Ephesians:

Confluence of Grace

For Sprit Salon

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Ephesians: “Confluence of Grace”

From NLT

Jan. 6 – March 23, 2016

Study Schedule

Jan. 6: (week 1) Eph. 1:15-23

Jan. 13: (week 2) Eph. 1:1-14

Jan. 20: (week 3) Eph. 2:1-10

Jan. 27: (week 4) Eph. 2:11-22

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March 16: (week 11) Eph. 6:1-12\*

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**Week 1: Eph. 1:15-23**

**Paul’s Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom**

15Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God’s people everywhere,[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29182e" \o "See footnote e)] 16I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, 17asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29184f" \o "See footnote f)] and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. 18I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29185g" \o "See footnote g)]

19I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power 20that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. 21Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. 22God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. 23And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

**Ephesians 1:15-23**

***Helpful Background for the Passage***

1. The book of Acts has much background for us on the Ephesian church. (Please read this background at your own convenience. Acts 19, & 20:17-38) Paul spent at least two and a half years ministering and living among the Ephesians, growing quite familiar with their joys and struggles. In this time, he developed a great love for his fellow believers, and longed to see them thrive and grow spiritually.

2. The city of the Ephesians was a very prosperous city, and was a major city of the Roman Empire. It was a multi-national, multi-ethnic melting pot, with Greek religion being dominant. There was a strong Jewish community, and a thriving Jewish Faith. Many Jews became Christians, along with many gentiles. The challenge was to blend these two diverse backgrounds into one body, under their common Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Paul begins this section as he begins most of his letters. He tells the Ephesians how he is thankful for them, and how he prays for them frequently. Paul does this because of his personal closeness to the Ephesians, but also because he is motivated after hearing how well they are living out the Christian life. (1:15-16)

4. In verse 1:18, Paul prays that God would flood the hearts of the Ephesians with light. (NIV = Open the eyes of the hearts of the Ephesians.) In the Bible, the heart is the home of the intelligence and will. It is this inner vision that must be enlightened by God, through the Holy Spirit, so that we are able to understand the truth God has for us in scripture.

5. The word hope, as used in the Bible, means far more than just “wish or desire.” It means strong assurance, or confident expectation. Hope is being sure in whom you trust. (1 Cor 15:19, Col 1:27)

6. The word translated “power,” (1:19) is the Greek word *DUNAMIS*, from which we get our English words dynamite and dynamic. The word means explosive, extraordinary, and overwhelming.

***Review Question***

1. Why is this section surprising? What motivates Paul to be thankful? How does he pray?

2. Beginning in verse 1:17, Paul prays some specific prayers for the Ephesians. To whom does Paul pray? For what, specifically, does he pray? For what ultimate purpose? (1:17b & 18a)

3. Paul prays for the Ephesians to be given and to grasp three truths, regarding their relationship with God. (1:17b-20) What are these three truths, and why are they significant?

 a. knowledge of God (17b)

 b. hope (18b)

 c. power (19a)

4. Thankfully, Paul expands his teaching about God’s power, by describing the working of that power in 1:19b-21. How did God exert His power in Christ? Why is it significant that God did more than just “raise” Jesus? What else happened?

5. What does this passage teach us about the position and power of the risen Christ? Why is this reality important to us? What is the relationship between Christ and the Church? (v. 1:21-23)

***SO WHAT?***

Read again the prayer in 1:17-19a

6. How well do you “know” Christ? Can wisdom help you in this area? How will you pray about this area?

7. How would your daily life be different if you lived as one who understood the hope and power that we have in Christ? How will it be different, now that we have studied about the reality of our situation, if we are “in Christ?”

8. Christ has the supremacy over all things, even the Church. How does this true statement help you enjoy/survive today/tomorrow? How can this reality help your attitudes, thoughts, and actions be more in line with a follower of Christ??

**Week 2: Eph. 1:1-14**

**Greetings from Paul**

1 This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.

I am writing to God’s holy people in Ephesus,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29168a" \o "See footnote a)] who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus.

2May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

**Spiritual Blessings**

3All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. 4Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. 6So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29173b" \o "See footnote b)] 7He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. 8He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

9God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. 10And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. 11Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29178c" \o "See footnote c)] for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

12God’s purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. 13And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29180d" \o "See footnote d)] by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. 14The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

# **Ephesians 1:1-14**

***Helpful Background for the Passage***

1. The term “apostle,” (1:1) was understood by the early church to be “one who had been personally, directly, called and commissioned by Christ Himself.” These first generation leaders were invested with a special authority because of this office, and were used by God to give authoritative teachings. In the NT, the term is not used to describe any one who is called into ministry, by the Holy Spirit, or through the service of an apostle. (For example, Timothy, John Mark, Titus, and others, are not called apostles.)

2. The phrase in 1:1 “holy people” (NIV = “saints,”) means “called out ones,” or “those who are set apart.” Paul uses this term throughout his letters to refer to all Christians, because we are “called out” from the world, and “set apart” for the purposes of the Lord.

3. In the greeting, (1:2) Paul combines the standard Greek greeting, “grace,” with the common Hebrew greeting, “peace.” Paul is a Jew, but he lives as a Greek. A major theme of Ephesians is that we are one in Christ, regardless of our backgrounds as Jews, Greeks, or anything else. Paul teaches this theme in his greeting, using every opportunity to teach and encourage his readers.

4. When studying the Bible, always notice the tenses of the verbs. It is extremely important in this passage, to note what verbs are past tense, and how that impacts our Christian walk. (1:3-10)

5. In verse 5, we are reminded that we are “adopted” children of God, through Christ. Under Roman law, as today, a legally adopted child has all the rights and rewards of a biological child. We are more than servants or workers in God’s house, we are children of the Father, co-heirs with Jesus.

6. Grace (used about 10,000 times in Ephesians) means “undeserved, unmerited favor. A gift, not a wage. Paul uses the Greek term, [Charis,] which is related to the Greek common greeting word, [charie,] to describe all the amazing gifts that we receive from God.

7. The term “purchased” (NIV =“redemption or redeemed,”) in 1:7 literally refers to the act of paying ransom to free a slave or prisoner. There must be a payment in exchange for freedom.

8. The term “mysterious plan” (NIV = “mystery,”) in 1:9 refers to something formerly hidden, which is now been revealed. The term is used today in the same sense. When you begin to read or watch a mystery, you do not know how it will turn out. The thrill is in the discovery, as you begin to gradually see the way the truth is being uncovered. The truth, or plot, is always there, it is just hidden for a time.

9. Paul indicates a chronology in which the gospel was heard and received. (1:12-13) He indicates that the Jews were the first to believe in Jesus, as they had the background and were waiting for the Son of God. But God then included all in this opportunity for salvation. There is no difference between these two groups. They are equal in God’s eyes and in value. The gospel went first to the Jews,then to the Gentiles. This reality contains no order in value.

10. In 1:14, the term “guarantee” (NIV = “deposit” or “pledge”) is the common Greek term (and in modern Greek as well) used to describe an engagement ring. It is a promise, a commitment, or a pledge, of something greater that will occur in the future. We can take great comfort and encouragement in knowing that He who made the promise, is incredibly able to keep it.

***Review Questions***

1. Who wrote Ephesians? Why? How are the Ephesian believers addressed?

2. What is significant about the greeting? (1:2) “Grace,” and “peace.”?

3. Paul begins Ephesians by praising God, specifically, why? What has God done? Is it past, present, or future? (1:3-4 only, for now!)

4. When were we chosen and why? For what purpose? (1:4)

5. In what manner were we “adopted,” and why? (1:5)

6. What is grace? How did God give it to us, and through whom? (1:6)

7. What does it mean that we were “purchased?” (NIV = redemption/redeemed,) And from what? How is it related to God’s grace? (1:7-8)

8. What is the “mysterious plan” mentioned in 1:9 how is it accomplished in Christ?”

9. What is God’s complete plan, only part of which we have seen in the cross? When will it be put into action? (1:9-10)

10. What does it mean to be “united with Christ?” (1:11) In what manner did God choose us in advance? According to what plan? (1:11)

11. Who were the “first to trust in Christ,” (1:12) and why were they saved? Who else “heard the truth,” and how was this accomplished? (1:13)

12. What does it mean to be Identified” as God’s own? (1:13b) What is the guarantee (NIV = deposit,) that Paul mentions? (1:14) What is significant about this promise? What does it indicate?

***SO WHAT?***

13. How does it impact you to realize that if you are in Christ, “united with Christ,” you are ALREADY loved, chosen, adopted, forgiven, and set free? Because of grace, you don’t have to earn or do anything!

14. In this passage, we have understood that our new identity is that we are “united in Christ.” (Or in Christ.) What does this mean? How should your life reflect this reality?

15. What courage and comfort can we find in the promises that God has made to us? (1:9-14)

**Week 3: Eph. 2:1-10**

**Made Alive with Christ**

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. 2You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world.[[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29192h" \o "See footnote h)] He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. 3All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.

4But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, 5that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!) 6For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. 7So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

8God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. 10For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

# **Ephesians 2:1-10**

***Helpful Background for the Passage***

1. The term, “dead,” (2:1) means “complete absence of life.” Something that is “dead” is unable to respond, unable to live, and unable to “do” much of anything. A dead thing is unable to initiate any contact, and will not have an independent response to any external prompting.

2. The word, “transgressions,” (2:1, 5) means “stepping out of the boundaries.” God sets up the playing field, and we step out of bounds, thus breaking the rules. We intentionally cross the boundary fences that God sets up to protect us, and go into areas where we were never meant to go. These transgressions lead us into harmful, dangerous, enslaving, areas, that are “out of bounds” in the world that God designed.

3. A sin (1:1) is “missing the mark.” God has a standard, and we do not live up to it. God has a target, and we cannot hit it. We fall short of God’s holiness because of sin, and cannot meet his perfect standards.

4. Paul makes it clear that “all have sinned,” (Rom. 3:23) in chapter 2:1-3. He first explains that the Ephesians, former Gentiles and Jews, were all “dead” in their sin. Then, he confirms, that at one time, all other believers, apostles, disciples, Jews, and all, were also “dead.” (2:3) All had been “objects of wrath,” or under the intense anger of God Almighty, the Holy One.

5. To be “Alive,” (2:5) means the “presence of life.” Something that is alive will respond, will change, and can grow. It may move, reproduce, and will respond to external prompting.

6. In 2:5-6, the verbs translated, “made us alive,” “raised,” and “seated” are in a Greek verb tense called, aorist. These verbs, in this tense, indicate what God has already done for His children in Christ. They indicate a past, completed action, even if we cannot “see” or “understand” that reality with our limited minds.

7. The word translated “incomparable,” (1:19, 2:7) means supreme, exceeding, ultimate, or unsurpassed. In verse 1:19, it describes the supreme act of God’s power, raising Christ from the dead. In verse 2:7, it describes the supreme act of God’s grace, first our salvation, but even more so, our status, “raised and seated with Christ.” We know from other scriptures that the supreme act of God’s love was His only son going to the cross in our place.

8. In Ephesians 2:8-9, we have three of the key truths of Evangelical Christianity. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, and to the Glory of God alone.

9. The word translated “workmanship” (2:10) means masterpiece, or highest accomplishment. It is a term that refers usually, to artwork, literature, paintings, and other beautiful created things. In Christ, God has done some of his best creating, or recreating, in each one of us.

***Review Questions***

1. (2:1-2) What does “dead in your transgressions and sins” mean? How did we end up “dead?” What does it mean to be spiritually “dead?”

2. (2:3) Who was dead? What was our status, in relation to God, when we were “dead in sin?”

3. (2:4-5) What did God do, when we were “dead in sin?” What was His motivation? Did we do anything? What did God do?

4. (2:6-7) Did God quit after he “made us alive?” What else did God do? Why did he act? (What verb tense is used, and why is this worth noting?)

5. (2:8-9) How are we saved? How does the saving happen, specifically? Why is it “not from yourselves?”

6. (2:10) Once we have been saved and sustained by God’s grace, how does He view us? What does God declare us to be? For what reason are we “created in Christ?”

***SO WHAT?***

7. Do you remember a time when you were unresponsive to God, and “dead in sin?” Do you remember being “made alive in Christ?” How should you act/think/live, since you are “made alive in Christ?”

8. According to this passage, if you follow Jesus as your only Lord and Savior, you are, in God’s eyes, alive, saved, raised with Christ, and seated with Jesus. You did not earn this status, it was a gift to you. How then should we live? How should this truth impact our daily lives?

9. You are also God’s masterpiece, created in Christ to do great things. How do you respond? How do you think and feel as a result of this amazing truth? Does it make a difference?

# Ephesians 2:1-10

***Review Questions***

1. (2:1-2) What does “dead in your transgressions and sins” mean? How did we end up “dead?” What does it mean to be spiritually “dead?”

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**Week 4: Eph. 2:11-22**

**Oneness and Peace in Christ**

11Don’t forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called “uncircumcised heathens” by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. 12In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. 13But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

14For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. 15He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. 16Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

17He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. 18Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

**A Temple for the Lord**

19So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family. 20Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. 21We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. 22Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

# **Ephesians 2:11-22**

***Helpful Background for the Passage***

1. When we study the Bible, it’s important to pay attention to every word. Some words can indicate a transition, or a change in direction or meaning. For example, any time we see the word, “therefore,” we need to ask ourselves, “What’s therefore, there for?” It usually shows us that whatever came before “therefore,” is the reason for what follows.

2. In the days before the Church was established by Christ, circumcision was the external sign of inclusion in God’s plan. It was a sign of participation in God’s covenant with Abraham, (Gen. 17:10-14) and also provided an identity as one of God’s chosen people. In Christ, circumcision can be dismissed as merely a physical, outward sign, in favor of the spiritual, inward, heart change that Christ brings to us through the Holy Spirit. (Col. 2:11)

3. The phrase, “foreigners to the covenants of the promise,” (2:12) refers to the covenants made by God with Abraham.

 (Review Gen. 12:2-, 13:14-, 15:1-, 17:1-, 22:15-, reaffirmed, 26:2-, 28:13, 35:9-)

God’s promise was that He would make Abraham’s people into a chosen people of God. Before Christ, this promise was thought to only include Jews, and those Gentiles who became Jews. All other Gentiles, were outside of the promise, and not included in God’s people. The OT did predict that some day Gentiles would be included.

4. In the day of Paul, the division between Jew and Gentile, was greater than any division we have today. Jews were raised, trained, and encouraged to think of Gentiles as morally bankrupt, spiritually unclean, and barely better than animals. The beliefs, thoughts, and actions of the Gentiles were completely abhorrent to the Jews. The Gentiles viewed the Jews as arrogant, narrow-minded, weak, and horribly backward in all things.

5. When Paul uses the phrase, “…the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,” (2:14) he may be thinking of an actual wall in the temple in Jerusalem. The Gentiles were not allowed beyond the outer courts of the great temple. They were prevented from going into the inner courts by a high wall posted with warnings that the penalty for a non-Jew going beyond the wall would be death. Paul may be using the memory of that wall as an illustration of the great division between Jews and Gentiles, which has now been destroyed by Christ.

6. The word, “reconcile,” (2:16) means “to make peace, to bring together, or to join what was separated.” The word is used to describe the “bringing together” of God and man, made possible by the cross. (Vertical reconciliation) There is also reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles, also made possible only by the cross. (horizontal reconciliation)

7. The concept of “access to the Father,” (2:18) being equally available to both Jews and Gentiles, would have been a radical teaching in NT times. For centuries, the Jews had claimed to have an exclusive access to God. The only access was through the temple, the sacrificial system, and becoming Jewish. But now, all who are in Christ, have access to the Father, through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

8. In Ephesians, Paul uses three illustrations to express the unity of Jewish and Gentile believers in the new fellowship which Christ has created. We see this unity being described as a city, (building) a family, (household) and a body. Each of these illustrations perfectly shows the truth that there may be many distinct parts, but one unified whole. A building may have many rooms, a family many branches, and a body many parts, but they are all one.

# **Ephesians 2:11-2:22**

***Review Questions***

1. What did the first ten verses of chapter 2 teach us? How does it connect with the “One in Christ” passage we are about to study?

2. (2:11-12) Paul begins this section by encouraging the “Gentiles” to remember their former condition: “…foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope, and without God in the world.” (2:12) Explain these former conditions.

3. (2:13) Who was “far away,” and how have they been brought “near?”

4.( 2:14-15) What has Christ done? What does it mean that Christ, Himself, is our peace? How’s this different, or the same, as Christ “making peace?”

5. (2:14-16) How did Christ destroy the hostility that existed between Jew and Gentile? For what purpose? What is the end result?

6. (2:17-18) The “peace” ended the hostility, but what else did Christ’s peace provide? What “access to the Father” was available before Christ?

7.( 2:19-20) In Christ, what is the new status of the Gentiles? What are they no longer? What does it mean to be a “member of God’s household?” What is this new reality? On what is the “house” built?

8. (2:21-22) What other metaphors are used to illustrate this new reality? What does it mean to be “a dwelling in which God lives…?” What is all of this based upon?

***SO WHAT?***

8. Christ brought peace to those who were far from God, and peace to those who were near to God. Which were/are you? How did it feel to be far from God? How does it feel to be near? What made the difference?

9. In Christ, we also have access to God the Father. How does this reality help you? What does this access mean for our daily lives?

 10. In this passage, we learned that in Christ, we are no longer “foreigners and aliens,” but that we are “citizens” and “members of God’s household.” We are also becoming a place where God lives. How do you relate to God? As a stranger, or as an adopted son or daughter, part of His household? How do we relate to each other? As strangers, or as another room of God’s house?

**Week 5** Eph. 3:1-13

**God’s Mysterious Plan Revealed**

When I think of all this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of you Gentiles[[i](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29213i" \o "See footnote i)] . . . 2assuming, by the way, that you know God gave me the special responsibility of extending his grace to you Gentiles. 3As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me. 4As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ. 5God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets.

6And this is God’s plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God’s children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus.[[j](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29218j" \o "See footnote j)] 7By God’s grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News.

8Though I am the least deserving of all God’s people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. 9I was chosen to explain to everyone[[k](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29221k" \o "See footnote k)] this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.

10God’s purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

12Because of Christ and our faith in him,[[l](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29224l" \o "See footnote l)] we can now come boldly and confidently into God’s presence. 13So please don’t lose heart because of my trials here. I am suffering for you, so you should feel honored.

# **Ephesians 3:1-13**

***Helpful Background for the Passage***

1. Paul refers to the fact that he is writing from prison, and that he is a prisoner because of his ministry to the Gentiles. (3:1) Paul was called to bring the good news to the Gentile world, which bothered some Jewish Christians, and angered many Jews, especially in Jerusalem. As a result, Paul was persecuted, beaten, and almost killed by the Jews who were trying to stop his outreach to the gentiles. His arrest by the Roman authorities was almost a protection, and all part of God’s plan.

2. The word translated “special responsibility” (NIV = “administration”) means stewardship, or putting something into action. (3:2) In this case, Paul has been chosen by God to be the one who proclaims God’s grace to the Gentiles. As we have learned in Ephesians, this grace is the salvation of the Gentiles in Christ, but also their inclusion as full members of the people of God through Christ.

3. A “mystery” or “mysterious plan” (1:9, 3:3-6) is something previously hidden, that is now being revealed. The focus in Ephesians is on the aspect of the mystery that allows Gentiles to be co-heirs with the Jewish believers. The fact that God did intend to bless both the Jews and the gentiles was not a mystery, (see Romans 14:9-12, and Gen. 12:1- ) but how this would happen was not made known. The making of “one new man” in Christ, from Jews and Gentiles, was a complete mystery until Jesus. The idea that God, through Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, would make “one body” from such different and conflicted parts is quite an amazing mystery.

4. The Greek word, translated “power,” [DUNAMIS, DYNAMIS] means extraordinary, explosive, or overwhelming. It infers strength and confidence. English derives the words dynamic, and dynamite from this Greek word. (If this sounds familiar, it was covered earlier, but this fact deserves a second mention!)

5. The Greek word translated “rich variety” (NIV = “manifold”) in 3:10 is a rare poetic term that means “diverse, multi-colored, and vast.” The word infers a strange combination of beautiful color and incredible size.

6. The Greek term translated “boldly” (NIV = “freedom”) in 3:12 expresses a citizen’s legal right to speak freely. It expresses “freedom of speech,” but also a right to stand without fear before a person in authority. It also means boldness, in the presence of legal or civil authority.

7. In 3:13, the word translated “lose heart” (NIV = “discouraged”) means to become tired, disheartened, despondent, or to lose strength. The term indicates a reality where strength is gone, energy is fading, and the end is near.

8. The term translated “honor” (NIV = “glory”) also in 3:13 means “the honor resulting from a good opinion.” When used of God, the term also has the OT meaning of His spiritual radiance, which reflects His perfection, worthiness and holiness.

8.5. Paul’s closest companion during much of his time in prison was his faithful dog, Mutticus. This faithful friend stuck by Paul through the hard times, and did not dessert his master. Paul writes about Mutticas in Eph. 8:4, and 3 Tim. 1:5. (Now are you aware of Brian’s strange sense of humor?)

# **Ephesians 3:1-13**

***Review Questions***

1. (3:1-3) Why is Paul in prison? What is the “special responsibility” that Paul has been given by God? What is involved in this? Why does Paul mention this?

2. (3:4-5) What is a mystery? What’s the “mysterious plan” to which Paul refers? What’s the mystery, or the “plan regarding Christ?” To whom was it revealed? How?

3. (3:6) Because of the “mystery,” all of us, Jew and Gentile, can be together. How is this possible? In what areas can we be together?

a. heirs

b. members of one body

c. sharers in the promise

4. (3:7-8) What was Paul’s attitude towards his ministry? How did he describe his position, and how did he receive it? What was his job? (By God’s grace!)

5. (3:9-10) What was God’s timing for revealing the mystery? (3:5, 9-10) Why this timing? What was revealed in the Church age?

6. (3:10-11) What was God’s “purpose” in this plan? What part does the Church play in carrying out God’s “eternal plan?” How was this plan carried out in Jesus?

7. (3:12) What is the difference/connection between being in Christ, and having faith in Christ? What is the resulting reality of our new identity?

8. (3:13) Why does Paul ask the Ephesians “not to lose heart/be discouraged?” How are Paul’s sufferings the “honor” of the Ephesians?)3:13)

***SO WHAT?***

9. Paul had a humble, servant’s heart towards his own ministry. What are your attitudes towards your ministry, or your responsibilities/job? Are you displaying the same humble, heart of a servant?

10. According to 3:12, if we are in Christ, and through Him, we can approach God in a bold and confident manner, or with “freedom and confidence.” How should this truth impact the way that you think/feel towards God? How does this truth impact the way that you pray?

11. If we are adopted children of God, and in Christ able to approach God the Father, in this way, how should we act/react to life around us? How could you better face the struggles, fears, and hurts of daily life, if this reality was uppermost in your mind?

**Week 6: Eph. 3:14-21**

**Paul’s Prayer for Spiritual Growth**

14When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father,[[m](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29226m" \o "See footnote m)] 15the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth.[[n](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29227n)] 16I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. 17Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong. 18And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. 19May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

20Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. 21Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

**Ephesians 3:14-21**

***Helpful Background for the Passage***

1. As Paul considers the reality of God’s grace, he can ONLY respond with prayer and praise. As Paul “thinks about” the confluence of grace, and how God’s grace has accomplished so much, he breaks into praise.

2. Paul prays to the Father, from whom creation originates. The word “name,” (3:15) means identity, essence, or function. In addition, Jews believed that the giver of the name, had authority over the thing named. God gave Adam authority to name all the animals in Genesis, and also gave Adam dominion over the creation. We have NT references to “name” in Phil 2:10-11 and in Acts.

3. The phrase, “inner being” (3:16) refers to the regenerated soul of a Christian. It refers to that part of the believer that was made alive (2:5, Rom 7:22, 2 Cor 4:16) but which may be still weak, or asleep. (5:14) A newly reborn person is a baby, and is in need of much care, or strengthening. (1 Cur 3:1-3, 1 Pete 2:2, Heb. 5:13-14)

4. The concept expressed by the word, “dwell,” (3:17) is that Christ would “take up residence, or make His home” in us. The idea that God would live “in us” is found in the OT, but still is a radical reality. (See also, John 14:23)

5. The word, “rooted,” (3:17) means to “securely plant, ground, or deeply connect.” It’s an agricultural term, referring to a living thing that gets a good, solid, hold with a roots system in the soil. Such a tree or plant would be difficult to move.

6. The word, “established,” (3:17) refers to the foundation of a building. It’s a construction term, which meant to start with a good, solid, secure, foundation. A good building needed to be “established” on the proper foundation.

7. The word “immeasurably,” in the phrase “immeasurably more” (v. 3:20) means exceedingly great, beyond comprehension, and infinite. Paul actually takes an existing Greek word for vast or great and adds an additional prefix, thus coining a new word to illustrate this truth. It’s a super-superlative, which also appears in Eph 1:19.

# **Ephesians 3:14-21**

***Review Questions***

1. (3:14-15) What sparks Paul to prayer? 3:14) Why is Paul motivated to pray? Why does Paul mention God the Father as the Creator? What significance does that have for Paul? (3:15)

2. (3:16) As Paul begins his prayer, what is the first thing he asks God to do? Why is it first and how will it happen? What type of strength will God provide?

3. (3:17) For what purpose is the strengthening? Why is “home” a significant word? Why are deep roots important? Where will they grow?

4. (3:18) Now for what does Paul pray? Why do we need power to understand? What should we understand? How is this love described?

5. (3:19) What does Paul want us to experience? How will that help? How can trying to understand the love of Christ and experiencing this love both help? What does it mean to be “made complete?” How does that happen?

6. (3:20-21) How does Paul sum up this passage, and the first three chapters? What’s the ultimate purpose of all of these great truths? (Eph. 1-3) From where will God receive glory? For how long?

***SO WHAT?***

7. How would you be changed if you understood the love of Christ? Why do we need “power” to understand this love?

8. In the first three chapters of Ephesians, we have glimpsed some of what God has already done for us, in that, He has chosen us, made us alive, redeemed, raised, , and seated us, and has made us one. Now, in Eph 3:20, we are told that God can do “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine…” How do you respond? How should this truth be reflected in your prayer life, and in your daily life?

**Week 7: Eph. 4:1-16**

**Unity in the Body**

4 Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. 2Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. 3Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. 4For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.5There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,6one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.7However, he has given each one of us a special gift[[o](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29240o)] through the generosity of Christ. 8That is why the Scriptures say, “When he ascended to the heights,he led a crowd of captivesand gave gifts to his people.”[[p](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29241p)]

9Notice that it says “he ascended.” This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world.[[q](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29242q" \o "See footnote q)] 10And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.

11Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. 13This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

14Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. 15Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. 16He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

**Ephesians 4:1-16**

***Helpful Background***

**Worthy of your Calling**

1. The word humble, (4:2) means being in a low position, of a low priority, , or lowliness. It means, willing to take little honor, or to give higher place to another. Humility was not considered to be a virtue in the Greek world, but for Christians, we have a Lord who showed incredible humility for us to follow as our example. (Phil. 2:5-11)

2. The word “gentle,” (4:2) means meekness, or tender strength. It has a sense of having no one but God to turn to, so that one accepts rough circumstances without complaint.

3. The word, “patient” (4:2) means literally, having a wide soul, long-suffering, so that one can live with a troublesome neighbor. It means self-restraint in the face of provocation, or choosing not to act, react, or respond to a negative situation.

4. The inverted quote found in verse 4:8 is from Psalm 68:18. Paul either inverted the receiving/giving himself, or it was the understood version for the Jews and the early Christians. The imagery in the Psalm is of a victorious King, returning in triumph to the capital city, receiving the praise and tribute of the people. While “receiving” from the people, the triumphant King would shower His people with gifts to help celebrate the victory. The Jews, and the early church, understood that God would give good gifts through the victory of the Messiah. This Psalm was traditionally sung during the Jewish Festival of Weeks, or time of giving thanks. Interestingly, the day of Pentecost, when God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church, was during the Festival of Weeks.

5. The word, “descended,” (4:9) is used by Paul to illustrate the point that Christ could not have gone up, ascended, unless He had first gone down, descended. The phrase translated “lowly world” (NIV = “lower earthly regions,”) is difficult to understand. Some experts think that Paul may be referring to the incarnation of Jesus as a human, for Jesus did “lower Himself” to take on the very nature of a human. (Phil. 2:6-8) This is the direction the translaters of the New Living Translation (NLT) chose, by translating it to “our lowly world.”

 But, the cultural/historical context of a victorious King returning home seems to better fit the resurrection of Jesus. Thus, the phrase most likely refers to the place of the dead. We know from several NT passages, that God “raised” Jesus from the dead, and “raised” or “exalted” Christ to heavenly places, so we may interpret the “lower regions” as where Christ was while dead, and not just the earth. (Eph 1:19-22, Rom 10:6-, Acts 2:25-35, Ps 16:10, Ps 110:1, Phil 2:8-11)

6. The words, “apostles, and prophets,” (4:11) describe two specific leadership roles in the early church. An “Apostle” was someone directly, personally, commissioned by Jesus for ministry. Paul also uses the term to describe those who were closely associated with an apostle. “Prophet,” refers to those in the early church who were given the spiritual gift to speak God’s Word for immediate needs, and of seeing future events as present situations.

7. The words “evangelists, pastors and teachers,” (4:11) all are ministers of the Word, for today, and for the local church. Evangelists are everyday missionaries who seem to be able to reach people for Christ wherever they go. A pastor/teacher, (literally shepherd,) is a leader, called by God to lead a group of His sheep. This shepherd is also able to clearly communicate the Bible to the people, in formal or informal settings.

8. The word “mature,” (4:13) literally means a fully grown, fully developed adult person. This word teaches that every individual Christian should grow up, thinking and behaving as an adult and becoming fully developed as God has planned. It also indicates that God wants to knit us together as one new person.

9. The word translated “full and complete standard” (4:13) means literally stature. It means that we are to grow up like Jesus, in all ways, we are to be the “body of Christ,” fully grown and like Jesus.

# **Ephesians 4:1-16**

***Review Questions***

1. Paul begins this chapter with a “therefore,” cleverly disguised for NIV readers as a less dramatic, less fun, “then.” What does the use of a transition word indicate?

2. (4:1) To what is Paul referring by the challenge, “to live a life that’s worthy of your calling?” What is the “calling?”

3. (4:2-3) What’s meant by “making allowance for each other’s faults?” How do we keep “united in the Spirit,” and why is unity important? How do the character qualities listed in Paul’s challenge relate to unity? What is meant by “binding yourselves together with peace?” (4:3)

4. (4:4-6) What are the seven unique distinctions of those who are in Christ? What do they indicate, and what do they mean for us?

5. (4:7) Why is the phrase “to each one of us” significant? Why is it important in the context of the previous section? What is meant by the “generosity of Christ?”

6. (4:8-10) Why is it important that Christ “ascended” and “descended?” Why is this Psalm quoted for us here? What “gifts” did Christ give to us? What was the purpose for all of this? (4:10)

7. (4:11) What are the five leadership roles established and given as gifts to the Church? Who established these leadership roles? What are they based upon?

8. (4:11-12) For what purpose were the leadership roles established by Christ? What is the job of these leaders? Who do they “equip” and what does this mean? What then is the responsibility of “God’s people?” What should the people of God do?

9. (4:13-14) For what purpose are we equipped? What’s the ultimate goal? Why is it important to be mature in our faith instead of immature?

10. (4:14-15) What are the signs of Christian maturity? What is an indicator of spiritual immaturity?

11. (4:15-16) What does it mean to “speak the truth in love?” Why is it important? What is our goal as the “body of Christ?” How does this work?

***SO WHAT?***

12. As you consider the challenge “to live a life that’s worthy of your calling,” remember that you have all necessary power available to you because you are in Christ. So, how are you living? Are you developing the character qualities that will build and maintain unity in the Body?

13. Paul does not urge us to “DO” anything; He challenges us to “BE” humble, gentle, patient, and loving. What’s the difference?

14. Have you been “equipped” for doing His work? If so, how are you serving? If not, what specific areas do you need to be equipped in? Are you “built up,” and overly busy or inactive? Or, are you eager to serve, and just do not feel equipped yet? (It might be time to pray, and “get after it” either way!)

**Week 8: Eph. 4:17-32**

**Living as Children of Light**

17With the Lord’s authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. 18Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. 19They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

20But that isn’t what you learned about Christ. 21Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, 22throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. 23Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. 24Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

25So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. 26And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.”[[r](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29259r)] Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

28If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. 29Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

30And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own,[[s](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29263s" \o "See footnote s)] guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

31Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. 32Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

# **Ephesians 4:17-32**

***Helpful Background for the Passage***

1. “Actions speak louder than words!” “I’d rather see a sermon than to hear one any day” (Not quotes from Paul, but they could be!)

 Once again, Paul begins our passage with a challenge to live for Christ. Remember (or read) 4:1, 4:17, 4:24, 5:1-2, 5:8. Do you grasp Paul’s theme? He is very concerned, that we live out what we believe. Paul’s understanding is that one who has “been made alive,” should not act like a dead thing. A changed life is the sign of a changed heart.

2. To the apostle Paul, the word, “Gentile,” meant a person who was far from God, completely sinful in everything, and completely ungodly, not just a non-Jew. Paul uses the term to describe those that are far from God, and followers of the world.

3. The word translated “lustful pleasures” (NIV = “sensuality”) (4:19) as it is used here, means shameful ways, debauchery, lewdness. It implies sexual depravity, unrestrained behavior motivated by lust, and a refusal to obey limits established by God. The Almighty established guidelines for the protection of people, but humans tend to violate those boundaries without care or concern.

4. The word, “corrupted,” (4:22) literally means rotting, decaying, dying, or a dead thing. The “sin nature” (old self”) is being killed by its own desires, and only a “new nature” (new self”) can save the soul. Paul uses the same vivid language to teach about this reality in several scriptures, but especially Romans, chapter 6. (2 Cor 5:17, Gal 2:20, Rom 8:5-6, 12:1-2)

5. The fact that Paul assumes anger will happen in 4:25, “Don’t sin by letting anger control you,” demonstrates that anger is an expected human emotion. Anger will happen, just as all other emotions will just happen. Feeling anger or getting angry is not sinful, but what we often do/say/think as a result of those feelings, may be sinful. The key is how we respond to it, by not sinning. We will be angry, but we must develop healthy ways to express and deal with it, so that we will not sin against God or others.

6. Unresolved anger will turn to bitterness. Thus, Paul’s warning to “not let the sun go down while you are still angry,” is great wisdom. As far as it is possible, find ways to express, process, and get past anger. Do not allow it to go unresolved, or bitterness will begin to grow in your heart, thus, giving the Devil a way into your life.

7. The fact that Paul commands us, “Do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit,” (NIV = “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God”) in 4:30 is an amazing truth that helps us defend the Trinity. The personhood of the Holy Spirit has been under attack for centuries, with false teachers saying that the Spirit is a cosmic force, (as in Star Wars) or some spiritual energy force field. This verse shows us that the Spirit is a person capable of being grieved, (grieved means to hurt or offend.) An inanimate object or force cannot feel sorrow or be grieved, it has no emotions. (For example, I cannot cause sorrow for or grieve gravity, or make my computer experience grief or sorrow, though sometimes I want to do so! But I can grieve a friend.)

8. The word, “slander” (4:31) means an intentional, malicious effort to destroy someone through using lies, rumors, and gossip. The Greek root is the word for devil. Slander is one of the enemies’ favorite weapons against the church and against church leadership.

9. As Christians, we are to forgive, because we have been forgiven. The motivation is simple, but powerful. If we truly understood and remembered how much we have been forgiven, then we would be willing to practice forgiveness more consistently in our daily lives.

# **Ephesians 4:17-32**

# ***Review Questions***

1.) 4:17-19) Paul begins this section by challenging us that we should no longer live as the ungodly live. (Compare/Contrast 4:17, with 4:1) Of what past reality does this remind us? (Eph 2:1-5) How do the ungodly live? What have they done toward God? What choices have they made? Why? What is the result?

2. (4:20-21) Why is Paul so strong in his insisting about how we live? (4:17) What is the contrast made by Paul? How were the Ephesians “taught,” and how did they hear the truth? How did we hear and learn?

3. (4:22-24) What was taught about the “former way of life?” (4:22) Why? What should we throw off, and why so quick and active? How were they/we renewed?” (4:23) What needs to be “put on?” (4:24)

Starting in 4:25, Paul commands that specific actions and attitudes that define the sin nature be thrown off. He also commands that those attitudes and actions that define the “new nature” should be “put on.”

4. (4:25) Why does Paul begin with another rtransition word? (This time “So,” which is a Therefore” cleverly disguisee.)

What’s the first action/behavior to “put off?” Why should it be eliminated?

5. (4:26-27) What else should we “put off,” and why? What is significant about the way Paul mentions anger? What specifically should we be careful not to do, and for what reason?

6. (4:28) What must be “put off,” and what must be “put on?” What should a former thief not do, and what should he do? Why? What should be his motivation?

7. (4:29-30) What type of talk should we “put off,” and what type of speech should we “put on?” For what purpose? What else should we “put off,” or stop doing? How do we bring sorrow to the Holy Spirit? How do we avoid doing this?

8. (4:31-32) What should we “get rid of” “throwoff?” What actions and attitudes should we “put on?” Why should we forgive one another? (4:32)

***SO WHAT?***

9. In 4:22-24, we are told specifically how to live the Christian life, “throw off” and put on.” What does this mean? How do you “put on the new nature?” What are the steps of how this can happen?

10. Okay, let’s get personal! Which of the specific actions or attitudes in 4:25-32 do you need to intentionally and prayerfully “throw off,” and which do you need to “put on?

11. What about forgiveness? What’s our basis for practicing an ongoing priority on forgiveness?”

**Week 9 Eph. 5:1-16**

**Living in the Light**

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. 2Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us[[t](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29267t" \o "See footnote t)] and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

3Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God’s people. 4Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. 5You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.

6Don’t be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. 7Don’t participate in the things these people do. 8For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! 9For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.

10Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. 11Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. 12It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. 13But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, 14for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said,

“Awake, O sleeper,
    rise up from the dead,
    and Christ will give you light.”

**Living by the Spirit’s Power**

15So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. 16Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.

# **Ephesians 5:1-16**

***Helpful Background for the Passage***

1. Paul’s command to “Imitate God” because we are His dearly love children, should bring some vivid emotional images to mind. Paul wants us to think about the ways beloved children try to be like their loving parents. The little boy, who tries to walk like Dad, use the same tools as Dad, or tries to shave, just like Dad. Also, the little girl, who wants to dress like Mom, do her hair and make up like Mom does every morning, or go out to work like Mom. Any time children feel loved, valued, or secure, they want to imitate those who are the closest in their lives. This is how we should be as those who are greatly loved and valued by our Heavenly Father, in whom we are secure.

2. According to 5:2, Christ considered his life to be an offering to be given up to God. It was not just an offering, but a pleasing offering to the Father. We should be overwhelmed that Jesus Christ, (God and Man) would be willing to be such an offering in our place. Because of what Christ has done for us, Paul urges us to “live a life of love,” by living our lives as offerings to God.

(Rom 12:1-2, Phil. 2:17, 2 Tim. 4:6-8)

3. The word, “immorality,” (5:3) means illicit sexual relations, or any sexual act that takes place outside of marriage. The inference is that God has set some boundaries for sexual relationships, marriage, and anything outside of those boundaries is sin. The Greek word, [porneia] is where we get the English word, pornography.

4. The word translated “excuse these sins” (NIV = “empty words”) in 5:6 refers to all false teaching and wrong philosophies of man. But, Paul may have in mind a particular false teaching that taught that freedom from the law meant freedom to sin. This wrong teaching, called gnosticism, taught that the body and the spirit were separate, and unrelated. Thus a Christian could do what he/she wanted with the body, because the spirit was saved and would not be affected by the actions of the body. Paul’s “put off, put on,” teaching shows what we are to do.

5. Paul uses the vivid imagery of light and darkness to illustrate how we should live, and also how we should not live. (5:8-10) We are told to “live as people of light.” The Bible uses this same illustration in many places to teach us that as Christians, we should be lights that stand out in a dark world. (Phil 2:15, 1 Thes 5:8, 1 John 1:6-)

6. The verb translated “carefully determine” (NIV = “find out”) in 5:10 means, proving, discovering, or putting to the test. This refers to what happens when we live out truth, goodness, and are righteous. We find out that God’s way is best, and that He takes good care of all things. We also discover that God’s will is holy and perfect in every way.

7. In teaching about what the light produces in 5:9, Paul echoes his teaching on the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5. When we allow God to work through us and shine His goodness through our lives, “fruit” just happens, as it is produced not forced out. Living in the light will have good results.

8. The verb, “expose,” (5:11) means to disprove, show the error, or bring to light the falsehood. This word, in Greek, is the opposite of the Greek verb translated “carefully determine” or “find out,” or “prove,” (5:10) Paul is teaching us that the things of God, will prove to be good, perfect and exactly what we need, while the things of the darkness will be disproved, and shown to be empty and shameful.

9. Although the use of the introductory phrase, “it is said,” (5:14) often indicates a quote from the Old Testament, this time it does not. This quote is similar to several OT passages, but is not a direct quote. (See Is. 26:19, 51:17, 52:1, Mal. 4:2) This is probably a quote from an early church baptism hymn, or from a ceremony to welcome new believers to the church family.

**Ephesians 5:1-16**

***Review Questions***

1. (5:1) What does it mean to “imitate?” In what manner should we imitate? How can we imitate God?

2. (5:2) How can we “live a life filled with love” in this cold, sinful, world? Why should we live, and love, in this way? What type of love is this? Who is our example for this?

3. (5:3-4) What actions/attitudes are we to “trow off,” and why should we do so? What three types of speech should be “put off” as well? Why? What should we “put on” instead?

4. (5:5) How are immorality, impurity, and being greedy, idolatry? Of what can we be sure, in reference to immoral, impure, or greedy people?

5. (5:6-7) What must a believer be alert for, and guard against? What are we instructed to not let happen? Why?

6. (5:8-9) How does Paul, once again, contrast the “old nature,” with the “new nature?” What two illustrations does he join together? How do we “live as people of light?” What will God produce through this choice?

is the “fruit” of living in the light?

7. (5:10-12) What’s the command Paul gives us, and why is it given? What should our attitudes and actions be toward darkness?

8. (5:13-14) What is the purpose of the light? Why is it useful? Who is the light?

9. (5:15-16) How do we “be careful,” and how do we live “wise” and avoid being foolish? Why? What is Paul speaking about in teaching “make the most of every opportunity?”

***SO WHAT?***

10. We are to be dear children, “imitators of God,” and to “live a life filled with love.” How do we do this? How, specifically and practically, can we imitate God?

11. How are you “careful” and “wise” about how you live? Are you “making the most of every opportunity?” (5:15-16) How can you grow in this area? How can we help each other deal with darkness, and live in the light?

**Week 10: Eph. 5:17-33**

17Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. 18Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, 19singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. 20And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Spirit-Guided Relationships: Wives and Husbands**

21And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. 24As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

25For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her 26to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s word.[[u](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29291u" \o "See footnote u)] 27He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. 28In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. 29No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. 30And we are members of his body.

3

1As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.”[[v](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29296v)] 32This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. 33So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

# **Ephesians 5:17-33**

**Helpful Background for the Passage**

1. The phrase translated “ruin your life” (NIV = “debauchery”) is the end result of unrestrained living. It means a wild, disobedient, unrestrained pursuit of sinful pleasures. It is a contempt for boundaries, and is characterized by stubborn, selfish, disobedience. (Prov. 23:30, Gal. 5:19-21, Luke 15:13)

2. The concept of “submission,” has caused much controversy in the American Church. Paul teaches that the Christian life is all about submission; first to God, Jesus, and the Spirit, (See the Bible) then in the way we deal with each other, (Eph. 5:21, Phil. 2:1-5) and finally in the various human relationships, husband and wife, (5:22-33) children and parents, (6:1-4) workers and employers. (6:5-9.) In all submission, we are to follow the example of Our Lord Jesus, who submitted Himself to the Father’s will, which included becoming a human, washing feet, and even a horrific death to pay for our sins. (John 13:4-, 1 Pete 5:5, Phil 2:5-11)

3. The word, “submit,” Biblically means to deny yourself, lay down your own desires, and let go of control. It means to intentionally choose to follow, to serve, and to put aside your own ways. Biblical submission is not about being dominated, abused, or becoming a slave. Biblical submission is all about trust.

4. Paul teaches that the roles of wives and husbands are to be lived out, without condition, and independent of the other partner. Wives are told to “submit, as to the Lord.” Husbands are told to “love… as Christ loved the Church.” Both of these statements indicate that the role should be lived out regardless of whether or not the spouse is living out their role. The husband is being obedient to God by living out his role, and he should continue in it, unconditionally. The wife is being obedient to God by living out her role, and she should continue to do so, unconditionally. (Of course, it is much easier, if both partners are living out their roles, empowered and assisted by the Holy Spirit.)

5. Paul elevates the status of women within marriage in the first century context. He declares that wives are to be treated with honor, love, kindness, as Jesus Christ treated the Church. Self-sacrifice is part of the command to husbands, which would have been a radical concept in Greek or Roman cultures.

6. The model for marriage given by Paul is an exact copy of the model given elsewhere in the Bible. (5:31) It is a three-phase process: “leave,” “join,” and “be united into one,” (NLT,) or Leave, cleave, and become one flesh. (NIV/NKJ) Both partners must leave their previous families and lives, in order to step into a new life, and begin a new family. Both partners must choose to join the other (cleave) with the other, and “forsake” all others. Both partners, must then pursue becoming “one flesh,” which begins with the sexual union, and then progresses throughout the marriage.

7. Paul refers to the reality of Christian marriage as a “mystery.” (5:32) The only other time that Paul uses this term is when he refe4rs to the good news of the gospel. (Remember, a mystery is NOT mysterious to the author or creator of the mystery!) Paul doesn’t pretend to understand how God uses His gift of marriage in the lives of His children, but just reminds everyone that Christian marriage is ultimately, a mystery!

**Ephesians 5:17-33**

***Review Questions***

1. (5:17) What is meant by “do not act thoughtlessly” (NIV = “ do not be foolish”) in 5:17? Why is this a transition phrase? According to the context of 5:17, how do you know and understand “what the Lord wants you to do?”

2. (5:18) What are we told about alcohol? What are we not told about it? Why should we “not get drunk?” What’s the specific reason? What’s the general reason? How are we “filled?”

3. (5:19-20) How should we “speak” to each other? How is this possible? What attitude should we have as we go through our days? How does this reflect earlier teaching? (Eph 4:29…)

4. (5:21) What attitude should we have as we go through our days? How does this reflect earlier teaching? (Eph 4:29…) How does this verse connect with earlier context in chapter 5?

5. (5:21-22) What does it mean to submit? Who is called to submit in verse 5:21, and to whom? Who is called to submit in verse 5:22, and to whom? In what manner, and with what attitude, is the wife called to submit?

6. (5:23-24) What is the model for Biblical submission? What is the role of the wife, and what is the role of the husband? How does the church submit to Christ? How is this submission the model for wives?

7. (5:25-27) What are husbands called to do? What type of love is commanded here? How did Christ love the church? What was the purpose of the love of Christ for the church? How is this love the model for husbands?

8. (5:28-30) How are husbands to love their wives? How does this work in every day life? What is the purpose of this role?

9. (5:31-33) What is the three- stage model given for marriage? Why is this important? From where does Paul get this teaching? What is mysterious about marriage? (Also see Gen. 2:24, Mark 10:7)

***SO WHAT?***

10. How are you making the most of every opportunity and trying to live intentionally? How are you choosing to live “wise” and continuing to make good choices? What are you throwing off from your sin nature, and what are you putting on from your new nature?

11. What’s your view of the concept of submission? How is life characterized by willing submission on a daily basis? Why is this concept so important when facing the struggles, problems, and painful situations of life?

12. If you are married, how are you doing at living out your role as wife or husband? What has God called you to within your marriage, and how are you responding?

13. If you are not married, what can you learn from this passage about God’s design for marriage? How can this understanding help you in daily life? How can this be of help in other relationships?

**Week 11: Eph. 6:1-12\***

**Children and Parents**

6 Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord,[[w](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29299w" \o "See footnote w)] for this is the right thing to do. 2“Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: 3If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.”[[x](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29301x)]

4Fathers,[[y](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29302y" \o "See footnote y)] do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

**Slaves and Masters**

5Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. 6Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. 7Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. 8Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.

9Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don’t threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites.

**The Whole Armor of God**

10A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. 12For we[[z](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29310z" \o "See footnote z)] are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

**Ephesians 6:1-12**

***Helpful Background for the Passage***

1. Paul continues his teaching on “how to live,” by moving from the mutual roles of husbands and wives, to the roles of children and parents. (6:1-4) Paul is writing to believers, and assumes the families he is addressing are Christian. But, the reality of many families being non-Christian, or mixed, does not change the roles required of parents and children.

2. The words “belong to the Lord” (NIV = “in the Lord”) 6:1 teach that all children, need to obey their Christian parents (because) they are all believers together” and (as if) they were obeying God. Children who have non-Christian parents are still to “honor” them, and “obey” them, unless those actions would counter what God says to do. (Disobedience to parents, Biblically, is a sign of incredible ungodliness and a culture of sin. [Rom 1:30, 2 Tim 3:3])

3. To “honor,” (6:2) means literally, to give weight to, to value, or to give glory to something/some one. This challenge from Paul echoes the fifth commandment, (Ex. 20:12) and holds a promise of blessing if it is followed. As a child or youth, it means to submit to your parent’s guidance, obey the rules, and follow their leading. As adults, it means to seriously consider your parent’s guidance, obey the rules, (in their home) and honor (give weight to) their leading.

4. The Greek word translated “fathers,” (6:4) is plural in the Greek, and probably means not just more than one father, but parents. Both parents can “exasperate,” or “provoke” their children. (If the children are commanded to obey and honor their parents, parents should strive to be worthy of that honor and obedience.)

5. Slavery in NT times was not exactly as we think of slavery today. It was an economic or military reality, and not based on race, gender, or religious persecution. For example, if you could not pay your debts, you sold yourself into slavery to pay off what you owed. If your city or country was conquered by another, you might be enslaved to the victors. Slavery was not necessarily life-long, and did not necessarily condemn your children to the same reality.

6. The phrase translated “deep respect and fear” (NIV = “with fear and trembling) means with an attitude of reverence, respect, and honor. It does not mean “fear,” as in “I am afraid of something bad happening,” and “trembling,” in abject fright. (For the same use, 1 Cor 2:3, 2 Cor 7:15, Phil 2:12)

7. The challenge to “Be strong,” (6:10) is literally, “be empowered.” The Greek word used here is [endunamou] which comes from our old friend, [dunamis] which means power. (Remember, dynamite, dynamic, explosive and incredible force…. yeah, Yeah, Brian, we remember, now get on with it!) It’s through being connected in with God that we have this incredible power to resist the Devil, all his evil plans, and every temptation known to man. We are only powerless if we choose to ignore the power in us through the Holy Spirit. (See also, 2 Tim 2:1, 1 Cor. 10:13, Col 1:11, Eph 1:19, 3:16, Acts 9:22, 1 Tim 1:12)

8. The words, “rulers, authorities, powers,” and “spiritual forces of evil,” (6:12) refer to the non-physical, beyond our tangible realm powers. These powers were first mentioned in Ephesians 1:21, and 3:10. We know that they were created creatures, and forever under the ultimate authority of Christ. (Col. 1:16, 2:10) They are “fallen angels,” authorities and powers only in a temporary, spiritual world way. The OT speaks of the power these “spiritual forces,” have to impact human events and history, but that the true and ultimate power remains with God. (See Dan. 10:13, 20) They are in an ongoing rebellion against God, part of which is trying to destroy God’s masterpiece creation, us.

# **Ephesians 6:1-12**

***Review Questions***

1. (6:1) Who does Paul now address? How are children to obey their parents? Why should children obey?

2. (6:2-3) What does it mean to “honor,” some one? To what authoritative teaching does Paul refer for more support for his command? What is the promised result if the command is obeyed?

3. (6:4) How should parents treat children? What should parents be careful not to do? What priority should parents have while raising their children? (Ps. 127:3)

4. (6:5-8) Who does Paul next address:? How should “slaves” serve, and with what attitude? In what manner should they serve/obey? (As to the Lord…) What should be the motivation, and what should be the action?

5. (6:9) What about masters? What are they not to do? What should be the reason for fair dealings between slave and master? What is the reassuring reality about God taught here?

6. Paul begins verse 6:10 with “a final word,” (NIV = “finally”) and we all say yay!) What does “finally,” indicate, and what is special about what follows this transition word? What does “Be strong,” (6:10) mean? How are we to be strong?

7. (6:11) What are we to “put on” to help us “Be strong?” Why do we not get our own instead of having to use God’s? What’s the point? Why do we put it on?

8. (6:12) To what does the phrase, “we are not fighting against” (NIV = “our struggle”) refer? What is the fight/struggle not against, and what is it against? Where are these enemies/forces located, and where is the battle” taking place?

***SO WHAT?***

9. All of us are children, and many of us are parents. (Grandparents are significant also!) How are you doing in your role as a child or parent? There is no age when we should stop honoring our parents, so how are we doing in this area? (Honoring someone’s memory is also a powerful way to honor them.)

We are in a fight/struggle/battle. It rages around us, whether we acknowledge it or not. (6:12)

10. How’s the battle going for you? Are you “standing” in your own power, or in God’s? How can you, practically and specifically, “Be Strong,” and empowered?

***Week 12: Eph. 6:13-24***

13Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. 14Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God’s righteousness. 15For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.[[aa](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29313aa" \o "See footnote aa)] 16In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.[[ab](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29314ab)] 17Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.[[ac](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29316ac" \o "See footnote ac)]

19And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God’s mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike.[[ad](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29317ad" \o "See footnote ad)] 20I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God’s ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should.

**Final Greetings**

21To bring you up to date, Tychicus will give you a full report about what I am doing and how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper in the Lord’s work. 22I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you.

23Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters,[[ae](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1-6&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29321ae" \o "See footnote ae)] and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness. 24May God’s grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Ephesians 6:13-24**

**Helpful Background for the Passage**

1. The challenge to “stand” is an interesting statement. It’s a military term which simply means, “to remain, to hold the position, or to be solid.” We are not commanded to win the war, for “the battle belongs to the Lord.” We are not even told to advance, just to stand. We are told to be strong, to stand, to be alert, and to pray. (I like my role in the battle, if I can only remember it!)

2. In the “armor of God,” (6:14-17) we hear echoes from many other scriptures. Compare the descriptions of each piece of armor to the Fruit of the Spirit. (Gal 5:22- ) Also, Paul is intentionally echoing the Old Testament in this teaching, to remind us that this is not a new idea, just a new aspect of an old truth. (See Is. 11:5, [truth] 59:17, [righteousness, salvation] 52:7, [peace] and Heb. 4:12, Is. 11:4, [sword of the Word])

3. In the Armor of God, notice that there is only one offensive weapon, and only defensive weapons that would protect the front. There is no protection for the back, rear, or backs of legs. Thus, no turning back, there is no safe running or flight possible.

4. Paul reminds believers to allow the Holy Spirit to empower their prayer lives. We should rely on the Spirit that dwells in each of us to remind us to pray, but also lead/guide our prayers. We are to consider prayer a powerful force that God can spark and inspire in us.

5. We are always to “stay alert.” (6:18) If we remember the reality of the Christian life (spiritual battles) then we will remember to stay on guard and alert for whatever comes are way. It can be easy in modern Christianity to get comfortable, and to not be alert, but from Jesus to Paul, the NT calls us to be aware and alert.

6. Tychicus, (6:21-22) is described by Paul as being “a beloved brother,” and a “faithful helper in the Lord’s work.” We know that he was a close friend of Paul’s and apparently a very useful member of Paul’s ministry team. Paul utilizes him as a messenger, a missionary, and a substitute pastor. (Acts 20:4, Col. 4:7-9, Ti. 3:12) He probably personally carried the letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, and perhaps even the letters to Timothy and saw that they were safely delivered. But, he would have also brought personal thoughts from Paul and a great deal of help to these believers in Asia Minor.

# **Ephesians 6:13-24**

**Review Questions**

1. (4:12-13) Why should we “put on” the armor? What’s the reason given in the transition? (It’s are final, “therefore!”)What are we to “put on,” and why? What is the “time of evil?” (See 5:16)

2. (6:13) What does it mean to “stand?” What is significant about “standing,” and how do we do it?

3. (6:14-17) What is “the armor of God,” and what is significant about each item? What are the defensive tools, and what are the offensive weapons? What do you do with your shield?

4. (6:18) Paul transitions from imagery to practicality. What is our role in the battle? What are we to do? (6:11, 13, 18)

5. (6:18-20) How should we pray? For whom should we pray? When? Specifically, what are Paul’s prayer requests?

6. (6:21-22) Who is Tychicus? What purpose does Paul have for him? How does Paul speak of him?

7. (6:23-24) How does Paul end the letter? What are his final words of wisdom? How should we love Our Lord, Jesus Christ?

***SO WHAT?***

8. Paul tells us to “stand firm,” and to “stand your ground.” In your life, how can you “stand?” In what areas do you need to be strengthened?

9. In what areas do you need to be helped by putting on the armor of God? How can you “put on” the armor of God every day? Which “piece” could make the most difference?

10. What have you learned from this long journey in Ephesians? Take some time to look back at what God revealed to you. What difference will this study make in your life? What has changed since we began, and what needs to change now? Seek God on how you can become a “doer of the Word,” and how He can help you grow closer to Him.