



Winter Study Guide 2020

BROUGHT NEAR

**..NOW IN CHRIST JESUS YOU WHO WERE ONCE FAR OFF HAVE
BEEN BROUGHT NEAR BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST EPH 2:13**

A STUDY OF EPHESIANS

Ephesus Profile



Ephesus was an ancient port city whose well-preserved ruins are in modern-day Turkey. The city was once considered the most important Greek city and the most important trading center in the Mediterranean region. Throughout history, Ephesus survived multiple attacks and changed hands many times between conquerors. It remains an important archaeological site and Christian pilgrimage destination.

Author, Date, and Recipients

The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the churches in Ephesus and the surrounding region c. A.D. 62 while imprisoned in Rome (Acts 28). During this time he also wrote Colossians and Philemon. All three letters were sent with Tychicus and Onesimus.

Theme

There are three main themes of Ephesians: (1) Christ has reconciled all creation to himself and to God; (2) Christ has united people from all nations to himself and to one another in his church; and (3) Christians must live as new people.

Purpose

Ephesians offers general instruction in the truths of God’s redemptive work in Christ; the unity of the church among diverse peoples; and proper conduct in the church, the home, and the world.

The Setting of Ephesians

Ephesus was a wealthy port city in the Roman province of Asia. It was a center of learning and was near several key land routes. Paul probably wrote his letter to the Ephesians while under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28).

Ephesians and Redemptive History

The vision of redemptive history presented in Ephesians stretches all the way back to the beginning of time and before, and all the way forward to the end of all things. In Ephesians 1 Paul says that God “chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). And at the end of this passage Paul strains his eyes to look forward to the end, when “we acquire possession of” our inheritance (1:14). In it all, Jesus is the one through whom this eternal plan is enacted (1:10; 3:11).

Yet Paul says something startling to his hearers in chapter 3. He says that there has been a “mystery” kept hidden for countless generations, but which has now been revealed (Eph. 3:4–5, 9). This mystery is that God’s favor is not only for the Jews. It is for all people (3:6, 8–9). At the height of human history, Christ came and made salvation freely available to all those who have faith in him (2:8–9). The result is that this salvation is now spilling over the banks of ethnic Israel and flooding out to the nations. There is “one God and Father of all” (4:6). Because the “dividing wall of hostility” between us and God has been torn down, the hostility can also be torn down between us and other people (2:14–16).

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

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

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

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. **In love** ⁵**he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ**, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

SHARE TOGETHER

From Sunday, share...

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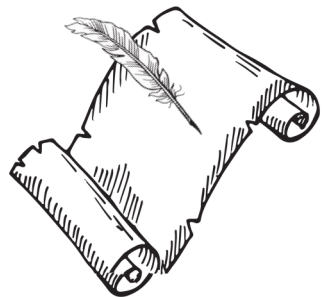
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EXPLORE TOGETHER

- Why do you think Paul uses the word “saints” to describe the believers in Ephesus?

- Notice that after Paul referred to his readers as saints, he followed up with a greeting in verse 2. Why do you think Paul used those two words to greet the saints?

- Why is God’s grace foundational to salvation and the Christian life? How does the fact that we are made saints by grace bring us peace?

- What motivated God to “adopt” those who are in Christ (vs 3-4)? What does the fact that God adopted us show us about His nature and character?

- What is God’s eternal plan for those who are in Christ, according to these verses (vs 5-6)? How should this shape a disciple’s pursuits?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- Why is the doctrine of election key in glorifying God? How does the denial of it detract from His glory?

- How does knowing you are adopted by God change your view of yourself and of God?

- What do you see as the relationship between being adopted into God’s family and becoming holy and blameless?

- How should being “in Christ” define our identity and determine our actions?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: Philippians 1:6 & Psalm 139

7In him we have **redemption through his blood**, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things **according to the counsel of his will**, ¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, **when you heard the word of truth**, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

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EXPLORE TOGETHER

- What motivated God to “redeem” those who are in Christ (vs 10)?

- According to these verses, how is a person redeemed, and to what result? Read Romans 10:9-10 & 13 to add to your discussion.

- What are the spiritual blessings (vs 3) and the inheritance (vs 11) we have in Christ? What aspect of this inheritance is most exciting for you and why?

- Why is the Holy Spirit a promise of God’s and why is His seal important to the believer?

- Why is it important to distinguish between the sealing of the Spirit, the baptism of the Spirit, and the filling of the Spirit?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- Some argue that if God’s plan is fixed, it denies our “free will.” In doing so, they deny that God has ordained all things. How would you answer them?

- Why is it important to remember that our right standing with God was achieved by God’s “own purpose and grace”? How might your relationship with God be different if your salvation were based upon your good works instead?

- If God forgives all of our sins at the moment we’re saved, why do we need to continue to confess them to obtain forgiveness (1 John 1:9)?

- What do you communicate to God when you disregard the Spirit’s guidance?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: Colossians 1:20-22 & Psalm 62

¹⁵For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶**I do not cease to give thanks for you,** remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, **that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you,** what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

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EXPLORE TOGETHER

- Can we correctly know God apart from understanding sound doctrine? Can we know doctrine without knowing God? If so, what's the difference?

- Why does Paul pray that the Ephesians will know the hope of His calling? What is the "hope to which he has called" the believer?

- Paul continues in his prayer that they may know "what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints." What are the implications of His request?

- Why is it important to know the truth of "immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe"? Why is this something the believer should ask God for?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- The reward of our salvation is to know God personally! How can we develop and maintain a passion to know God?

- What difference does growing in our knowledge of God make in our daily lives? How is your knowledge of God and His power different today than it was years ago?

- What do you think it means to be members of Christ's body in the church? Read Romans 12:4-5 to add to your discussion.

- Why is it important to fully embrace the reality that Jesus is the head of the church?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: Romans 15:13 & Psalm 63

¹And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴**But God, being rich in mercy,** because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ**—by grace you have been saved—⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

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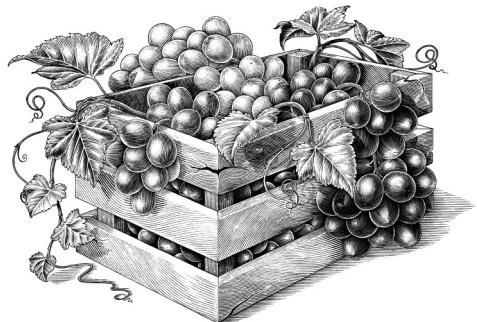
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EXPLORE TOGETHER

- What is the essence of “worldliness” (vs 1-3)? How do these three enemies, the world, the devil, and the flesh, assert themselves in the lives of believers?

- Why is it important that we understand humanity, apart from Christ, to be dead and not just bad? How does that understanding change the way we view the good news of the gospel?

- Look back at verses 4-7. What attributes of God do you see in this passage? Why must saving faith include repentance and submission to Christ as King? Is this adding works to faith, as some contend?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- Why is having a right understanding of sin necessary to truly understand the gospel? What happens to our understanding of the gospel if we miss what sin truly is?

- Does your view of God begin with His abundant mercy and great love? If not, why not?

- What is your “Big God” moment? The moment when everything changed spiritually?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: Philippians 2:10 & Psalm 145

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

¹⁰**For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus** for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

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EXPLORE TOGETHER

- Why does Paul keep emphasizing that salvation is totally God’s doing? Why is it important to affirm that salvation is not a joint effort between God and men, but that it is all of God?

- Why is it important for the believer to understand that salvation is by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ?

- What do you think Paul meant in that we are Christ’s “workmanship” (vs 10)?

- What do you think Paul means in his message that salvation is by grace through faith apart from good works, but it inevitably results in a life of good works?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- In addition to reconciling a believer with God, in what other ways does grace impact the believer’s life?

- Why is it important to know that God didn’t just save us from something, but for something? What are some practical implications of our present identity with Christ?

- Why do you think God wants us to know that we are His workmanship? Is it difficult for you to believe this about yourself? Why or why not?

- Since giving your life to Christ, how are your actions (or works) a testimony of Christ at work within you?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: 2 Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm 147

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

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EXPLORE TOGETHER

- How has Christ destroyed hostility and made peace possible for all people (v. 14)?

- What three examples does Paul use to describe what it means to be a Christian (vs 19-22)? What is significant about each of them?

- What do these examples tell us about our identity in Christ? How might we think about and treat people differently if we viewed all people as potential “members of God’s household”?

- Reconciliation with God is also the basis for reconciliation among believers to each other. Why did Jesus’ death on the cross bring not only reconciliation between God and man, but also between different groups of people to each other?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- How do you relate Paul’s command here to remember your spiritual past with his comments in Philippians 3:13-14 about forgetting the things behind?

- What makes the family of God different from any other family? What sorts of barriers are crossed in the family of God that might keep people apart in other situations?

- In what ways can you see the church being fitted together and growing in the Lord? What role does our group gathering play in God working this way?

- The early church did not have official “membership.” Why should we?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: Romans 12:15 & Psalm 89

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

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

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EXPLORE TOGETHER

- What most likely, was Paul's attitude about being in prison? What did God accomplish through Paul while he was in prison?

- How did Paul view himself? What does it mean to be a steward of God's grace (vs 2)?

- Why do you think God gave His grace and power to Paul (vs 7)?

- Why would Paul have felt a responsibility to take the message of God's grace to the Gentiles?

- What, in your own words, was the mystery Paul was talking about here?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- Why is it important for every believer to see themselves as a steward or servant of Christ? How does this attitude help us?

- How can a person who grew up in a Christian home gain a deeper appreciation of God's abundant grace in salvation?

- How often do you remember that part of the reason you were saved, is so that you can be a steward of God's grace?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: II Corinthians 5:17 & Psalm 77

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶that according to the riches of his glory **he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,** ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹**and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

²⁰Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

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EXPLORE TOGETHER

- What is Paul's posture before the Father? How is this different than other prayers of Paul's (v. 14)?

- Paul's prayer tells us several things about the person of God. What does this tell us? Why is God able to give us an unlimited supply of strength? Why would He want to?

- Based on verses 17-19, what do believers receive when they pray for spiritual power?

- According to Paul, what will result when the Spirit strengthens our inner being and Christ takes up permanent residence in our lives?

- What does verse 20 imply about what we can expect when we pray to God?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- What kinds of things might believers be tempted to think they need in order to be spiritually strong? (Examples: self-discipline, power of positive thinking, etc....)

- In contrast, what does Paul indicate we need in these verses?

- How does greater spiritual strength in the inner being strengthen every aspect of a person?

- Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-9. Why was Paul given a thorn in the flesh? Why do you think God often only gives us grace for the moment? What might He be teaching us in doing so?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: Galatians 5:25 & Psalm 86

¹I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to **walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called**, ²with all **humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love**, ³eager to maintain the **unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

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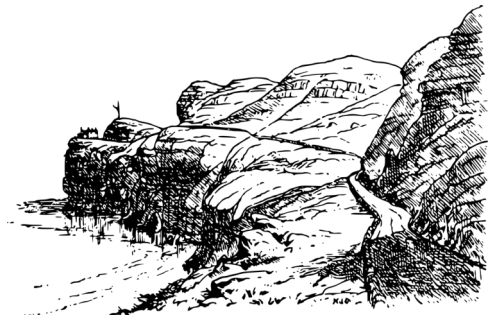
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EXPLORE TOGETHER

- Why did Paul reiterate that he is a prisoner for the Lord. Why was this important to him and to his readers?

- What does it mean to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling (vs 1)”?

- How does living in a manner worthy of our calling bring harmony to the body of Christ?

- In verse 3 the reward for the believer is a “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” How does unity and the bond of peace help believers live out “bearing with one another in love”?

- As believers in Christ, what do we share and what does it mean (vs 4)?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- If unity among believers is so important, how can we know when (if ever) we should divide?

- Are there different levels of unity or fellowship? How does fellowship differ from a 1-on-1 relationship to a small group setting to attending a church service?

- What is the greatest bond a believer will share with a fellow believer? Why is it that shared experiences contain so much bonding power? Give an example.

- Is there anything your group could do for another group that would promote church unity?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: John 17:20-21 & Psalm 133

⁷But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸Therefore it says,

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

⁹(In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?¹⁰He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹**And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,** ¹²**to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,** ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ

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EXPLORE TOGETHER

- Why is it important to know that God's grace is the source of our gifts?

- To whom does the Lord give these gifts? What do these gifts have in common (vs 12)?

- How are the specific gifts mentioned in these verses essential to our mission of making disciples?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- What is God's purpose in giving gifts to His people? Why is it important that each part of the body of Christ does its work?

- Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-6. What word does Paul use in place of gifts in verse 5? How does this help us understand the purpose of spiritual gifts?

- Discuss the ways you think God has gifted you, whether through life experiences, formal training, or conviction. What would it look like to exercise these gifts not merely for yourself, but for the good of the body?

- What can you do to more consistently serve at our church and join in serving our community? How can we as a group intentionally help one another with this effort?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: 1 Timothy 4:12-16 & Psalm 127

¹⁴so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

¹⁵Rather, **speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,** ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love and holiness.

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EXPLORE TOGETHER

- What is Christ's intention in giving spiritual gifts to His people (vs 14)?

- While some in the body are gifted to teach, all are gifted with responsibility. According to verses 14-15, what did Paul say that responsibility is? To whom are we responsible?

- In what ways is each gift important to the life and growth of other Christians (vs 15-16)?

- As Paul finished this section (vs 16), how did he describe the relationship between individual Christians and the body of believers as a whole?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- How does being a faithful member of a life group help bring about the unity this passage emphasizes and protect from the chaos mentioned in verse 14?

- What do you think Paul meant by each part "working properly" together (vs 16)?

- It's easy to think that those who are paid, or those with official positions, are responsible for the church. How does this passage reshape that idea?

- What things make church and small group relationships different than other kinds of relationships?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: Colossians 3:14-16 & Psalm 67

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

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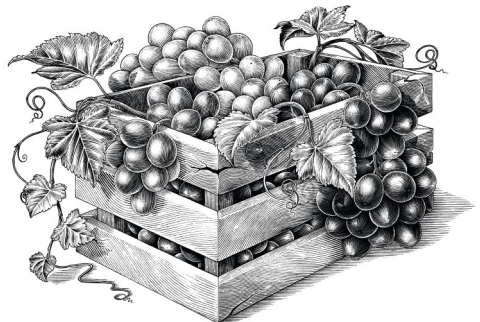
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EXPLORE TOGETHER

- Who are the Gentiles? What did they live for? How should Christians be different from the people described in these verses (vs 17-19)?

- Where does transformation start for a believer (vs 20-24)?

- Why do you think Paul was so direct? What was he encouraging and challenging them to do? (vs 20-24)

- What does it mean “to put off your old self”, and to “put on your new self”? What does that tell you about the old nature and new nature?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- Why must there be a distinct difference in how the unredeemed and the disciple of Christ live their life?

- What are the things in the world that are the hardest to let go? How do those things hurt transformation?

- Is there anything you are struggling to “put off” from your former way of life? How can our group encourage or challenge you?

- James (4:6-10) recommends three steps for putting on the new self: relent, repent, and remove. How are you exercising these steps regularly? Where do you need to begin?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: I Peter 1:14-16 & Psalm 51

²⁵Therefore, having put away falsehood, **let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.**

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

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EXPLORE TOGETHER

- As a group can you identify 2-3 biblical heroes that struggled with honesty, anger and contentment? What does this reveal to us about those who follow God?

- Why is Paul's exhortation to be honest so important for the disciple (vs 25)? What connection does this have with corrupt talk (vs 29)?

- Anger is not inherently wrong...however, it can easily lead to sin. How does not quickly dealing with anger give the devil an opportunity (vs 26)?

- According to verse 32, what should be our primary motivation for pursuing holy (God-honoring) living?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- Take each principle in verses 25-32 one at a time, evaluate and discuss: (1) What we are to put off; (2) what we are to put on; (3) the reason we are to put on that quality.

- Give examples of what it looks like to build up one another and to give grace (vs 29)?

- What evidences could you point to as examples of Christ's sanctifying work in you right now?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: 2 Corinthians 5:17 & Psalm 66

¹**Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.** ²And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ³But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

⁵For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶**Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.** ⁷Therefore do not become partners with them ⁸for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. **Walk as children of light** ⁹(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹**Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.** ¹²For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³**But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible,** ¹⁴for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

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

SHARE TOGETHER

From Sunday, share...

- _____

*(Something that **stood out** to you)*

- _____

*(Something that **encouraged** you)*

- _____

*(Something that **challenged** you)*



EXPLORE TOGETHER

- What is the heart of Paul's command to imitate God? Why does God want us to imitate Him? What happens in the disciple's life as they imitate God?

- What's the common link among the sins listed in vs 3-5? What purposes do these wrongs serve in our lives? How is God's standard for our lives different?

- What does it look like to live as children of the light (vs 8-9)? How does walking in the light produce fellowship among believers?

- Living as children of light involves pleasing God instead of ourselves. How do we know what pleases the Lord (vs 10)?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- As we grow in our knowledge of God, why must we continually seek to know Him in all His attributes as revealed in His Word? What errors may result if we don't?

- What are some modern-day idols people worship? How do these idols impact our relationship with God?

- What are the fruitless deeds of darkness (vs 11)? How does a Christian properly expose them? (Hint: look back at 5:1-6). What encouragement can we give to believers who struggle with sin?

- How can believers expose sin without violating Jesus' command not to judge others? Read Matthew 7:1-5 to add to your discussion.

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: Matthew 5:14-16 & Psalm 130

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

SHARE TOGETHER

From Sunday, share...

- _____

*(Something that **stood out** to you)*

- _____

*(Something that **encouraged** you)*

- _____

*(Something that **challenged** you)*



EXPLORE TOGETHER

- What is the first step to living a life of wisdom (vs 15)?

- What commands did Paul give the Ephesians in verses 17-21? Why are each of these actions examples of wise living?

- What can these verses (20-21) teach us about what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit? What might we learn about the Trinity from this passage?

- How do we submit to one another? What does it mean to revere Christ?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- Looking back on Ephesians how would you articulate God's plan for Christian living?

- In what specific areas of life are you working to revere Christ? In what areas of life is it more difficult? Why is this?

- What evidence is there in your life that you are filled with the Spirit? If evidence is lacking, what evidence is there that you are filled with or influenced heavily by other things? What needs to change?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: James 4:8 & Psalm 80

²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴**Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.**

²⁵**Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,** ²⁶that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸**In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.** ²⁹**For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it,** just as Christ does the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body.

³¹**“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”** ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³**However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.**

SHARE TOGETHER

From Sunday, share...

- _____

*(Something that **stood out** to you)*

- _____

*(Something that **encouraged** you)*

- _____

*(Something that **challenged** you)*



EXPLORE TOGETHER

- From the text, what other relationship is a marriage symbolic of? In what ways?

- What does true submission look like? What does it not look like? How is Jesus' work on the cross an example of submission for us?

- What does Genesis 2:18-24 tell us about the purpose of marriage in God's kingdom? Why do you think Paul quoted Genesis 2:24 in his instruction on marriage?

- How does a proper view of marriage affect our relationship with God?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- What elements do you believe are vital to a good, godly marriage?

- What does the love husbands are called to model look like? Husbands, what is the best example that comes to mind of a time when you have loved your wife like Christ loves the church?

- How might a wife respond to a husband who loves her like Jesus? How does this type of love benefit her spiritually?

- How does a relationship centered on sacrificial love and submission reflect the gospel? How can you and your spouse keep these ideas as a common part of your marriage?

- What value does a passage like this have for you if you aren't married?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: I Corinthians 13:4-7 & Psalm 1

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

SHARE TOGETHER

From Sunday, share...

- _____

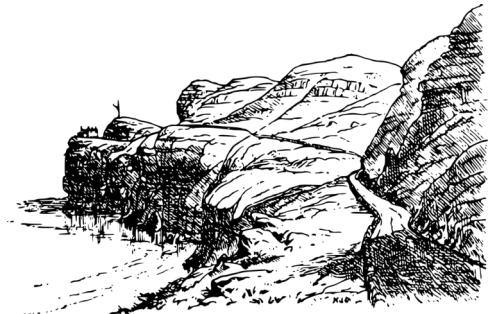
*(Something that **stood out** to you)*

- _____

*(Something that **encouraged** you)*

- _____

*(Something that **challenged** you)*



EXPLORE TOGETHER

- Why would Paul, and all the more the Lord, commanded children to honor and obey their parents?

- What reasons did Paul give in these two verses for children to obey their parents? What significance do you see in his statements that “this is right” (Eph. 6:1) and “this pleases the Lord” (Col. 3:20)?

- Paul commanded obedience and identified such obedience as right and pleasing to God. How do parents train their children in obedience not only to themselves but also to the Lord?

- Look back at Deuteronomy 6:4-9. What was the truth parents were to teach their children? How were they supposed to teach these truths?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- What are some of the important ways godly parenting is different from worldly parenting?

- How can parents bring up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord?

- How does your parenting style align with the principles of parenting that the Lord gives?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: I Thessalonians 2:7-8 & 11-12 & Psalm 78

⁵ **Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,** ⁶not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, **doing the will of God from the heart,** ⁷rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

⁹ **Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.**

SHARE TOGETHER

From Sunday, share...

- _____

*(Something that **stood out** to you)*

- _____

*(Something that **encouraged** you)*

- _____

*(Something that **challenged** you)*



EXPLORE TOGETHER

- Why do you think Paul emphasized the importance of an employee's attitude? What makes it especially challenging to practice biblical submission in the workplace?
-

- What do we learn about submission in the workplace through Jesus' example? Read John 13:12-17 to add to your discussion.
-

- Why must your relationship with Christ be the primary foundation for how you relate at work? Give practical examples of how this works.
-

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- In your own words, how would you explain God's plan for relationships? What about God's plan for the workplace?
-

- How could thinking "I'm an employee of Christ" rather than "I'm an employee of _____" change your attitude and actions? How would you fulfill your daily tasks differently if you actually did them for Christ?
-

- Read Romans 8:28-38. How does knowing that the Master is working for our good enable us to serve honorably in the workplace, even when the conditions aren't great?
-

- What step might you take this week to begin approaching your work with an eternal perspective?
-

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: Colossians 3:23 & Psalm 25

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹**Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil...** ¹⁴**Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,** ¹⁵**and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.** ¹⁶In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

To that end, **keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,** ¹⁹and also for me, **that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel...** ²⁴**Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.**

SHARE TOGETHER

From Sunday, share...

- _____

*(Something that **stood out** to you)*

- _____

*(Something that **encouraged** you)*

- _____

*(Something that **challenged** you)*



EXPLORE TOGETHER

- Verses 11-12 remind us of the true nature of the battle. Why is it important that we recognize that our true battle is not against flesh and blood, but is instead spiritual in nature?

- What key word do you see repeated? Why is this important (vs 11-14)?

- What role does prayer have in the armor of God? How does prayer prepare us to resist the evil in this world (vs 18)?

- What does Paul's emphasis on the words "all" and "every" in verse 18 communicate?

- What are 2-3 things the Apostle Paul encourages those in Ephesus to pray for?

EVALUATE TOGETHER

- In what way does the enemy bring distraction into your life? How does the gospel keep you focused and steady in the midst of distraction?

- In what way does the truth of God hold everything together?

- What is righteousness? How does righteousness protect our hearts?

- What form do the flaming arrows of the enemy usually take? How does faith extinguish them?

- How can we pray all the time? Why is remaining alert in prayer a challenge? What helps you remain alert as you pray?

Students of the Word For the week ahead spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: I Corinthians 15:58 & Psalm 20

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* Philippians 1:6 & Psalm 139

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* Colossians 1:20-22 & Psalm 62

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* Romans 15:13 & Psalm 63

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* Philippians 2:10 & Psalm 145

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* 2 Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm 147

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* Romans 12:15 & Psalm 89

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* II Corinthians 5:17 & Psalm 77

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* Galatians 5:25 & Psalm 86

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* John 17:20-21 & Psalm 133

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* 1 Timothy 4:12-16 & Psalm 127

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* Colossians 3:14-16 & Psalm 67

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* I Peter 1:14-16 & Psalm 51

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* 2 Corinthians 5:17 & Psalm 66

Notes/Thoughts:

Horizontal lines for notes

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

Horizontal lines for prayers

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- Meditate on: Matthew 5:14-16 & Psalm 130

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* James 4:8 & Psalm 80

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* I Corinthians 13:4-7 & Psalm 1

WEEK SEVENTEEN

Notes | Prayer | Word

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* I Thessalonians 2:7-8 & 11-12 & Psalm 78

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* Colossians 3:23 & Psalm 25

WEEK NINETEEN

Notes | Prayer | Word

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

For the week ahead, spend additional time in the Word!

- *Meditate on:* I Corinthians 15:58 & Psalm 20

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:

STUDENTS OF THE WORD

Notes/Thoughts:

Prayers for those in your Life Group:



Not yet in a group?

- See online Life Group finder wearescc.org/life-groups
- Complete an inquiry form on Sunday or online
- Email Pastor John Doty jdoty@wearescc.org