thessalonians 5:4-5).
• The church, as Christ’s body, is the lamp of the world. (Isaiah 9:2, Matthew 4:15, Luke 2:32, John 1:5, Philippians 2:14, Revelation 1:20 church=lampstand).
• Rather than focusing on the evils of the world, or speaking about the things people do, our lives shine as we imitate God. Light exposes corruption.
• The growing church exposes the darkness of the world, not by partnering with it or focusing on its darkness, but by invading it with light (2 Corinthians 6:14).
• The church is not a lighthouse on some far off island, but a light advancing and invading a dark land (Matthew 5:14-16).

2. Acceptable to God
Read Ephesians 5:9
• We dare not merely teach, counsel, or talk about this fruit—we must be living examples, verifying by our lives what God accepts.
• Goodness (agathosyne) = uprightness of heart and life in relating with others.
  ✓ This word describes overall, moral excellence that is active on behalf of others.
  ✓ This type of goodness is not just free from defects, not just useful, but touches everyone, like very positive moral excellence has an effect on the people around it.
  ✓ We should each examine our standing with others as to whether it is good for them to be around us.
• Righteousness (dikaiosyne) = a state that is approved by God
  ✓ This word describes our relationship with God, in never deviating from His holiness.
  ✓ We must examine ourselves in our prayer relationship with God and our interaction with His Word.
• Truth (aletheia) = the personal experience of truth
  ✓ This word describes personal integrity, honesty, reliability, and trustworthiness.
  ✓ We should each examine ourselves in our inner man to see if we are walking in light.

“I heard the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark world’s light, Look unto Me, thine mourn shall rise and all thy day be bright. I came to Jesus and I found in Him my star, my sun. And in that light of life I’ll walk Till traveling days are done.”
~Horatio Bonar, 1846
Making it personal:

Body Life Walk

Rewrite Ephesians 5:1-14 in your own words.

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Ephesians 5:1 is a bold, broad statement. In what ways are we to imitate God?  In what ways can we not imitate God?  (Hint: We imitate His character, not His attributes).

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______________________________________________________________________________
Ephesians 5:2 says to live a life of love. Name three specific ways you will love your husband or wife, or neighbor in the body of Christ.

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The Holy Spirit through Paul tells us to love just as Christ loved us. Was Jesus always nice? What are some examples of Jesus being not nice? What is the difference between being loving and being nice?

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Loving obviously cost Jesus. Does loving always have a cost?

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Ephesians 5:3 mentions a hint of sexual immorality. What would be some ways people hint of sexual immorality?

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Ephesians 5:4 mentions coarse joking. What movies, shows, and entertainment would taking this seriously make off limits? How would that benefit you?

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Ephesians 5:6 mentions God’s wrath. How can you get close to a God of wrath? What is great about having a God of wrath?

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Look at Ephesians 5:8. How is light like walking with God? His is darkness not like doing so?

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Be careful!

1. Guard your heart with vigilant and diligent care.  
   Read Ephesians 5:14-15
   - Paul warns us to stop and think, to live thoughtfully and carefully. We need reminders.
   - Living in wisdom does not happen individually, and is not done solely in the privacy of our minds. It happens in a corporate body.
     ✅ We need personal reminders (Proverbs 17:17).
     ✅ We need to be exhorted (Hebrews 3:13).
     ✅ We need to be motivated by others in the body (Hebrews 10:24-25).
     ✅ We need to sing Scripture with each other (Ephesians 5:19).
     ✅ We need Scripture to be spoken to us (Colossians 3:16).

2. Be deliberate to choose wisdom.  
   Read Ephesians 5:15
   - Proverbs teaches this message of alert pursuit of wisdom (Proverbs 1:8, 2:1-5, 3:1, 4:23).
   - We are easily distracted in our fast-moving, quickly-gratifying, emotionally-driven world.
   - Wisdom focuses long and hard on how it looks to apply our lives to God’s Word.

3. Use time wisely  
   Read Ephesians 5:16
   - We must think of time as precious and unrecoverable—how we spend it impacts eternity (Psalm 90, James 4:14).
   - There are many ways to squander time—there’s the obvious idleness and wickedness, but there are also worldly pursuits that neglect the soul of the Christian and the body of Christ (Proverbs 18:9, 19:15, 22:21, Ephesians 4:28).
   - We will be accountable to God for the details of our lives (Matthew 12:36).
   - Choose this moment to improve the use of time (Psalm 119:60). Time to worship God corporately, and time in prayer and the Word privately, must be viewed as foremost in importance for the use of time. Be very careful to prepare for and set aside the time God wants for intimacy with Him and his body.

4. Understand God’s will  
   Read Ephesians 5:17
   - A consideration of God’s will isn’t primarily whether you will do such and such a job, go to such and such a school, or marry such and such a person. In the context of Ephesians, God’s will is something far bigger.
• A consideration of God’s will must begin with His ultimate purpose for creation.
• God’s will relates to His eternal purpose to be glorified through Christ. In saving both Jew and Gentile and bringing them together to make His dwelling place, and through the church manifesting His wisdom to rulers and authorities in heavenly places, God’s glory shines (Ephesians 1:1, 1:5, 1:9, 1:11, 3:10).
• To live in God’s will means that daily I walk according to God’s purpose to be glorified in Christ through His church—which grows as His holy bride (Ephesians 5:10). As such I must:
  ✓ Submit to Jesus Christ as Lord and Ruler of my life. I must learn what pleases Him and do it.
  ✓ Commit to Christ’s church. If I am casual or rebellious in my connection to the church, I am not in line with God’s eternal purposes.
  ✓ Labor to preserve unity and harmony with other believers, in the church and in my home (Ephesians 4:3, 5:32).
  ✓ Glorify God in the world. Do my responses to trials, and my responses to other believers show people that life with Christ is superior?

5. Be filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit
Read Ephesians 5:18
• The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not an experience, it is a fact for all believers that is true of them from the moment they are saved and placed into the body of Christ (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:2,5).
• The ongoing filling of the Holy Spirit empowers victory over sin, growth in godliness, and service to edify the body (Galatians 5:16). This is commanded of every Christian every day, and happens as we yield control of life to the Holy Spirit, confess sin when we take back control, and then once again yield control.
• The result is singing, thankfulness, and submission to one another by serving each other—according to God’s order of authority in the home, church, and workplace.

Be thankful!

1. We must be very careful—and very thankful!
Read Ephesians 5:19-21
• The attitude of thankfulness is modeled and taught by Paul (Romans 1:8, 1 Corinthians 1:4, Philippians 4:6, Colossians 3:15, 17, 1 Thessalonians 5:18).
• Any complaining is not against a person or circumstance, it is against the Lord (Exodus 16:8).
• Un-thankfulness is a highly personal sin against the God who created us, loves us sacrificially, and provides a rich inheritance for us (Romans 1:21).
• The children of Israel had a big problem with complaining. Be sobered by how serious God was about not letting them get away with it.
  ✓ Compare Numbers 11:4 with Numbers 11:32-33
  ✓ Compare Numbers 14:1-4 with Numbers 14:22-23
  ✓ Compare Numbers 16:3 with Numbers 16:31-33
  ✓ Compare Numbers 16:41 with Numbers 16:46-48
  ✓ Compare Numbers 20:2, 21:5 with Numbers 21:5-7

“Paul contrasts getting drunk with wine, which produces a temporary ‘high’ to being filled with the Spirit, which produces lasting joy. Getting drunk with wine is associated with the old way of life and its selfish desires. In Christ, we have a better joy, higher and longer lasting, to cure our depression, monotony, or tension. We should not be concerned with how much of the Holy Spirit we have but with how much of us the Holy Spirit has. Submit yourself daily to his leading and draw constantly on his power.”

~Tyndale’s Life Application Study Bible
Rewrite Ephesians 5:14-21 in your own words.

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The NASB translates vs. 16 this way, “making the most of your time.” What are some ways we can make the most use of our time?

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Why is getting drunk off limits? Study Proverbs 23:29-35

Ephesians 5:19 is very interesting. It doesn’t say to sing to God. It says to speak to one another in psalms and hymns. How can you imagine this working out practically.

Ephesians 5:20 speaks of being thankful. Can you be thankful and depressed at the same time?

What are the benefits to you of being with a person with an attitude of gratitude?

What steps could you take towards being a person with an attitude of gratitude? Maybe thank God for 20 things as you go to sleep each night and/or wake up each morning? Every time you wash your hands or drink a glass of clean water? Every time you are in the grocery store or pharmacy for food and medical provisions? Every time you open your Bible, or pray, or come together in the church house? For the freedom from persecution that we are so blessed with? How else?

Resources
Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 4:17-24. These sermons or study helps may have been accessed in the preparation of the study on the previous pages.

“Walking in Wisdom, Part 1” by John MacArthur @ http://gty.org/Resources/sermons/1934

“Walking Wisely” by Steven J. Cole, 2008 @ www.fctonline.org/sermons


ESV and John MacArthur Study Bible notes

Blueletter Bible @ http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.
Submission and Headship

1. Submission reflects Christ
   Read Ephesians 5:21-22
   • God’s wisdom brings order to chaos. We are created as equals in His image, to function with authority and submission like He does.
   • The Godhead illustrates mutuality and submission to authority (1 Corinthians 11:3, John 4:34).
   • Submission to authority is biblically mandated in government (Romans 13:1), in the church (1 Timothy 2:11-12), in the parent-child relationship (Ephesians 6:1-4), and in marriage.
   • In Ephesians 5:21, Paul commands everyone to be subject to each other. He begins to explain how that looks, by stating that a wife is to be submissive to the God ordained headship of her husband.

2. What does “head” mean?
   Read Ephesians 5:23
   • Head (kephale) = always speaks of someone in a position of authority.
   • The headship of Christ is linked to the headship of the husband in Ephesians 5. If the husband’s role is divested of authority, Christ’s authority over the church is likewise diminished.
   • The headship of a husband and the submission of a wife are to be understood by the headship of God the Father and the submission of Christ the Son (1 Corinthians 11:3).
   • When there is a head, there is also a follower. In marriage and the church, God commands headship for men and followership for women.

3. How wives honor God
   Read Ephesians 5:22-24
   • When a church body doesn’t submit to the direction of the head Jesus Christ, there’s a serious problem.
   • When a wife doesn’t submit to the direction of her husband, it’s also a serious spiritual problem. However, a wife who follows willingly honors God, her family, and her church.
   • In submission, a wife must learn how to follow her husband’s lead in a manner pleasing to God. As a wife submits “as to the Lord,” if her husband tells her to do something contrary to Scripture, she obeys God.
   • “Unlike Eve, whose response to God was calculating and self-serving, the virgin Mary’s answer holds no hesitation about risks or losses or the interruption of her own plans. It is an utter and unconditional self-giving: “I am the Lord’s servant...May it be to me as you have said” (Luke 1:38). This is what I understand to be the essence of femininity. It means surrender.” — Elisabeth Elliot, “The Essence of Femininity”

“As I have said, I am not married myself, but as far as I can see, even a woman who wants to be the head of her own house does not usually admire the same state of things when she finds it going on next door. She is much more likely to say ‘Poor Mr. X! Why he allows that appalling woman to boss him about the way she does is more than I can imagine.’ I do not think she is even very flattered if anyone mentions the fact of her own ‘headship.’ There must be something unnatural about the rule of wives over husbands, because the wives themselves are half ashamed of it and despise the husbands whom they rule.”

~C. S. Lewis
in “Mere Christianity” (NY: HarperCollins, 1952) 64.
Headship that honors God

1. Husbands are to love their wives in the pattern of Christ’s love for the church. Christ’s love manifests in four ways (adapted from John MacArthur, “Different by Design”)

Read Ephesians 5:25-32

- **Sacrificial love (Ephesians 5:25)**
  - The depths of God’s love reaches to people who don’t deserve it.
  - When a wife’s sin makes it hard for a husband to love her, it’s a chance to love as God loves him. (Romans 5:7-8).
  - If every appealing characteristic and virtue of a wife were gone, a husband is still under obligation to love her. Selfless love has healing and restorative power, evidenced by Christ’s love for the church. (Romans 2:11).
  - God defines love as an action more than an emotion. (John 13:34, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7)
  - Love meets needs even when it is rejected or resented.

- **Purifying love (Ephesians 5:26-27)**
  - Christ’s love has a goal, the purification of the church. (Ephesians 5:26-27).
  - Christ’s love for the church means He is not content with any sin (1 John 1:9).
  - Husbands who really love their wives do everything they can to maintain her purity, virtue, and holiness.

- **Caring love (Ephesians 5:28-29)**
  - A wife is to be seen as a God given treasure to cherish and care for (Proverbs 18:22).
  - A husband may not allow himself to become bitter against his wife (Colossians 3:19).
  - Patience and grace will be necessary with a trying wife (Proverbs 21:9).

- **Unbreakable love (Ephesians 5:30-31)**
  - God intends permanence for each marriage union (Genesis 2:24).
  - The ties with father and mother must be broken (“leave...father and mother”), and a stronger, unbreakable set of ties cemented (“and cleave”).
  - God hates divorce because it breaks what He has ordained unbreakable (Malachi 2:16). Just as the body of Christ is undivided-able, God intends marriage to be.
  - Husbands or wives who break the union harm, violate, and destroy themselves.
  - Our culture does not take covenant with the church seriously, because the covenant of marriage is not taken seriously. In revealing the mystery of the church, the sacredness of commitment to the church and the sacredness of commitment to marriage are interwoven.

A biblical picture of marriage

1. **Song of Solomon**
   - The husband is the head of the home (SoS 2:13-15).
   - A beautiful example of how to think about a spouse (SoS 5:10-16, 7:10).
   - They see each other as beloved friends.
   - A problem enters when the wife refuses to submit to her husband (SoS 5:1-3).
   - She is sorry (5:4-5) and finally finds him (6:4), and they have a wonderful time together (SoS 7).
Making it personal:

Body Life Marriage

Rewrite Ephesians 5:22-33 in your own words.

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What is the most important concept in this passage for you today?
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How will you train to change your life accordingly?
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How will your changed life edify Christ’s body?
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Resources
Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 5:22-33. The study on the previous pages may have been adapted from ideas or outlines in these books, sermons or study helps:


“When Sinners Say I Do” by Dave Harvey (Shepherd Books, 2007).


“What Did You Expect: Redeeming the Realities of Marriage” by Paul David Tripp (Crossway, 2010).

“This Momentary Marriage: A Parable of Permanence” by John Piper and Noel Piper (Crossway, 2009).


John MacArthur Study Bible notes

ESV Study Bible notes

Blueletter Bible @ http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.
Parenting

1. Techniques for child rearing

Read Ephesians 6:1-4

• Only one thing is needed to teach parents how to raise children—Scripture (2 Timothy 1:16-17).
• We must reject psychology’s anti-biblical advice (i.e. building your child’s self esteem) as if it were compatible with Scripture.
• Everything must be compared with Scripture.

2. Teach them to obey their parents in the Lord

Read Ephesians 6:1

• The first concern is a child’s salvation.
• Obedience apart from being “in Christ” is nothing but behaviorism.
• From the youngest age, children must be taught respect for God (Proverbs 1:7).
• Parents discipline children into obedience as part of their parental obedience to God (Proverbs 13:24, 19:18, 22:6, 15, 23:13-19, Hebrews 12:6-8, Revelation 3:19). Younger children are taught biblical behavior (since that’s all they understand), older children are also taught biblical attitudes.
• Because of the fall, it is every child’s nature to be self-centered, proud, and rebellious. Parents must see that children grow in servitude, humility, and submission to authority.

3. Teach them to honor their parents

Read Ephesians 6:2-3

• Honor (kabed) = to be heavy, weighty, to honor. When the President of the United States or some other important person speaks, people often say his words “carry a lot of weight.” His position is worthy of honor.
• Curse (qalal) = to make light, of little weight, to dishonor. If we dishonor a person, we would say their words “carry little weight.” The contrast is striking!
• God says parents are worthy of value and respect. In modern-day terms, we could call them a heavy-weight in our lives.
• Failing to honor parents is not only wrong and dishonoring to God, it literally drains us of life.

4. Teach them the way God teaches you

Read Ephesians 6:4

• As imitators of God (5:1), fathers must be defined by love and grace without ever excusing sin (Exodus 34:6-7, Psalm 103:13).
• A father’s active demonstrations of love provide the foundational context for discipline (Proverbs 3:12).
Working

1. The workplace
Read Ephesians 6:5-9
• From Christian slaves in Ephesus, to Christian workers in America, the issues remain the same.
• Note that the reign of slavery is not attacked by Paul. The Roman Empire had millions of them. It is the heart attitudes of Christians in the workplace that Paul addresses.

2. Those under a master
Read Ephesians 6:5-8
• Behavior (6:5a)—The first thing that those under a master are called to is behavioral obedience.
  ✓ Obedience is also the first thing required of a child to a parent.
  ✓ Workers are to behave submissively even when bosses are unreasonable or abusive (1 Peter 2:18).
  ✓ In Christ we are not disgruntled rebels but diligent workers—pleasing and agreeable to masters (Titus 2:9).
• Attitude (6:5b)—The fear of God demands a respectful attitude for masters, in any context.
  ✓ Obedient submission to an employer is service to God, carried out with fear of God.
• Faithfulness(6:5c)—Obedience is to be carried out with sincerity and singleness of heart.
  ✓ Do not be deceived by the lie that sin is preferable to obedience because obedience would be hypocritical.
  ✓ Genuine loyalty and honest work with undivided attention is always required of Christians (1 Thessalonians 4:11).
• Goal-oriented(6:6a)—Every aspect of life is done in worship to someone. Make your daily work an act of worship to Christ by glorying God.
  ✓ Use your present job as an opportunity to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31).
  ✓ Discontentment and unthankfulness are not glorifying to God.
• Diligence(6:6b)—Be motivated by God’s approval, not man’s.
  ✓ It doesn’t matter whether an employer is watching. God is watching and He requires that we work heartily (Colossians 3:23-24).
• Eagerness(6:7)—Wholehearted service.
  ✓ Joy comes not from making money but from serving the Lord.
  ✓ God is the real master, and He calls you to serve Him wholeheartedly in your present job situation.
• Rewarded(6:8)—A payday is coming when cash won’t matter.
  ✓ All the money in the world can’t buy the words, “Well done good and faithful servant.”
  ✓ Your obedient actions, respectful attitude, loyalty your employer for God’s glory, with diligence and eagerness, may become mundane—until you remember the promised heavenly reward.

2. Those who are masters
Read Ephesians 6:9
• Masters are to go back and look at the list, and do the same things.
• Masters serve under a divine Master, as an act of worship to Him.

Don’t yell at your employees, don’t intimidate them. Don’t verbally abuse them. Don’t threaten them. A Spirit-controlled, Spirit-filled employer is gentle, never abusive, never threatening. Threats have no value. Use encouragement. Use reward. Use those things that stimulate the Christian’s noble intent.”

~John MacArthur in “God’s Perspective on Work”
www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-171

Body Life Children and Jobs
Rewrite Ephesians 6:1-9 in your own words.


Ephesians 6:1 says it is right to obey parents. Is it always right? Any exceptions? When do you stop being a kid that is required to obey?


Similar language is used in the chapter before about husbands and wives. Are wives to obey in the same way that kids are to obey?
What are some ways that we as adults can honor our parents? How do you want your kids to treat you when you are old?

What are some ways to provide spiritual training and instruction to our kids (Ephesians 6:4)? See Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Proverbs 1:8, 6:20, 22:6, Colossians 3:20, 1 Timothy 3:2-5, Titus 2:3-5.

Ephesians 6:5 asks slaves to obey their masters. How obligated are employees to obey their bosses?

Ephesians 6:7 says to serve the Lord wholeheartedly. What kinds of things distract you from serving the Lord wholeheartedly?

Who are some of the most wholehearted Christians you have known? What else is true of these people? Were they happy? Optimistic? Depressed? Effective? Purposeful?

Look at Ephesians 6:8. Is it good to serve the Lord selfishly, for the reward we will receive? On what basis are rewards given, by grace or works? Read Matthew 16:27, Romans 2:6, Revelation 20:12-13, 22:12.

How would you apply Ephesians 6:9? What goes into being a good boss?

Resources
Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 6:1-9. The study on the previous pages may have been adapted from ideas or outlines in these sermons or study helps:

“God’s Perspective on Work” by John MacArthur @ http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-171

“Key Principles for Parents” by Steven J. Cole @ www.fcfonline.org/sermons
22. Body Life Armor

Why armor?

1. Resist the devil in the face of deception

   Read Ephesians 6:10-13
   - All of life is war.
   - We are surrounded by human sons of disobedience (flesh and blood) whose attacks can be hindering and destructive. But there are even worse princes of the power of the air at work (Ephesians 2:1-2).
   - We are not taught to focus on standing against flesh and blood (people), but against the wiles of the devil.
   - Do not miss the triumphant tone of these verses. We must approach the battle as positional victors. Triumphant in Christ is positional—not something we do, but something we are.
   - The church’s victory is sure. Christ will return as the morning star shining in the hearts of the church (Matthew 15:16-18, Ephesians 3:5, 3:10, 2 Peter 1:19-20).
   - When we resist the devil by taking up our battle armor, we are successful to stand firm in the face of deception and discouragement.

   Armor by which we resist the devil in the face of deception

   1. Belt of truth

      Read Ephesians 6:14, Isaiah 11:5, 11:1-12
      - Telling the truth is a priority in spiritual combat. The fear of exposure, that tempts us to lie, is self-defeating.
      - We must be honest (about our own sin):
        - Before God (Psalm 51:1-4, 1 John 1:8-10).
        - In our own hearts and minds (Psalm 51:5-6, Philippians 4:8).
        - When speaking with others. Don’t forget that the reason for honesty with others is unity (Ephesians 4:25, Colossians 3:9).
      - Our thinking must change to focus on Christ’s victory over sin and death on the cross (Hebrews 12:1-3).

   2. Breastplate of righteousness

      Read Ephesians 6:14, Isaiah 59:17, 59:9-60:5
      - As we confess our sin, we wear the righteousness of Jesus Christ that has been imputed to us in justification (Romans 3:21-26).
      - Wearing the breastplate of righteousness means remembering “WWJD”, and then doing the right thing (Philippians 3:9-14).
3. Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace  
Read Ephesians 6:15, Isaiah 52:7, 52:1-54:3  
- There is no peace apart from the end of conflict against God. It is the power of sin and Satan to bring conflict between us and God. The terms of peace are faith in Jesus Christ.  
- We must be ready for action, ready to move in with the gospel that brings peace with God (Colossians 4:5-6, 1 Peter 3:15).  
- As we share what Christ has done for us (the gospel), our faith is invigorated (Philemon 6).  
- The path between us and those who need our help to make peace with God is not a smooth or easy road, and so we must be prepared (2 Timothy 2:3).

4. Shield of faith  
Read Ephesians 6:16, Genesis 15:1, Psalm 3:3, 18:2  
- When times are hard, we must trust God rather than our natural thoughts and emotions, obeying His Word rather than our common sense (Proverbs 30:4-5).  
- Take refuge in God when the battle rages, rather than hiding in self-constructed bomb shelters (Psalm 46:1, 57:1).

5. Helmet of salvation  
Read Ephesians 6:17, Isaiah 59:17  
- The helmet identifies you as in Christ, the Messiah. Accept your identity, and know that He defends you.  
- Don’t focus on the problems at hand, think future! Your future is sure!  
- God wants us to bring our thoughts around to the hope and confidence of the salvation that covers us now and awaits fulfillment in heaven.

6. Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God  
Read Ephesians 6:17, Isaiah 49:2, 49:1-13  
- When you encounter problems, don’t rely on your own thinking! Go to God’s Word and renew your mind with His truth.  
- This is the offensive armor piece that you hold out before the enemy, like Jesus did (Matthew 4).  
- Turn to, think about, and speak God’s Word (Deuteronomy 29:29).

7. Praying always  
Read Ephesians 6:18-20, Isaiah 53:12, Hebrews 7:25  
- This is our guard duty in battle—to pray constantly and about everything (Romans 12:12, Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:17).  
- Paul asks them to pray for his boldness in telling the truth. We need to pray for each other to be bold (Colossians 1:9, 4:12).

Peace, love, faith, and grace

1. Paul is all about encouraging the body, right to the end of the letter  
Read Ephesians 6:21-24  
- Tychicus has served faithfully (Acts 20:4, Colossians 4:7, 2 Tim. 4:12, Titus 3:12).  
- Paul closes with a reminder to those who love God. They have a communal identity rooted in His glorious grace, founded in Jesus Messiah and the doctrine He gave the apostles. The result is incorruptible love and peace among the brothers.
Making it personal:

Body Life Armor

Rewrite Ephesians 6:10-24 in your own words.

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What is the purpose of a soldier’s armor?

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List some tricks of the devil this passage might be referring to.

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In what ways does “right living” protect us?

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Why do you think the gospel was compared to footwear?

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List some of the ways a life of prayer will benefit in spiritual warfare.

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In what ways are Christians like soldiers?

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In what way is faith like a shield?

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How is salvation like a helmet?

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In what way is the Word of God like a sword?

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Resources
Listed below are some good resources for your study of Ephesians 6:10-24. The study on the previous pages may have been adapted from ideas or outlines in sermons or study helps listed below.

“Ready to Move with the Gospel of Peace” by John MacArthur @ http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/ScriptureIndex/3/639_


ESV Study Bible notes

Blueletter Bible @ http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.