

DIGGING DEEPER
EPHESIANS



Acknowledgements

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EPHESIANS OUTLINE

A. Position of the Believer – “Sit”

Spiritual blessings given to all who are in Christ

1. From the Father – **Ephesians 1:4-6**
2. From the Son – **Ephesians 1:7-12**
3. From the Holy Spirit – **Ephesians 1:13-14**

Paul’s first prayer for enlightenment – **Ephesians 1:15-23**

Our Spiritual position in Christ; believer’s relationship to God: past, present and future – **Ephesians 2:1-10**

Jews and Gentiles reconciled and made one in Christ – **Ephesians 2:11-3:13**

Paul’s second prayer for enablement – **Ephesians 3:14-21**

B. Practice of the Believer – “Walk”

Walk in Unity – **Ephesians 4:1-16**

Walk in Purity

1. Walk not as other Gentiles walk – **Ephesians 4:17-32**
2. Walk in Purity
 - Walk in love – **Ephesians 5:1-6**
 - Walk as children of light – **Ephesians 5:7-14**
 - Walk carefully – **Ephesians 5:15-17**
 - Walk/be filled with the Spirit – **Ephesians 5:18**
3. Walk in Harmony
 - Husbands and wives – **Ephesians 5:18-33**
 - Parents and children – **Ephesians 6:1-4**
 - Masters and servants – **Ephesians 6:5-9**

C. Practice of Believer – “Stand”

Stand in Victory – **Ephesians 6:10-24**

A book by Watchman Nee

- Watchman Nee wrote a book entitled “**Sit, Walk, Stand.**”
- This book is really a commentary on the book of Ephesians, and like so many of Paul’s epistles, the letter to the Ephesians is divided into two sections (doctrinal and practical).
- If we look a bit closer, we will find that the last half, the practical section, is subdivided again by its subject matter.
- Overall we have three subdivisions:
 1. Chapter 1-3 – Doctrinal (Our position in Christ) “**Sit**”
 2. Chapters 4:1-6-9 – Practical (Our life in the world) “**Walk**”
 3. Chapter 6:10-end – Practical (Our attitude toward the enemy) “**Stand**”

EPHESIANS Introduction

Introduction

A history lesson

Acts 18:19-21

- Paul first visited Ephesus for a brief period on his second missionary journey.

Acts 18:19:21

- Paul went again to Ephesus during his third missionary journey and stayed three years.

Acts 20:17-23, 31-38

- Later when Paul passed by Ephesus on his way back to Jerusalem, he called the church elders from Ephesus to a place called Miletus, which was on the coast. After this meeting with the Ephesian elders at Miletus, Paul traveled to Jerusalem, and it was there that he was arrested. He was imprisoned in Caesarea for two years before he was sent as a prisoner to Rome to be tried by the Roman Emperor. It was during his imprisonment in Rome that Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesian believers. It was somewhere around A.D. 62 that Tychicus delivered it to the Ephesian believers.

The Context of Ephesians

- As with all of scripture, we need to see the book of Ephesians in the context of the meta-narrative or big picture of God's eternal plan of redemption.
- God is the one who planned the plan; He is the one who prepared for the plan; He is the one who fulfilled the plan. Now we are in the church age and are living in the results of Jesus fulfilling the eternal plan of redemption.
- The book of Ephesians is written to believers in Ephesus who are living in the results stage. So, everything that is written, as we will see, is a result of Christ and His completed work.

Jesus completed the work of satisfying the righteous requirement of God and now God is free to bring us into relationship, oneness, fellowship, and communion with Himself.

- We learned from the book of Romans that Jesus fulfilled the eternal plan of redemption and God is now free to separate us from our old fallen spiritual identity and give us a new spiritual identity which is described to us in Romans Chapter 5. Through Adam's sin all were born with a fallen spiritual identity; but because of the obedience of Christ, those who trust in Him are given a new spiritual identity. Then Chapter 6 tells us how we got the new spiritual identity through union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. We are now dead to sin and alive to God.
- Now Ephesians tells us what is true of us because Jesus fulfilled the eternal plan of redemption. We have received a new spiritual identity, and we are living in the wonderful results of what Christ did. Let's dive into the details of His finished work.

EPHESIANS 1

Ephesians 1:1-2

Defining “Saint”

- Notice who this epistle is addressed to – “The Saints.”
- Saved sinner, not a sinless person. (The actual definition is “people who are chosen and called, by God’s grace, to be His people”).
- Eight times in Ephesians, Paul addresses the Ephesian believers (as well as all believers) as Saints – **Ephesians 1:1, 15; 2:19; 3:8; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18**
- Paul is referring to them considering their spiritual identity and not in terms of how they are living.

Paul then goes on to give his normal greeting in verse 2 of “grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

- The whole point of that greeting is that it’s the result of the finished work of Christ and the fact that we are a new creation with a new spiritual identity.

Ephesians 1:3

Worthy of all glory, honor, praise, and worship

The tendency with Ephesians Chapter 1 is to read through this chapter making us believers and the things we’ve been given to be the priority of our focus. But notice how Paul begins this verse:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

- This word “blessed” literally means, “to be inherently

worthy of praise and worship.” Paul begins by making this statement and then goes on to list many of the spiritual blessings we have been freely given through Christ because of grace—thereby showing and proving that God is inherently worthy of all honor, glory, praise, and worship. Who else is there that has given such amazing and abundant grace!!!!!!

- Who else is there that has taken fallen, condemned, wicked human beings who are deserving of eternal death and given them EVERY spiritual blessing in the heavenlies?

Not just spiritual blessing, but EVERY or ALL spiritual blessings.

- “Every or All” includes the idea of oneness, a totality or whole. There isn’t a spiritual blessing left for us to receive that we haven’t already been given.

Paul says this about our spiritual blessings:

1. They are given as a blessing from God and are undeserved.
2. They were given to us in totality.
3. These blessings are spiritual, which is why we have a new spiritual identity.

Putting this altogether, Paul is saying, “God is inherently worthy of all praise and worship, for He is the one who intervened and acted, giving us every needed thing in order for our spirits to be made conformable to His Spirit (new spiritual identity).”

- A good cross reference for this verse is **1 Peter 1:3-5**.

These spiritual blessings are true of us now, but not all of them are experiential here and now. All of them will be experiential in heaven where we will have a new heavenly body that no longer has flesh attached to it. That new body will match our redeemed spirits.

The other significant point to Paul stating that these

spiritual blessings are given to us or are reserved for us in heaven is that this is where we will be spending eternity in the presence of God. Here and now we struggle with the results of sin and fallenness, but for only 80 or 90 or 100 years. But in heaven, our walking in, living out, and experiencing **EVERY** spiritual blessing will be for eternity!!!!!! It will never end!!!!!!

Ephesians 1:4

How sure can we be of what we've been given?

This verse needs to be considered along with **2 Timothy 1:9**. Who was God's purpose and grace bestowed upon before the foundations of the earth? US. Us as individual believers, or us as the church, a corporate group of believers? Because of God's sovereignty and foreknowledge, the answer is both!!!!

- The emphasis in this verse is not in regard to whether or not God is predetermining who will or who will not be saved.
- What is most important is the fact that we are saved, and because we are saved, we know we are part of the chosen/elect.

Paul's statement "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundations of the earth" is not for the purpose of emphasizing election but for the purpose of assuring our hearts as believers of how true and sure the fact is that we will truly receive and experience **EVERY** spiritual blessing.

- The assurance of the truth and reality of these things was not based on our faithfulness and obedience but on the fact that God in His sovereignty and foreknowledge made an eternal plan for us to become the chosen before the foundations of the earth, before we even existed.
- Our goodness didn't get us chosen, nor will our sin ever cause us to become unchosen or traded in. It's all of Him and His grace; and because it's of Him, it is **SURE!!!** This is Paul's point with this statement.

“That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” is the result of all that Paul states God has done above.

- Because He’s already made us holy and righteous, already made our spirits conformable to His spirit, He has enabled us to be or exist before Him in holiness, blamelessness, and love. It’s the result of being made a new creation with a new spiritual identity.
- See **Colossians 1:21-23; Hebrews 3:12-14; 2 Peter 1:4**

In an effort to keep the flow of the context here, let’s read verses 3 through 14.

Paul began with stating that God is inherently worthy of all honor and praise and that we have been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies.

Paul then runs through a list of some of the spiritual blessings that we’ve been given. This list not only proves how blessed we are but also how worthy of praise God really is.

Ephesians 1:5

God predestined how our adoption would take place.

What is it in this verse that Paul is really saying was predestined? Many assume that it’s who will receive the adoption, that it’s those who have been individually elected who are predetermined to be adopted.

- If you read the verse carefully, I think it’s clear that Paul is saying our adoption as believers would come about through Jesus Christ. That is what has been predestined.
- This lines up with **2 Timothy 1:9**. God’s purpose and grace were predetermined to be bestowed upon us through Christ. What was predestined isn’t those who would receive grace but that it would be bestowed through Christ.

- I see it like the rules of a game. The inventor of the game predetermines how a player wins the game, but he doesn't predetermine who the players will be.

I think even greater significance is that God's adoption of us and making us His own was predestined by the good pleasure of HIS will!

- He is the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, creator of the heavens and the earth, and HE wanted to make us His own children and thereby place us amongst His beloved!
- This was all done because it was his will—not because we earned it or deserved it but because HE WILLED IT!!
- Because HE is the ONE who willed it, we know it's true and sure.

I think the last part of that verse is very, very significant. God predestined us unto adoption as his sons BY Jesus Christ TO Himself but on what basis? According to the good pleasure of His will.

- It wasn't according to what we deserved and not according to our worth. It was not according to our prayers or what we asked for. It wasn't even according to our need. We needed salvation; we needed our sins paid for. He could have done all that without adopting us as His children. God has taken our salvation to the extent that He's taken it according to the good counsel of His will.
- It's an amazing display and manifestation of His grace and goodness, a true display of His heart. As it says in **1 John**, He IS love.

Ephesians 1:6

Accepted in the beloved

First of all, “to the praise of the glory of His grace.” Glory is the true apprehension of God. The glory of God is His unchanging essence. Giving glory to God is ascribing to Him His full recognition.

- Adopting us as His children, making us His own in Christ before the foundations of the earth, making us fully accepted in the beloved reveal the glory of His grace BECAUSE of how undeserving we are of all these things.

It's also very significant here that it says HE made us acceptable. That verb “made” is in the aorist indicative active form of the verb.

- The active voice means that the action of the verb was performed by the subject, which in this case is God.
- The aorist indicative tense indicates action that happens at a certain point in time in the past—meaning that it took place at one time and the results are ongoing.
- This phrase “accepted in the beloved” literally means to be made objects of grace!
- There is not only the giving of God’s grace but also the adoption into God’s family in imparting special favor in distinction.
- The term beloved is the Greek word *agapeo*. It means to esteem, love, and indicates a direction of the will and finding one’s joy in something or someone.
- The form of this Greek word for beloved is the perfect participle passive. The passive voice represents the subject as receiving the action of the verb. In English it is usually written as “to be.”

- The perfect tense describes a process that took place in the past and the results of which have continued to the present.

Putting this together, by the good pleasure of God's will, He predetermined the process or event that took place in the past that made us to be His beloved! Those results continue today and will do so for all eternity!!!!

- We aren't just *with* His beloved or *in fellowship* with His beloved, but He has made us to *be* his beloved, too!

Ephesians 1:7

Results of being “IN” Christ

First is the word IN. It's a preposition and it means exactly what you would think: to be in a certain location. This Greek word also includes the primary idea of rest.

- It's used in many places throughout scripture: in the ship, in the synagogue, in Jerusalem, etc. To be IN Christ is as literal a place to be as it is to be in this room or in your car. Whatever your location is, there are circumstances, consequences, or even blessings that will be associated with the location. For example, “in Alaska,” “in India,” “in prison,” in my kid's home.”

Paul is saying IN Christ we have redemption. To be in Christ is to be redeemed. He purchased us—bought us back with His own blood.

- “In Christ” is a literal state, a standing that is always true of me and is part of my identity. However, while I can be in a house and then out of the house, this isn't true of being in Christ. I can never NOT be in Christ. No matter where I go, I am always in Christ, and the results of being in Christ are never lost or removed.

Also, the fact that this word IN carries with it the idea of rest is also very significant. This means that as long as you are in Christ, the results of the circumstances and conditions that are a part of being in Him remain. As long as I am in bed, I am resting.

- Everything that God says I've been given and have been made as a result of being in Christ, as long as I remain in Christ, those things will always be true. Therefore, I can be at peace and rest. Being in Christ made me beloved of God. I never need to worry about not being acceptable to Him. In Him I am redeemed and therefore forgiven.
- I can never be taken out of Christ and, therefore, I never need to worry about NOT being redeemed and forgiven. I can be at rest through the full assurance of faith!!!!

Next is the verb “have.” Have here is in the present indicative active form of the verb.

- The active voice means that the action is completed by subject of the verb, which in this case is us. We have received.
- The indicative mood states a fact. It's a fact that we have received redemption and forgiveness. The fact then that the verb is in the present indicative means that it's true of us here and now this very moment. Again, it's the result of being in Him.

I think for us to really value the fact of our redemption and forgiveness, it's important for us to understand the extent of our captivity or our fallenness and separation from Him.

- When someone is held captive, to the degree of severity of the conditions they were under, to that degree do they appreciate the freedom when it comes.
- Most Christians don't recognize how bad off spiritually we really were and aren't able to properly value their redemption.

The phrase “according to the riches of His grace” is extremely important and significant. Our tendency is to think that we have received forgiveness according to our sincerity, or faith, or brokenness.

- If our redemption was brought about by a little sincerity or faith or brokenness on our part, then it would show that we weren’t that far off to begin with.

The reality is that there is absolutely nothing within us that we could ever hope in. We were undeserving of every spiritual blessing but have received them all according to the riches or abundance of His grace. There is no limit to the abundance of God’s grace; therefore, we have received every spiritual blessing in full.

Ephesians 1:8-10

Abundant grace was lavished in wisdom and discernment.

The verb “abounded” is in the aorist indicative active form. This means at one particular time, the subject of the verb (God) caused this to happen.

- This is a continuation of verse 7 and the context is the abundance of God’s grace.

Notice Paul goes on to state that God made this abundant grace abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.

- God did this with all wisdom, skill, or expertise. It wasn’t done foolishly, sloppily, hastily, or as a second thought.
- He also made abundant grace abound to us in prudence, perception, and discernment. He didn’t give us grace blindly hoping that no one ever abuses it. He gave it with the full knowledge that many would reject it, abuse it, and not value it. He made abundant grace abound toward us knowing full well how we’d continue to stumble and fall and sin, even though we’ve been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies.

Verse 9: “He made known to us the mystery of His will according as He has purposed in Himself.” There’s that word “purpose” again. Remember, “His plan and purpose were bestowed upon us before time began.”

- His purpose that would be carried out by grace and through Christ was bestowed upon us before we even existed. This was the mystery of His will that was kept as a mystery through the OT and now has been revealed in the epistles. It’s made known to us who believe, His children.
- This is a purpose that He predetermined, has made known unto us, and it’s according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself!!!
- Notice, too, that the One carrying out the action of every verb in this passage is God Himself. It’s all of Him.

Ephesians 1: 11-12

We are given a predestined inheritance according to grace.

This whole run began in verse 3 with Paul stating that God is inherently worthy of all honor, praise, and glory. He went on to proclaim the proof of that by listing some of the spiritual blessings we’ve been given, none of which we deserved, thereby proving how amazing God’s grace is. In keeping with the context, I believe Paul is saying that we are given an inheritance.

- In Adam, not only did we not have an inheritance, but we were the separated enemies of God. Now we have been given an inheritance that was predestined according to His purpose and will. Not according to us accomplishing anything or doing anything to deserve it!!!!

- Just like every other aspect of our salvation, our inheritance is by grace and is the direct result of the finished work of Christ alone.

Lastly in verse 11, “who works all things after the counsel of His own will” literally means that God works ALL things according to the decision or plan of His will. In other words, God willed to save us or redeem us; therefore, He devised an eternal plan of redemption before the foundations of the earth that was in accordance with purpose of His good will!!! The eternal plan of redemption is a manifestation of the heart of God!!!!

- This word “will” is not a demand or command. It is an expression or inclination of pleasure toward that which is liked, that which pleases and creates joy. When it denotes God’s will, it signifies His gracious disposition towards something. It’s used to designate what God Himself does of His own good pleasure.
- These facts should assure our hearts that God has done none of this reluctantly or as plan B.

In verse 12, the verb “should be” literally means to exist for a purpose. The idea is that God has SO abundantly blessed us and transformed us spiritually, that our very existence is a manifestation of His excellence and perfection.

- There are many things in life that reveal someone’s skill. Music, singing, carpentry, artwork, vehicle restoration, etc. When you see or hear the thing that the person created or played or sang, it usually results in praising the person and the skill that was manifested.
- This is what Paul is saying our lives do for God. When you look at where we were spiritually in Adam compared to who we are and what is ours now in Christ by grace...WOW, MAY GOD BE PRAISED!!! His abundant grace becomes clear and undeniable!!!

Ephesians 1:13-14

- Now, we find ourselves in verses 13 and 14 looking at two more spiritual blessings.
- Notice we are sealed in verse 13 and given a guarantee in verse 14, which again are Holy Spirit given blessings.

We are sealed and the promises are guaranteed by the Spirit.

- Notice the progression in verse 13. After hearing the Word of Truth and believing, we are SEALED with the Holy Spirit of promise.
- What is the significance of this sealing of the Holy Spirit?
- For one thing, it speaks of a finished transaction. Even today, when important legal documents are processed, they are stamped with the official seal to signify the completion of the transaction.
- This sealing also implies ownership. God has put His seal upon us because He has purchased us to be His own.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

- Sealing also brings to mind security and protection or guarantee. The Roman seal on Christ's tomb carried this meaning. **Matthew 27:62-66**
- Another thought regarding the term “sealing” is that it is a mark of authenticity (an authentic Christian). Just as a signature on a letter makes it official and genuine, so too the presence of the Holy Spirit proves the believer is genuine. **Romans 8:9**

Example:

- When a farmer has cows, he marks them, either on the ears or backside so that if someone steals them, he can identify them.
- In the same manner, God has marked us as His possession which He bought with the blood of Jesus. The moment we trusted Christ, He put His seal or mark, the Holy Spirit, in us to show everyone that we belong to Him and to convince our own hearts that, indeed, we are His and He is ours for the rest of eternity!!!

“Guarantee”

Now look with me back to **Ephesians 1:14**. Not only is the Holy Spirit God’s mark in us to show that we belong to Him, but the Holy Spirit is also God’s down payment, or pledge, guaranteeing that He will, one day, finish His work by taking us home to be with Him in glory.

- The Greek word for guarantee is *arrabon* which originated from a Hebrew word that is used in Modern Greek for “engagement ring.” However, in ancient times, the original Hebrew word signified a “first installment, deposit or down payment” that was used to pay part of the purchase price in advance and secured a legal claim to the article or made the contract valid.
- So it is with the Holy Spirit. In giving Him to us, God is not just promising our final inheritance but also assuring our hearts that it can never become lost or taken away.

It’s all by grace for His glory

- All of the blessings that we have studied thus far in Chapter 1 come by God’s grace and for His glory.
- It is interesting to note that after each main section in verses 4-14, Paul has added the purpose behind each gift.

1. Why has God the Father chosen, adopted, and accepted us? Verse 6: To the praise of the glory of His Grace.
2. Why has the Son redeemed, forgiven, revealed His will, and made us part of His inheritance? Verse 12: That we should be to the praise of His glory.
3. Why has God the Spirit sealed and become our guarantee? Verse 14: Unto the praise of His glory.

- This whole section is a shout of praise to God for all that He has done on behalf of His people. **“To the praise of the glory of His grace.” All glory, praise, honor, and worship to God, why? Because of this abundant manifestation of the grace that He has lavished upon us.**

Ephesians 1:15-23

Appropriate prayer for those who have received every spiritual blessing in the heavens

Wm. Randolph Hearst invested a fortune collecting art treasures. One day he was reading a description of some valuable artwork and decided he wanted it for his collection. He sent his agent overseas in search of this particular painting.

- After searching for a month, the agent reported that he had finally found the painting back home in Mr. Hearst's warehouse. Wm. Randolph Hearst had been searching for treasures that he already owned.
- For this very reason, the book of Ephesians was written—so that we might know what is ours, that we might know who we are in Christ and our position in Christ.

In verse 17, Paul said he was praying for the “Spirit of wisdom and revelation.” Spirit here refers to divine influence by which the temperament or disposition of mind in Christians is affected.

- “Wisdom” here is knowledge, insight, and deep understanding imparted from God in respect to the divine counsels.
- “Revelation” speaks of the removal of ignorance and darkness by the communication of light and knowledge, illumination, and instruction.
- “In the knowledge of Him” – this word knowledge is much stronger than “to know.” It expresses a more thorough participation in the acquiring of knowledge on the part of the learner. It often refers to knowledge that very powerfully influences the form of religious life; it’s knowledge that lays claim to personal involvement. This means it’s knowledge that so influences you that it changes how you live your life!

The verb “being enlightened” is in the perfect participle passive voice—at a certain time in the past, a process happened that caused the subject of the verb to receive its action, which in this case is to have light shed upon, to become illuminated.

“That we may know” expresses the knowledge that comes from one’s state of being, one’s intuitive knowledge.

Hope is earnest expectation, and “calling” is the divine call by which we were introduced into the privileges or results of the gospel.

Paul is praying that we would come to know the abundance of His glory as it’s manifested in the inheritance that we’ve received.

- We can only recognize how abundantly glorious our inheritance is by first understanding how undeserving we are of it, where we were taken from and unto.

What is the excessive immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe?

- Most view this statement about God's power as if He is holding it back waiting for us to do enough, be faithful enough, pray enough—and then we will have access to it and thereby be made more obedient, more faithful, more able to do great things for God.

But in Paul's statement here about this power of God, there is both a past tense and a present tense in terms of its display and availability.

- The past tense first had to do with raising Jesus from the dead and secondly was when He raised us from being in Adam to making us a new creation in Christ that is now alive unto God.
- The present tense is in reference to what's been done positionally to now become more and more true of us conditionally or more and more lived out in our daily lives. Look at **Romans 6:4**.

It's like all the plagues and miracles that God did when He led Israel out of Egypt. Words could never adequately proclaim what the Israelites saw God do with their own eyes.

- Just like that, words cannot adequately express the power, wisdom, grace, and love that was fully displayed when God took us from being dead in our trespasses and sin and made us a new creation in Christ that is fully accepted in the beloved, seated at His own right hand.
- It's the power to conform me more and more into the image of Christ as I by faith appropriate the results of the finished work of Christ.
- It is not power to make my flesh obedient, holy, or acceptable to God.

Lastly, in verse 23, Paul says that the church is the fullness of Christ. Fullness also means completion. Without the church, Jesus would be incomplete.

The union of Christ with the church is a union so real that the body must be there in order for Christ to be complete.

- The eternal plan of redemption (that Jesus would fulfill) was predetermined before the foundations of the earth. God the Father spent thousands of years preparing and orchestrating for its fulfillment. Then the time came when everything was ready; Jesus came down to earth and took on the form of a human, died for our sin, and fulfilled the eternal plan of redemption. Receiving the church, His body, His bride, was the joy that was set before Him and was the whole purpose for the fulfilled plan. Therefore, to not have the church would be for Jesus to have an unfulfilled purpose.
- Our existence is proof that the eternal plan of redemption has been completed.

EPHESIANS 2

“Sin’s work vs. God’s work” – Ephesians 2:1-10

Review Ephesians Chapter 1

It might be helpful to begin with a review of Chapter 1:

- **Eph. 1:3**
- **Verse 3 – blessed**
- **Verse 4 – chosen**
- **Verse 5 – adopted**
- **Verse 6 – accepted**
- **Verse 7 – redeemed and forgiven**
- **Verse 9-10 – His will is made known to us.**
- **Verse 11 – We are given an inheritance.**
- **Verses 13 and 14 – two more spiritual blessings**

- We are sealed and given a guarantee.
- Finally, after all this, in verses 15-23, Paul prays that we would grasp the magnitude of what has been done, grasp the magnitude of the “hope to which we have been called,” the glory of our inheritance, and the awesomeness of God’s power.
- In lesson 2, Paul showed the Ephesians what they had been given in Christ. Now, in an effort to magnify God’s grace in all that they had been given, Paul reminds them of what they were when they were still in Adam.

Introduction

There are two main ways that Paul seeks to help believers understand the glory of God’s grace which we have all received. First, by doing exactly what he did in Chapter 1—list some of the spiritual blessings we have received in Christ.

The second way will be by doing what he does here in Chapter 2. That is to take us back and remind us of what our fallen spiritual identity consisted of before lavishing His abundant grace upon us.

Our Old Spiritual Identity

Ephesians 2:1-3

Dead in trespasses and sin

Verse 1 – The spiritual identity that every human being is born with is to be “dead in trespasses in sin.” This means that there was no spiritual life in us whatsoever—the equivalent of being physically dead.

- As impossible as it would be for a corpse to resuscitate itself, so it was equally or maybe even more impossible for us who were dead in trespasses and sin to give ourselves spiritual life.
- It was from this place of spiritual death that Paul says God made us alive (spiritually).

In order for us to really value what it means to be made alive by being made a new spiritual creation in Christ and really be wowed by the abundant grace that has been lavished upon us, we must understand the depths of where He has brought us from.

- Starting in verse 2, Paul does two things. First, he lists what being dead in trespasses and sin looks like, and secondly, these things become proof of our fallen spiritual identity.

The first proof or characteristic Paul states is that we were living according to the course of this world.

- This refers to this present world and its current order of things, as opposed to the kingdom of Christ. It has with it the idea of worthlessness and evil, both physical and moral. This place has an environment of temptations and irregular desires.
- It could be summed up as being Anti-God and Anti-Christ.

The second proof or characteristic of being dead in our trespasses and sins was that we walked according to the prince of the power of the air.

- We know this is a reference to Satan. Literally it means, according to the magistrate or ruler that has been delegated authority to rule according to the parameters that were delegated to him. (*We must keep in mind Colossians 1:16.*)
- The term “air” is a reference to the celestial air surrounding the earth. The Greeks believed it to be the substance that filled the space between the earth and the moon.
- There are other references to this same term in the bible. One interesting one to consider is in **Revelation 16:13-17**. Three unclean spirits influence the world leaders to gather and fight against God in the battle of Armageddon. In verse 17, the seventh angel pours his bowl of wrath into the air.
- The second interesting reference is in **1 Thessalonians 4:17**, where the “taking” or the “rapture” is mentioned. Jesus will come and meet us in the air. He will penetrate this “air” where Satan has been delegated authority in order to deliver believers from the earth.
- Then Paul describes what this looks like further by stating it’s the same spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. Literally this means that it’s the same disposition or mindset is currently affecting and influencing those who are unwilling to be persuaded or those who are willfully unbelieving.

In verse 3, Paul ends this description of what being dead in our trespasses and sin looked like by stating these characteristics were true of us.

- For we all walked according to the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind.
- We were, by nature, children of wrath. Because of our fallen spiritual identity, we were born under the wrath of God, destined for eternal destruction.

BUT God!!!

Before the Lord delivered us, our position was hopeless. We were like Israel when they were trapped between pharaoh's army and the Red Sea. There was no way to escape. Only the Lord could save them and He did.

Like Israel before the Red Sea, it must sink into our heads and hearts how hopeless and helpless we were when we were dead in our trespasses and sin. BUT GOD who is RICH in mercy. . .

Ephesians 2:4

That word “rich” means abundantly wealthy. “Mercy” is an “active pity.” It is immediate and special regard to the misery which is the consequence of sin.

- God is abundantly wealthy in active pity. He has an abundant regard and care for the misery caused by the consequences of our sin. That abundant regard causes Him to take action in our lives!

This is the exact opposite of how many Christians view God. Many view Him as hoping for and expecting our obedience and then being unhappy and even distant with us when we are not.

Not only did God’s mercy cause Him to take action but also His love. “Love” here is *agape* love; it means to esteem, to love, and it indicates a direction of the will and finding one’s joy in someone or something.

- Notice too the past tense of the verb “loved.” This is a reference to Jesus’ death on the cross as being the action that was caused by the existence of God’s abundant mercy, and it was the manifestation of God’s willful love toward us.

The reason and motivation for God to take action regarding the misery that was caused by our sin problem had to originate with God; i.e., it had to be because of Who He is and not the result of us somehow warranting it.

- It's impossible to warrant or deserve salvation and all that goes along with it.
- This is the key and foundational point of verse 4. The only reason why we won't go on to be condemned as the result of being dead in our trespasses and sin is solely because God is "RICH in MERCY."

Notice in verses 1 and 5, Paul repeats his statement that it was while we were as spiritually dead as you can possibly be that God made us alive in Christ.

- "Quickened" is in the aorist indicative active form of the verb. It means that at one particular point in time, we were made to receive the action of the verb. For example, "made alive," "saved," "given eternal life."

Because God is Rich in Mercy

Ephesians 2:4-10

Ephesians 2:8-9 are probably two of the most memorized and quoted verses in all of scripture (next to **John 3:16**). These are two of the main verses I have always quoted in any effort to lead someone to Christ, and I have always only applied these verses to the fact that our justification is by grace.

The main statement of verses 8 and 9 is, "for by grace you have been saved through faith" If you back up again and read verses 4 through 10 in their entirety, we can see that the "salvation" mentioned in verses 8 and 9 refers to every aspect of our salvation and not only our justification.

- Verses 4 and 5 – past justification
- Verse 6 – present sanctification
- Verse 7 – our future glorification
- Verses 8 and 9 – “by grace you have been SAVED.” Given the context, this is clearly referring to the big picture of our salvation and that every part of it is obtained by grace and through faith.
- Verse 10 – Being God’s workmanship—actually this word means something made or work piece. It denotes the result of work rather than the act of making. It implies completion. The part that is’t necessarily a done deal in this verse is the carrying out of the good works on our part, but the creating and preparing of us is absolutely finished.

“Created in Christ” – The word “created” is an aorist participle in the passive voice. This means that we received the results of the action by the subject of the verb. In other words, this is something that was done unto us by God.

- This is in contrast to what was said about us in verses 1 and 5—that we were dead in trespasses and sin. We are God’s “workmanship,” God’s finished project. Another good reference for this is **2 Corinthians 5:17-18**.

In our original fallen spiritual identity in which we were dead in trespasses and sin, our lives were a complete manifestation of those facts. BUT GOD, who is rich and mercy, made us alive by giving us a new spiritual identity.

- Therefore, we are now a new creation with a new spiritual identity that is spiritually equipped to manifest the new spiritual identity that we have been given and no longer the characteristics of being dead in trespasses in sin.

“Good” means profitable, beneficial, useful.

“Works” here refers to performance, or the result or object of employment. In employment, you accomplish the work for which you are employed to do.

- When we were in Adam, we did the works that were fitting with who we were spiritually.
- Now, by the divine power of God through the finished work of Christ, because we have a new spiritual identity, we are now prepared, equipped to live out “good” works.

Putting the two together we are talking about benevolent works, well doing, virtue, acts of kindness as a manifestation of the new spiritual identity that we have been given.

- Both of these things were prepared beforehand, and they were prepared for the purpose of doing good.

“That we should walk in them” – These good works that God has prepared beforehand actually become the rule or manner of our lives, what characterizes our lives.

- It’s the fruit of walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh. It’s going to be the fruit of becoming more and more conformed to the image of Christ.

The work of recreating us and making us into a new creation with a new spiritual identity fit to manifest the life of Christ on this earth is already complete, but the actual living it out is a process.

- The way God will bring it about conditionally will be by bringing us to be more and more convinced that it’s really true of us positionally. This really is my identity, this really is who I am as a new creation!!!!
- He won’t bring this about in our lives apart from our believing and resting in those truths.

Wrong Spiritual Identity and the Wrong Ethnicity

Ephesians 2:11-12

Not only were we born with a fallen and condemned spiritual identity making it impossible for us to obtain righteousness, but also our ethnicity made it even doubly impossible for us to be restored to God—we were not born a part of His chosen people.

This whole idea of being without hope is huge and it really needs to sink in what it means.

- The only reason why the Jews had hope was because God had chosen them to be His people. Had He not chosen them, they would have had no hope either.
- We were without Christ; we were not of the nation that God had chosen; God didn't make any promises or agreements with us; we were unrighteous and not searching for God; so there was absolutely nothing from within ourselves or without that we could have hoped in. God was not a part of our lives.
- Our only possible solution was for God in His grace and mercy to divinely intervene. If He didn't do that, we would have been relegated to an eternity in hell.

Ephesians 2:13

Reconciliation: What God did for the Gentiles

- The “but now” in verse 13 parallels the “but God” in verse 4. Both speak of the gracious intervention of God on behalf of lost sinners.
- “Enmity” is the key word in verses 15-16 and means “hostility.”
- It’s interesting to notice that there is a twofold enmity: between Jew and Gentile in verses 13-15 and between all sinners and God in verses 16-18.
- Paul describes here the greatest peace mission in all of history. Jesus Christ reconciled both Jew and Gentile, not only to each other, but also to Himself in one body, the church.

- Paul is reminding the Ephesian believers of their past condition, separated from Christ and excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise.
- Israel has always had the hope of the promise of the Deliverer, but the Gentiles were separated from all of that.
- All through the Old Testament God protected, watched over, and blessed Israel. He always provided them with a way to be made acceptable to Himself.
- None of this was given to the Gentiles.

The enmity between the Jews and Gentiles

- Let's take a closer look at the enmity/hostility between Jew and Gentile in **Ephesians 2:13-14**. God had put a difference between Jews and Gentiles so that His purposes in salvation might be accomplished.
- Once those purposes were accomplished, there was to be no more difference, no more separation.
- In fact, it was God's plan that the differences be removed forever.
- It was this that was so difficult for the early church to understand. Think back in our own country (USA) and all the racial prejudice and how hard it was and still is for this nation to let go of all that enmity/hostility.
- For centuries, the Jews had been different from the Gentiles—in religion, the way they dressed, their diet, and laws.
- Until Peter was sent to the Gentiles in **Acts 10**, the church had no problems; but with the salvation of the Gentiles on the same terms as the Jews, problems began to develop.

- The Jewish Christians reprimanded Peter for going to the Gentiles and eating with them (**Acts 11:1-3**), and representatives of the churches gathered for an important conference in **Acts 15**.
- Basically what they were asking was, “Must a Gentile become a Jew to become a Christian?”
- Their conclusion was “No! Jews and Gentiles are saved the same way—by faith in Jesus Christ.” The enmity was gone.
- The cause of that enmity was the law (**Ephesians 2:15**) because the law made a definite separation between Jews and Gentiles. *The Gentiles did not obey the law.*
- The ordinances given by God to Israel stood as a wall between the Jews and all other nations.
- In fact, there was a wall in the Jewish Temple, separating the Court of the Gentiles from the rest of the temple areas.
- Archaeologists have discovered this inscription from Herod’s Temple: “No foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death.”
- It was this wall that the Jews thought Paul and his Gentile friends crossed when the Jews arrested him in the temple and threatened to kill him (**Acts 21:27-31**).
- In order for Jews and Gentiles to be reconciled, this wall had to be destroyed, and Jesus did this on the

cross. When He died, the veil in the temple was literally torn in two, and wall of separation was torn down, which opened the way for all to approach God.

- In Christ Jesus, Jew and Gentile become one.
- It took the early church a long time to get accustomed to the fact that “there is no difference.”
Galatians 3:28
- Notice that Christ is our peace (**Ephesians 2:14**), and He made peace (**Ephesians 2:15**).
- **Position of Gentiles – Ephesians 2:12**

Old	New
“Without Christ”	“In Christ” (Ephesians 2:13)
“Aliens”	“A holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9)
“Strangers”	“No more strangers” (Eph. 2:19)
“No hope”	“Called in one hope (Eph. 4:4)
“Without God”	“Family of God” (Ephesians 2:19)

The enmity between God and sinners

- **Ephesians 2:16-18** – Not only did the Gentiles need to be reconciled to the Jews, but both needed to be reconciled to God.
- This was the conclusion that the apostles came to at the Jerusalem conference in **Acts 15**.
- Peter said that God “put no difference between us ‘Jew’ and them ‘Gentile,’ but we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.” **Acts 15:9, 11**
- It was not a question of a Gentile becoming a Jew to become a Christian, but rather the Jew admitting that he was a sinner like the Gentile. **Romans 3:22-23**

- Before, the Jews were the chosen people of God and all other people groups were not. Now, through the cross, we all have access by the Spirit to the Father as His very children; and all who are the children of God are one body in Christ.
- Today, in Christ, all have access to God through the Spirit. He is our Heavenly Father and we can boldly approach the throne of grace at any time (**Hebrews 10:19**).

Ephesians 2:19-22

If you look at the sum of all of God's interaction, there isn't a description that could be used to stress God's value and acceptance of us more than these three terms:

Nation—As God's chosen nation, Israel was chosen by God and God was faithful to them with a divine commitment. He is equally faithful and committed to us today.

Family—It was God who instituted the family with all of its dynamics. All through the Bible, God uses the example of family and family relationships to help us understand Him and His heart for his children. Nothing is more important or acceptable to us than family.

Temple—The temple signified God's presence among His people, and the whole purpose for His presence among His people is for a relationship. All the furnishings and actions that were to take place at the temple were for the purpose of God and His people to be at peace with each and thereby enjoy intimate communion.

- Today, we as believers are the temple of God, and all that needed to take place in order for us to enjoy intimate communion with God has already been done on our behalves. The work has been completed, God the Spirit indwells us, all that is left is for to do is to grow in the knowledge of these things and believe them to be true.
- To the extent that we appropriate faith in those facts will our lives become the manifestation of Christ on this earth.

EPHESIANS 3

A. The Mystery Revealed—Ephesians 3:1-13

In preparation to better understand this section of Chapter 3, it's important that we remind ourselves of passages like **2 Timothy 1:9** that speak of the fact that predetermined the eternal plan of redemption before the foundations of the earth.

- **1 Corinthians 2:6-7** is a passage that helps put this section in Chapter 3 of Ephesians together with **2 Timothy 1:9**. Paul calls it the “hidden wisdom of God” which God ordained before the ages.
- This is also the “whole counsel of God” which Paul refers to in **Acts 20:27**.

Verse 2: “The dispensation of the grace of God.” Dispensation means “age” or time period. You may have heard of “dispensationalism.” This is basically a doctrine that breaks up the history of the world into seven different ages or dispensations that is determined by the status of man’s relationship to God and upon what it is based.

One of the drawbacks to “dispensationalism” is that it doesn’t keep in view that there is one “big storyline,” or one “Meta-Narrative” (Grand Story). Rather than dividing up history into seven different ways in which God was working, I think it’s more accurate to lay it out in terms of the unfolding meta-narrative.

There are eight different stages of the grand story that we have identified.

1. **THE GODHEAD CREATED THE PLAN:** From before the foundations of the earth, the Godhead planned for an eternal plan of redemption for a human race that He was planning to create. This eternal plan would be provided by grace and through the second member of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ the Son of God. (**2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:18-20**)

2. THE GODHEAD PREPARES A PLACE FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PLAN: God's preparations for carrying out His eternal plan of redemption begins with creation in **Genesis 1**. In creating the universe and all that it contains, God creates the location where His plan will become fulfilled as well as the ones for which it will be carried out. (**Genesis 1 & 2**)
3. THE FALL OF LUCIFER AND ANGELS: Rather than choosing to remain dependent and serve God, Lucifer became proud and desired to become God and many other angels followed him in his rebellion. The result was that, through being judged by God, they became Satan and the demons. Who they are and what they do remains a very important part in the fulfillment of God's eternal plan of redemption. (**Colossians 1:16**)
4. THE FALL OF MANKIND: In the beginning, God created mankind to be perfect and sinless, but the very fact that God created an eternal plan of redemption on the basis of grace (giving man what he doesn't deserve) is proof that He was planning for man to become sinful and not remain sinless. Also is the fact that God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden and commanded mankind to never eat from it. This fact give us another clue that God wasn't planning for man to stay perfect and sinless. (**Genesis 3**)
5. THE GODHEAD BRINGS THE LINE OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD: God had planned that His eternal plan of redemption would be fulfilled or provided by Christ. Therefore, at just the right time, God in His grace chose one of the fallen inhabitants of the world, Abram, to be the one to bring about a new nation and race of people through whom to bring Jesus into this world to become the Savior. (**Genesis 12:1-3**)
6. THE GODHEAD ESTABLISHES TYPES AND TESTIMONY ALL POINTING TO CHRIST AND HIS FINISHED WORK: God gives Israel the law, which became proof of Israel's sinfulness and example of the sinfulness of all mankind. The tabernacle, its

furnishings, and the sacrificial system all became physical pictures of spiritual truth that would be fulfilled and provided by the future Deliverer. (**Romans 5:20-21; Hebrews 10:1-10**)

7. THE GODHEAD FULFILLS THE ETERNAL PLAN OF REDEMPTION: At just the perfect time, when God had all things prepared and in place, the Son of God was sent to be borne by a virgin into the human race to go through the process and become the Savior of the world. (**John 3:16-17; Acts 2:22-23**)
8. THE RESULTS OF THE FULFILLED ETERNAL PLAN OF REDEMPTION: From **Acts 1** to the end of **Revelation 22**, we have an amazing record and testimony of what was accomplished through Jesus' fulfillment of the eternal plan of redemption. There are spiritual blessings that became true of us the moment we accepted Jesus as our Savior. These promises will remain true of us throughout eternity. These promises are both spiritual and physical in nature. (**Ephesians 1:3; 1 Corinthians 2:6-12; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2 Peter 1:2-4**)

Verses 3-5: God predetermined the plan before the foundations of the earth. Then all through the OT, He was giving promises, prophecies, types, and foreshadowings of what it would entail, all the while keeping it hidden (from being fully understood).

- Jesus went to the cross and fulfilled the plan, after which, as Paul states here, God revealed the mystery to Paul in order to make it known to the church.

Verse 6: Paul begins to describe what the mystery is—that the gospel has made us fellow heirs with Christ, with the Jews, and of God.

- **John 16:15; Romans 8:16-17; Ephesians 1:11; 1 Peter 1:3-5**

Verse 7-9: Now Paul tells us how it came to be that he was given the revelation of this dispensation of grace, or how it happened that this “mystery” was revealed unto him:

- It was given to him “according to the gift of the grace of God.” It was undeserved. Not only did he NOT earn the right to have this role, but also he was absolutely undeserving of it.
- It was carried out by the effective working of His power. It was done miraculously by the divine intervention of God.

Beginning in verse 8, Paul begins to describe the role given to him by grace and the power of God.

- To “preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”
 - “Unsearchable” speaks of being beyond comprehension, unfathomable, too great and abundant to fully comprehend.
 - “Riches” is a reference to an abundance of wealth or an abundant amount.
 - These two together are another way of what he stated in **Ephesians 1:3**—“every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies.” These are the unsearchable riches of Christ.
- Notice, that is what Paul states He was called and given to proclaim, the wealth that is ours in Christ and not all that we must do for God.
- Is the content of our teaching and discipleship teaching people as though they are sons or slaves?

Verse 9: The second part of what Paul says he was called to proclaim was “to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery.”

- Another way to state it is to help all see what is their “fellowship in the mystery,” help all see how the “mystery” affects them or what it has to do with them, to see the results of the fact that Jesus fulfilled the eternal plan of redemption.

Verse 10: Paul gives another purpose for the carrying out of the eternal plan of redemption on the behalf of mankind and that is to reveal the “manifold wisdom of God” to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies.

- As His creation, God is working to reveal Himself to the spirit world as well. We know He created all of the angels before creating the world and everything in it, giving them the opportunity to see firsthand that amazing display of power, love, and wisdom.
- Now, through the carrying out of the eternal plan of redemption on the behalf of fallen mankind, He is revealing his “manifold wisdom” or His multifaceted wisdom. In the carrying out of the eternal plan of redemption, God’s holiness, righteousness, and justice are all carried out at the same time as His love, grace, and mercy.

Verse 11: “...according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- This lines up with many other passages: **2 Timothy 1:9; Colossians 1:16; 1 Peter 1:18-20**

Verse 12: This verse is extremely important and significant. Here Paul is speaking in terms of our “rights and entitlement” as those who have had the eternal plan of redemption carried out on the behalf of.

- Just as bold and free as your own children are within your own household, so are we in the presence of God.
- The level of boldness and access with confidence that we sense and experience before God will be directly determined by where we are placing our trust and dependence.
 - Either it’s in the finished work of Christ alone or it’s in our own works and obedience.

Verse 13: Because of these facts, Paul said that the trials and tribulations he is going through in order to make these truths known is well worth it.

- Our hope is not in this world but in the new heavens and new earth to come.

B. “Paul’s second prayer for enablement”- Eph. 3:14-21

Ephesians 3:14-21

This passage is the second of two prayers recorded in Ephesians, the first being in **Ephesians 1**. In the first prayer, the emphasis is on enlightenment. (**Ephesians 1:16-18**)

- However, in the prayer here in **chapter 3**, the emphasis is on enablement. (**verse 16**)
- It’s not a matter of knowing what Christ has done for us, but rather appropriating, taking possession of what Christ has done for us, and by faith making it a part of our lives.
- Remember, this is where the doctrinal part of Ephesians ends, and the practical sections begin in **Chapter 4**. Paul ends this section by praying for God’s enabling power so that we can “walk.” (**Ephesians 4:1**)

Verse 16: Before Paul lists any of the things he is asking God to do, he gives a qualifying phrase: “according to the riches of His glory.” Riches here speaks of abundance and God’s glory is His unchanging essence.

- It’s like saying, “May God grant you these things according to the greatness of all that God is and the fullness of His essence.”
- Notice, it’s not according to anything that must be provided by us, either what we can do or what we already are.
- ***Therefore, the provision of these things is as unlimited as God Himself is.***

By using these words “power and strength,” we are often led to having the wrong understanding of what is actually taking place

here. The Christian life isn't about God making us powerful or great. He doesn't empower us to be independent of Himself.

- This word “might” actually means to be made able or capable.
- “Strengthened” is in the aorist infinitive passive, which means that the action was done to us by the subject—God.
- Paul is saying, “May God grant you according to the essence of ALL that He is, to be made stronger with ability/capability by His Spirit in our soul (mind, will, emotions).”

Verse 17: This strengthening with capability in the soul that is being done by the Holy Spirit leads to Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith.

- This word “dwelling” means permanent residence as opposed to visiting temporarily as a guest. This doesn't mean in terms of His presence, but in terms of our trust, hope, and dependence.
- The Holy Spirit is working to convince our hearts that EVERYTHING is the result of Christ and His finished work. As we grow in our confidence of these truths, our dependence upon Him and the results of His finished work will be the sole focus of our hearts, thereby causing Him and His finished work to be the sole focus of our trust, hope and dependence for every part of our salvation.

Verses 18-19: Having our understanding and confidence in God's grace and results of the finished work of Christ expanded will also expand our comprehension for God's love for us. Beginning to grasp the height and depth of God's love for us will result in filling us with all the fullness of God.

This doesn't mean that we are receiving anything new spiritually, for we've already received EVERY spiritual blessing in the heavenlies. But grasping the extent of God's love for us will actually give us the freedom to be absolutely excited or filled up completely by the fact of His heart for me.

Verses 20-21: **Ephesians 3:20** has got to be one of the verses that is most quoted out of context. Usually it's quoted in reference to some physical thing we want God to do. Is God able to do ANYTHING? Absolutely, but in this context, Paul talking about four specific things.

1. Strengthening with might in the inner man.
2. Christ would dwell in our hearts through faith.
3. Strength to comprehend the breadth, width, depth, and height of His love.
4. We would be filled with all the fullness of God.

It is impossible for us to bring these things about in our own lives, BUT God is able to bring these things about far abundantly above anything we would ever ask or think to be possible!!!!!! May we simply look to Him and depend upon Him to bring these things about in our lives.

EPHESIANS 4

Practice of the Believer – “Walk”

A. Introduction

Moving on now to Ephesians 4, we will notice a bit of a change in Paul’s focus from positional/identity truths to the daily conditional living out of the Christian life.

- It’s interesting that the key word in the last three chapters is “walk.” (**Ephesians 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15**)
- In these last three chapters, Paul encourages us to walk in unity (**Ephesians 4:1-16**), walk in purity (**Ephesians 4:17-5:17**), walk in harmony (**Ephesians 5:18-6:9**), and walk in victory (**Ephesians 6:10-24**).
- Before we look at this section in detail, it might be helpful to note one important word in verse 1: *therefore*. The word “therefore” is a connective, transitional word which indicates that Paul is basing all that he is about to say on what he has already taught in Chapters 1 through 3. (*We’re chosen, adopted, accepted, redeemed, forgiven, sealed, and given a guarantee. Our inner man has been strengthened, Christ is dwelling in our hearts, and we’re filled with all the fullness of God.*
- In light of all that has been done in and to us, Paul urges us to “walk worthy of our calling.” Live in such a way that is in line with who you are, who you are as a new creation with a new spiritual identity.

READ Ephesians 4:1-6.

B. Condition Flows Out of Position/Identity

Verses 2-3: Beginning in verse 2, Paul begins to characterize what walking worthy of our calling looks like.

- Rather than these things being evidence of unity, they are the characteristics or mindset that will enable us to maintain unity.
- First is lowliness of mind or not thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. This can only come from having a proper view and understanding of the Christian life and the basis for our relationship with God.
 - The traditional view of the Christian life leads one to depend upon self for living a life that is pleasing to God. Thinking that we are capable of such a feat is to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. This wrong view of our relationship with God then leads to living our Christian life constantly comparing ourselves with others in the body. This in turn leads to feeling inferior to those who we deem more spiritual and superior (judgmental/critical) to those who we view as being unfaithful.
 - This kind of a view and living out of the Christian life leads to strife and divisions, not unity.
- Second is meekness. Meekness primarily is not an outward expression of feeling but an inward grace of the soul, a calmness toward God in particular. It is the acceptance of God's dealings with us (whether desirable or undesirable) considering them as good in that they enhance the closeness of our relationship with Him.
 - Therefore, like lowliness, meekness can only come from having a proper view of the greatness of God and the wonder of all that He's done on our behalves.

- Third is long suffering, which means self-restraint before proceeding to action. It's the quality of a person who is able to avenge himself yet refrains from doing so. It is closely associated with or motivated by mercy which is an active pity.
 - **Titus 3:1-7** lays it out pretty clearly.
- Fourth is forbearance IN LOVE, which means to hold up or support. So it implies a holding up of and supporting as a way of bearing with those in regards to their errors and weaknesses.
 - Love that is the genuine fruit of the Spirit will be what enables us to have this kind of forbearance.
 - Again, we will be able to fulfill this only by first recognizing how much support and holding up we have needed in our own lives.
- Fifth is the endeavoring to maintain—the unity of the Spirit—the unity, the oneness we have received from the Spirit of God.
 - BUT in order to maintain it, we have to value it, we have to value others, and we have to value the body of Christ or the importance of being the body.
 - This can only come from the depth of our knowledge of God and having a right perspective on the Christian life and basis for our relationship with Him.
 - Paul said the unity we have been given by the Spirit will be maintained by the bond of peace. Peace is experienced solely by having a proper view of our identification with the finished work of Christ.

The grounds/basis for unity

Ephesians 4:4-6

It's interesting that many pastors and Christian leaders today attempt to unite their churches in ways that are not biblical.

- For example, we take scriptures like **Romans 12:10** “Be kind to one another”; **Romans 13:8** “Love one another”; **Galatians 5:13** “Serve one another”; **Colossians 3:13** “Forgive one another”; or **1 Thessalonians 5:11** “Edify one another” and we continually emphasize these directives, encouraging our people to carry them out by sheer determination and commitment, but rarely explain to them that the biblical standard for Christians today under grace is impossible to attain through man's determination or commitment or effort.
- In **Ephesians 4:4-6**, Paul lists seven defining elements that constitutes our unity as believers.
 - ▶ **One body** – One body refers to the total number of believers from Pentecost to the rapture, and this one body is called the church (**1 Corinthians 12:12-27**.) *Consider this point in light of all the doctrinal and denominational divisions that exist in the church today.*
 - ▶ **One Spirit** – One Spirit obviously refers to the Holy Spirit who baptizes each believer into the one body of Christ. Keep in mind it is the Holy Spirit who unifies believers.
 - ▶ **One hope of your calling** – This is a reference to the return of the Lord to take His church to heaven (**Titus 2:13**). Remember in **Ephesians 1**, it is the Holy Spirit within that assures us of this great promise (**Ephesians 1:13-14**).
 - ▶ **One Lord** – This is our Lord Jesus who died for us, lives in and through us, and one day will come back for us. It's almost impossible to think that two

believers can be in the same body, with the same indwelling Holy Spirit, with the same future hope, and the same Lord Jesus Christ, and yet not be able to walk together in unity. *It has been said that someone once asked Ghandi, the spiritual leader of India, “what is the greatest hindrance to Christianity in India?” He replied, “Christians.”*

- ▶ **One faith** – There is one settled body of truth deposited by Christ in His Church, and this is “the faith” (**Jude 3**). The early Christians recognized a body of basic doctrine that they taught, guarded, and committed to others (**Acts 2:42**). Christians may differ in some matters of interpretation regarding church administration, but all true Christians agree on “the faith.” To depart from “the faith” is to cause disunity in the body of Christ.
- ▶ **One baptism** – The reference here would not be to water baptism but rather to that act whereby the Holy Spirit places a believing sinner into the body of Christ at salvation (**1 Corinthians 12:13**). Keep in mind this is not an experience after conversion, nor is it something that we must pray for or seek after. We are commanded to be “filled with the Spirit” in **Ephesians 5:18**, but never are we commanded to be “baptized in the Spirit, for we have already been “baptized by the Spirit” at salvation. We are baptized, or united, into one body.
- ▶ **One God and Father of all** – The marvelous oneness of believers in the family of God is evident here, for God is above all. Absolutely everything is under His authority and sovereignty. Nothing is higher than Him in any realm or any regard. Therefore, there is no other person, thing, position, or authority that we need to fear.
 - He is through all. You can never be in a place where God is not already there. You can never be out of His presence. Therefore, He sees, hears, and fully knows every single circumstance that comes into our lives.
 - He is in you all. He is intimately associated with or connected with us. Through our union with Christ, we are one with the Godhead.

- These are truths that are true of us and our relationship with God and they are meant to be believed just like the gospel and the result of believing them will be the maintaining of our unity.

The gifts for unity

Ephesians 4:7-10

Being clear on our new spiritual identity, who we are in Christ, then understanding our unity that we have in the Spirit and what constitutes it will enable us to value it. We have to value it before we can be motivated to endeavor to maintain it.

- In the maintaining of it then, Paul seems to be boiling it all down to two main things: a right mindset followed by “right function.”
- Paul gave us the right mindset in verses 2-3; now beginning in verse 7, he begins to lay out the right function in drawing our attention to the individual engiftment that every believer receives in Christ.

Verse 7: There are two main Greek words for “gift”: *doma* and *dorea*. The emphasis on *doma* is the gift itself, and the emphasis of *dorea* is on the gratuitous nature of the giver. Here in verse 7, Paul used the word *dorea*.

- This in line with what his focus has been since Chapter one—highlighting the greatness of God by revealing how much grace He has lavished upon us.
- Here Paul’s focus is the same. In Chapters 1-3, he showed us how blessed we are and how much grace we’ve received by highlighting all that we’ve been made and given positionally as our new identity. Then he went on to speak of the oneness and unity that we all enjoy with one another and with God Himself.
- Not only did the finished work of Christ provide for all of that, but it also includes all that is needed in order for us to now grow conditionally unto maturity both as individuals and as the body of Christ.

- Really the book of Ephesians is a written testimony of how ALL INCLUSIVE the results of Christ's finished work really is for all believers.

Verses 8-10: In keeping with Paul's focus of how blessed and graced we are in Christ, I believe Paul is saying, "Jesus defeated sin and death by His resurrection, taking them captive and rendering them powerless as would a king after a victory over his enemies. The gift then in verse 7 Paul said, "every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift." The gift is eternal life and the forgiveness of sin that was given to us by Jesus' defeat of sin and death. It's an analogy in which Jesus is sharing the spoils of His ultimate victory over Satan with those who have received Him.

- In verse 8, the Greek word *doma* is used here for gifts, meaning the focus is on the gifts, roles, and enablements that God has given to each believer so that we can live and function as the body of Christ and all that entails.
- **2 Peter 1:3** says that we have been given all things pertaining unto life and godliness.
 - Everything we needed to be made spiritually alive and restored unto oneness with God we have received by grace.
 - Everything we needed in order for us to no longer live controlled by the flesh has been given us by grace.
 - Everything we needed to receive and have done so that we can fellowship, teach, train, and disciple one another unto maturity has also been given us by grace. IT'S ALL OF HIM!!!!

The work of building unity

Ephesians 4:11-16

Verse 11: Paul is saying that certain individuals within the church are engifted by the Spirit to fulfill certain roles in "equipping the body."

- This phrase “to equip” means perfected or completed. The Greek word used here is not the one that means “to perfect” but is the word that actually denotes the process as having been completed.
- Therefore, rather than these roles being given for the purpose of perfecting or maturing the saints, their being given actually completes the church as a body in terms of its ability to now live and function according to God’s call and design. Now the work of ministry (calling or occupation) can be carried out, and through them the body can now also be built up through their teaching and ministry.

The work of ministry here means the office of ministering in divine things and its mainly spoken of Apostles and teachers.

- The focus of this passage isn’t on the ministry the church is to do but is on everything being provided so the church can grow spiritually and become established in the faith.
 - **Apostles** were chosen as eyewitnesses of Christ and His teaching and were called to function in this role at that time period when the church was just beginning. Their testimony added credibility to the message and the establishment of the early church.
 - **Prophets** were a class of instructors or preachers who were next in rank to the Apostles and before the teachers (**1 Corinthians 12:28**). Unlike the Apostles, however, they did remain in one place like the teachers did.
 - **Pastors** shepherd and care for the flock, while the teachers are providing a progressive instruction of God’s redeeming purpose. As Paul stated in **Acts 20:27**, he had proclaimed unto them the full counsel of God.
 - *The growing consensus among linguists studying this text is that it appears pastors were a subgroup among all the teachers.*

- And so, when you put all of these roles together as a gift from Christ, you have a complete provision for all that needs to be supplied in order for the body of Christ to go on to spiritual growth and maturity. Engiftedness is given for every need that will ever exist. Look at **2 Timothy 3:16**.

Moving on then in verses 12-16, Paul is saying that pastors, teachers, and church leaders are to fulfill their calling for the purpose of four things. Another way of looking at it is that if you are going to be a pastor or a teacher, then you must be able to teach and disciple unto these four things. This is exactly what Paul was talking about in **1 Corinthians 3:10** when he said, “but let each man take heed how he builds.”

1. The first goal is unity of the faith or unity in what our faith is in; namely, the finished work of Christ.
2. The second goal is the knowledge of the Son of God. What is true of Him is true of us. Jesus said, “all that is the Father’s is mine.” In **Romans 8** we are called joint heirs with Him.
3. The third goal is unto a perfect man, a mature man. Look at **Colossians 1:28**.
4. The fourth goal is unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This is Christ-likeness. **Romans 8:29**—that we become conformed to the image of Christ.

Notice the progression here. Establishing the position will always precede the condition.

- Pastors, teachers, and church leaders who accomplish these four goals/purposes through their teaching and discipleship will then result in three things:
 1. A stable, well-grounded faith. **Romans 12:2; Jude 1:3**
 2. “Growing up into all things in Christ”—spiritual maturity which will result in. . .
 3. Unity—but more importantly will be life and function. Each of us functioning not only in the body but FOR the body according to how God has engifted us.

C. “Walk in Purity” (Walk not as other Gentiles walk) – Ephesians 4:17-32

In verses 17-19, Paul is saying that, based on the things that he again lists out as being given to us as the body of Christ, it no longer makes sense to go on walking how we used to walk apart from Christ. Then he characterizes what that looks like:

- First is the futility of their minds. This means that they don’t value that which has true worth; e.g., God, His word, and the Christian life.
 - This is the contrast that Paul is making. Their focus is on worthless things and not on eternal things. It’s what Paul was saying in **Colossians 3:1-3**.
- Second, their understanding is darkened. It means to be deprived of light, deprived of truth. When you are deprived of the truth, there is nothing in and of yourself that you can do about it.
 - Example: If you are out in the woods in the pitch dark without any way of making light, can you just make it appear? Can you make it light up?
 - We are equally incapable of accomplishing this spiritually. It takes divine intervention from God. Look at **2 Corinthians 4:6**.
- Third, “alienated” means to be entirely, completely separated from God as the source of eternal life. Notice that this alienation is due to ignorance, and the ignorance is due to blindness.
 - There is undesired blindness and there is willful blindness. Paul is talking about willful blindness here, a hardness or callousness of the heart.
 - When you study through our “Knowing God” lessons, it becomes very evident how much effort God continuously puts into seeking to reveal Himself and making Himself known to mankind. Because of the effort and clarity with which God has revealed Himself to the world, for anyone to continue to live alienated from Him and eternal life, it must be the result of the hardness of their own hearts.

- Fourth, Paul says that they are past feeling. There is no feeling of honor or shame. This Greek word is where we get the word “analgesic” from.

Verses 20-21: “But you have not so learned Christ.” This ties in with Paul’s urging statement in verse 1 to walk in a manner that is worthy of our calling. Here, he just finished telling us to not walk like the gentiles/unbelievers walk, and the reason for this? For you have “not so learned Christ.” This is not according to your “calling” or who you are in Christ.

- Here Paul is presenting Jesus as the sum and substance for the truth/the gospel/the Christian life. ALL things are of Him, from Him, or by Him!!!!
- He Himself is the way, the truth, and the life, AND WE ARE IN HIM, JOINT HEIRS WITH HIM!!!!

Verses 22-24: The issue with these three statements is that they can either be taken as indicative statements about our position or as imperative commands about our condition. See note in Net Bible for verse 22.

- Paul is listing these truths in verses 22-24 as explanation and detail for what he said in verses 20-21. The conditional putting off of our old manner of living, renewing our minds, and conditionally putting on the new man are the results of what it means to “learn Christ,” to have heard Him, and to have been taught by Him. The Christian life IS Christ, His finished work, and our identification with Him and His finished work!!!!!!
- That was already accomplished positionally or in terms of our spiritual identity.

Beginning in verse 25, Paul says “wherefore” or “therefore.” What he is about to say is the result of what he said previously.

- “Learning Christ” will enable us to do what he is saying to do in these next verses. In “learning Christ,” we know our “old man” was crucified; we were recreated with a new spiritual identity and our minds need to be renewed by faith in those facts.
- That has already taken place positionally. As we continue to believe those truths to be true of us and appropriate them conditionally, Paul says we will then “put away” certain things.
 - The word that is used here is actually stronger than to just put something away. It’s more violent. It means to cast off or throw away. If you are putting away something delicate that you value, the action that would go along with that would look very different than the action that would go along with dropping your keys in the yard in the dark and reaching down, feeling around to find them again, you grab something and realize it’s dog poop.
 - The way in which you would “put away” or discard the dog poop from your hand would look a lot different.

That’s what Paul is saying about this list of sins or deeds of the flesh. We must ask what would cause us to violently cast off dog poop we might accidentally pick up? It’s the grossness of it, the undesirableness of it, the filth, the smell. Really, it’s the reality of what it is!!!!

- The same is true of these sins that Paul lists. If we are still at the stage of trying to establish our spirituality by denying and justifying our sin—that we are still trying to validate our Christian lives by our own righteousness—then instead of violently casting down the poop in our hand, we will try and hide the fact that we picked it up.

- However, if we are ever increasing in believing that we really are who God says He's made us as a new creation in Christ, eventually we will be convinced and confident that really this is who we are. At that point, the committing of these sins and others will be as distasteful to us as picking up dog poop, and it's that distastefulness that will cause us to violently cast them away.
- Until we come to that point in believing what is true about us, no amount of focusing on the sin in and of themselves can bring us to that point. If you don't mind something, it's very hard to make yourself hate it. Something must first happen that changes our perspective. We need to "LEARN CHRIST"—the results of His finished work and all that it means for us.

Verse 25: It's interesting to note that the first recorded sin in the early church was Ananias and Saphira's lie of how much they were giving as an offering to help support the body. They were portraying themselves to be more generous and spiritual than they really were.

- We do the exact same thing in our Christian lives today when we trust, hope, and depend upon our own efforts and faithfulness to be spiritual and thereby accepted by God.
 - I would actually say that this is the worst of all the lies, as it is a dependence upon your own efforts **OVER** grace and Christ's work on your behalf.

Verses 26-27: Be angry and sin not...don't let the sun go down on your anger. This word for anger or angry in Greek literature is used almost exclusively in referring to the source of anger and not the anger itself. It is that which is the cause of the provocation and not the internal reaction from it.

- Not letting the sun go down on your wrath doesn't seem to be a reference to dealing with sin "quickly" in our midst per se but rather a reference to dealing with it faithfully. Don't let it pass, don't forget about it, don't let it go away.
- The context here is the body of Christ. Never does a member of our physical human bodies ever do anything for itself. Everything that every member does is for the whole.
- That's what Paul is saying here. Rather than continuing to be self-centered and taking for oneself only, let them work to give toward the benefit of the whole body.
- This can only happen through "learning Christ."

Verse 28 looks like just a simple command for people to not steal, to not be a thief. "Stop Stealing!!"

- But again, context, context, context. Paul's focus has been on the corporate body of the church, the unity of the Spirit that we have all been given in Christ and the charge to "endeavor to maintain it."
- Stealing is a manifestation that you are actually doing the exact opposite of what Paul is teaching.
 - A thief is self-centered and takes what doesn't belong to him for himself. It's the exact opposite of endeavoring to maintain the unity of the Spirit.
 - When a thief begins to genuinely "walk in a manner that is worthy of his calling," he will not only stop stealing, but he will also labor and give himself in order to have something to give to those in need.

Verse 29: Let no corrupt communication come out of your mouth. "Corrupt" here actually means bad, rotten, putrid, filthy. The kind of communication that would resemble this will divide and destroy our unity, not protect and maintain it.

- In contrast, speech that builds one another's confidence and faith in Christ and His finished work, and speech that causes true joy and encouragement in the hearer will protect and maintain our unity as the body of Christ.

Verse 30: First and foremost, Paul states in verse 30 that we are not to grieve the Holy Spirit. This word “grieve” means to afflict with sorrow. How do we do that?

- When you have done absolutely everything in your power to make it easy for your child or another person to be fully successful at something important and they willfully choose to disregard it or it’s of no value to them, it can be very painful and sorrowful for you.

A key clue in understanding the extent of the Holy Spirit being grieved is in the qualifying statement that follows: “by Whom you have been sealed until the day of redemption.”

- Remember what the purpose of the seal was. It proved authenticity. In **Ephesians 1:13**, Paul stated that the Holy Spirit is our seal or proof of the reality and the authenticity of all that God has promised. These promises include all things pertaining to life and godliness. They include our justification, sanctification, and glorification.
- Therefore, for us to go on living in unbelief of these promises is extremely grieving to the Holy Spirit, for the purpose of Him indwelling our hearts is to make us confident that these promises are true! (**1 Corinthians 2:11-12**)

Verses 31-32: Paul concludes with two lists.

- The list in verse 31 is that which must be “cast off,” things that are not in line with our new spiritual identity and will also result in division and separation.
- The second list in verse 32 states what is worthy or in line with our spiritual identity and are characteristics that will maintain our unity.
- Notice his last statement—“forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you.” He brings it all back to the results of the finished work of Christ.

EPHESIANS 5

A. Walk in Purity – Part 2

- **Walk in love – Ephesians 5:1-6**
- **Walk as children of light – Ephesians 5:7-14**
- **Walk carefully – Ephesians 5:15-17**
- **Walk/be filled with the Spirit – Ephesians 5:18-21**

- **Ephesians 5:1-21:** Paul contrasts the pagan lifestyle that so many lived out before coming to faith in Christ with what the Christian life is designed to look like.
Ephesians 4:17-24, 2:2-6, 2:12-13

B. Walk in love - Ephesians 5:1-6

Ephesians 5:1-2

Beginning with verse 1, most people will usually emphasize the command to be a follower but notice how Paul says we are to follow as dear children. That word “dear” means beloved.

- What part does a little child play in making himself dear and beloved to his parents. NONE! The parents automatically love the child dearly because of who he is to them. The more they love him, the more the child follows them and wants only to be with them.
- Therefore, following this example, the more convinced we become of how dearly beloved we are to God (Chapters 1-3), the more we will become His followers.
- To strive to make yourself a faithful follower without knowing how beloved of Him you are will make your Christian life a religion and not a relationship.
- Paul’s statement in verse 2 is like his statement in verse 1. Just knowing how dearly loved we are is what will make us His followers. Now in verse 2, it’s knowing how much Christ has revealed His love for us by dying for us that will enable us to walk in love.

- The ability to walk in love is not just about choosing to be loving or choosing to manifest love, but first and foremost it's believing that you are loved!!!

Ephesians 5:3-4

The temptation is to always zero in on the commands or demands of a passage and then set out to do it—as if we think we can JUST DO IT!!

- But after giving another command, Paul uses that little word “as” – “as becometh Saints.”
- Therefore, in order for us to not commit those actions that are not becoming of us as Saints, then we must know what a Saint is and believe that we are one.
- A Saint is one who is pure, clean, perfect, without blemish, one who shares in God’s purity! This is what we have been made as a new creation in Christ.
- The enablement to follow Paul’s command here will be found in believing that we are really who He has revealed us to be. This is exactly what he was saying in **Ephesians 4:1**.

Ephesians 5:5-7

Paul’s point here is that no one who commits these sins as an unbeliever will receive eternal life...not because they are doing these things but because they are unbelievers.

- Unbelievers do these things and they will not be going to heaven; therefore, it’s all the more unfitting for the children of God to partake in these things with them.
- These are the things that characterize the lives of unbelievers, that characterize those who will not be receiving eternal life; therefore, they are not worthy of who we are as Saints who will be receiving eternal life.

C. Walk as children of light - Ephesians 5:7-14

Ephesians 5:8-14

“Now you are light in the Lord,” literally means to have been enlightened, made alive unto God. Here he is talking about our spiritual identity. This became instantly true of us the moment we accepted Jesus as savior.

- Then he says to walk or live your life as children of the light. The term “children” here means to be the offspring or one who is the object of parental love and care. This speaks of believing that we are who God has made us to be, His dearly beloved child!!!
 - So, once again Paul is showing that our condition flows out of our position. Or the ability to live, act, and walk as children of light, flows out of the fact that we have been made to be children of light by being given a new spiritual identity.

Verses 9-10: I don't think Paul here is saying that something being pleasing to God is the test for knowing how we should act. Instead, the context here is walking as children of the light. The fruit of the light is expressed in righteousness and all goodness.

- Another characteristic will be that we desire to learn what is pleasing to Him, or what is it that He delights in?
- If we are genuinely walking as children of light, then a characteristic that will be true of us is that we will desire to walk in anything that is pleasing to God!!

Going back to our context of contrasting what characterizes unbelievers who don't have eternal life with walking as children of light who do have eternal life, I think we can safely assume that the things that are unfitting in our new nature are things that unbelievers do habitually.

- It is in their nature to do these things and it once was in our nature, also. But no longer.

- After we finish working all day, we are usually dirty. Do we like to stay that way?
 - No. We go home and wash up because it isn't our nature to remain dirty.
 - What about pigs? They love being dirty! Even if we wash them, they will go out looking for more mud. It's their nature to be dirty.
- Just like we don't enjoy being dirty, as God's children who are "walking in the light," we will never enjoy continuing in sin.
 - Sometimes we may slip and fall or possibly even rebel, for it is possible for God's children to NOT walk as children of the light.

So, Paul's point is unbelievers love to sin for it is in their nature.

- But we as believers are the dearly beloved children of God who have been given eternal life. It is possible, but unfitting, for us to be found doing the very things that the world will one day be judged for.

Verses 11-12: Paul continues on and tells us that not only should we not participate in the evil deeds of the unbelievers, but we should be exposing their sin.

- How are we to expose their sin?
 - By our lives. If we walk in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, our life will produce the fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22-23**).
 - As others see the fruit that the Holy Spirit is producing in and through us, they may become convicted. After becoming convicted, some will respond and turn to the Lord for salvation.
- Why did Cain kill Abel? Did Abel go and tell Cain that he was disobeying God? No. Just the fact that Abel did what was right convicted Cain that he was wrong.

- As we walk in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, He will use our lives in the same way.
- When missionaries go into a new area, do they go out and tell everyone they are sinners and their spirit worship is sin?
 - No. They just teach God's Word and as people hear the truth, the Holy Spirit convicts their hearts of those things.
- We don't have to point out everyone's sin; but as we walk in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, He will use our actions and words to accomplish His good pleasure in the lives of others.

Verse 12: Then Paul is saying that shameful things unbelievers do in secret should never be aired publicly by Christians.

- He's not communicating this in a legalistic way but simply showing how unfitting it is for believers to walk in those things.

Verses 13-14: Paul says that the gospel reveals sin, but he goes on to say in verse 14 that the purpose in the exposure of the sin is always the redemption of the sinner.

- God doesn't expose sin so that He can judge. He exposes sin so that people will recognize their need for salvation. **John 3:16** is followed by **John 3:17**. Jesus didn't come into the world to judge the world, but that through Him the world might be saved.

D. Walk carefully – Ephesians 5:15-17

Ephesians 5:15-17

First Paul says that we are “to see,” be aware, alert, to make sure of “WHAT”?

- To walk circumspectly, to live life accurately, diligently or exactly. Examples of this word are in **Matthew 2:8; Luke 1:3; Acts 18:25**.
- Paul first tells us what walking circumspectly is NOT!
 - It is not walking as a fool. This word means to be mindless or unmindful of the consequence of a thought or action.
 - To be unengaged. Unable to reason logically and arrive at proper conclusions.
- “Wise” here denotes a fear or respect of God and knowledge of His ways. It also includes the ability to apply with skill the things that one knows.
- So putting this all together in this verse, Paul is telling believers to carefully make sure that we are taking into account all the truths that God says are true of us, remain ever mindful of those truths and promises, and then live our lives according to the reality of those truths.

Verse 17: Paul is actually telling us how to redeem the time and that is by not being unwise but through understanding what the will of the Lord is.

- Usually, we will always take this to mean what does God want me to do, how does He want me to live?
- That word is not a reference to what God demands, but it is an expression or an inclination of pleasure toward that which is liked. It’s used of God to designate what God Himself does of His own good pleasure.
- Notice that Paul said that we are to **UNDERSTAND** what God takes pleasure in. This word “understanding” means the comprehending activity of the mind which entails the assembling of individual facts into an organized whole, as collecting the pieces of a puzzle and putting them together. The mind grasps concepts and sees the proper relationship between them.
 - It’s the same as growing in the knowledge of God, learning His ways as it says in the OT. It’s coming to know the heart of God!!!

E. Walk/be filled with the Spirit – Ephesians 5:18-21

Ephesians 5:18-21

It's interesting to note that the phrase FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT is only mentioned once as a command for believers and that is in **Ephesians 5:18**. However, it is mentioned 14 other times in the New Testament, all in the books of Luke and Acts.

- If we were to examine the Greek, we would see that the term used in both Luke and Acts has a different meaning than in **Ephesians 5:18**.
 - In all usages of the phrase other than **Ephesians 5:18**, it seems to describe either the Spirit coming upon an individual for special empowerment such as **Acts 1:8**, or it refers to a quality of life roughly equivalent to the term Spiritual as we use it today. (**Acts 6:3**)

If we are to get a proper interpretation of the command in **Ephesians 5:18**, we must look at the term in light of the context.

- It appears from the context that the literal interpretation is "*filled by the Spirit*." Thus, the Holy Spirit is the one doing the filling; in fact, in the Greek, the tense of the verb places the emphasis on a continuing process to be received by the believer. "*Keep on getting filled by the Holy Spirit*" would be a more accurate translation of the verse.

Looking at the context in Ephesians

- In **Ephesians 1**, Paul refers to the summing up of all things in Christ (**Ephesians 1:10**). The idea is that Jesus Christ is the center and focus of all that God is doing to work out His sovereign purpose.
- **Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 4:10-13** – It appears that the meaning of "*BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT*" in **Ephesians 5:18** is that Christ Himself is the content of the filling, and it is produced by the Holy Spirit.

To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with Jesus Christ Himself.

- Whatever **Godliness** is outwardly seen through our lives is nothing more than the manifestation of an inward working of the Spirit producing the life of Christ in us. **Philippians 2:12-13; John 16:13-14; 2 Corinthians 3:18**
- We want to make this as clear as we possibly can: TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT is to be filled with the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our life. **Colossians 3:4a; Galatians 2:20.** It means to be conformed to His image. **Romans 8:29**
- TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT is to have His life manifested in our mortal flesh. **2 Corinthians 4:10-11**
- Let's go back one more time to **Ephesians 4:24.** The Christian life is the life of Christ/the “new man” produced in each of us by the indwelling Holy Spirit Himself, and that life will become progressively spontaneous as we walk by faith. **Romans 8:2**
 - Eventually our words, our prayers, our lives will become spontaneous, unforced expressions of the life of Christ within. This is what Paul goes on to say will be the expression of the Spirit's filling.
- Some describe Paul's explanation here in verses 19-20 as “experiencing lightheartedness.” There is more to this than just “lighthearted days.”
 - Psalms here is a reference to the story of man's deliverance or mercy that has been received.
 - Hymns are declarations of how great someone or something is.
 - Spiritual songs, or a new song, are those that were composed by the Spirit's inspiration.
 - It's along the same lines as what Paul wrote in **Colossians 3:1-3.**
- These are expressions of giving honor, glory, and praise for the fulfillment of the eternal plan of redemption.

Verse 21 contains the last characteristic that expresses the Holy Spirit's filling and that is submitting to one another in the fear of God.

- This submitting one to another has no reference to one being superior or inferior. It actually implies that both parties are equal but submit to the differing roles and positions that are held in order to reach a common goal.
- That it is to be done "in the fear of God" means that it's motivated by Who God is, what His will is, and the design for us as new creations in Christ.
 - A prime example is the body of Christ and the need to recognize and submit to one another according to various roles and giftedness.
 - Another example of this Paul covers in the next verses.
 - In the rest of the chapter gives examples of submitting to one another that are in accordance with God's call and design.

C. Review

Ephesians 4:22-24 – Put off/Put on

Verses 25-32: – Stop lying, stop being angry, stop stealing, stop the corrupt communications, stop grieving the Holy Spirit, stop being bitter.

Ephesians 5:1-18 – Walk in love, walk as children of light, walk in wisdom, walk/be filled by the Spirit.

With all this as background, it's interesting where Paul now goes in the rest of this chapter.

Ephesians 5:22-24

Paul begins this section by describing what "children of light" marriages are designed to look like. He begins by saying that wives are to be subject to their husbands in the same way they would be subject unto the Lord.

- God established man as the head of woman (**I Corinthians 11:3**) as well as her provider and protector; therefore, she is to submit to the authority that God has placed over her.
- Verse 24 clearly states that she is to submit to her husband in everything. What if it contradicts the Word of God?
- Remember in Acts when the Pharisees commanded that the disciples not proclaim Christ? What did the disciples say?
- Let's read **Acts 5:28-29**. Just like this, wives should submit to their husbands in everything, except when it contradicts the Word of God.
- So, how will it be possible for a woman to submit to her husband as unto the Lord? Two things will motivate her:
 - Confident that she is a DEARLY LOVED child of God...
 - And walking as a “child of light.”

Ephesians 5:25-33

Paul now moves to the husband's side of the marriage and commands husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the Church.

- Paul's instruction to husbands begins with giving Jesus' view and heart for the church. Because of His purpose for the church—that of bringing us into union with Himself—He loved us with a love that surpassed all knowledge and caused Him to die to Himself and give Himself for us.
- Therefore, Paul states that because a husband and wife have already been brought into union with one another, we should be motivated to love, cherish, and take care of her just as we would our own body.
 - That if a man identifies himself and his wife as truly being one flesh, then he will be enabled to love her as Christ loves the church, for no man hates his own body but cherishes it. Paul ties this same concept into the fact that we are one flesh in Christ.

The context here is walking as dearly beloved children of the light. This will take place by walking circumspectly in wisdom clearly understanding what the heart of God is like and what He delights in.

As He and the results of His fulfillment of the eternal plan of redemption become the focus of our hearts, the result is praising, honoring, and glorifying Him, as well as submission to one another according to design and purposes.

One of the most important expressions of that takes place within our marriage relationship, which has been designed to be an expression of Christ's relationship to the church.

EPHESIANS 6

A. Other relationships – Ephesians 6:1-9

It's important that we keep in mind the two main divisions of focus that we've identified for the book of Ephesians.

1. First is the “positional” focus of Chapters 1-3. Paul’s focus in this first half of the letter was all in terms of what is now true of us because of our new spiritual identity. What is true of us simply because we “IN CHRIST.”
2. The second half is Chapters 4-6. Paul’s focus in this section is in terms of our “daily condition,” or the living out of the Christian life. It’s extremely significant to note how Paul begins this section in Chapter 4, verse 1: ***“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.”***
 - Because the facts of our new spiritual identity that he laid out in Chapters 1-3 are true, THEREFORE, live a life that reflects who you are spiritually. Chapters 4-6 are instruction and description of the daily life that reflects who we are spiritually in Christ.
 - First was the explanation of the spiritual gifts that are given to the church in order for discipleship and the establishment in the faith to take place SO THAT (beginning in verse 17 of Chapter 4) the old man can be put off (conditionally) and the new man put on (conditionally) on a daily basis. Verse 25 states we won’t live lives that grieve the Holy Spirit but that are in tune with what He is working to accomplish. If this discipleship and the putting off of the old and putting on of the new does NOT take place, then “walking in a manner that is worthy of our calling” will be impossible.
 - Then in Chapter 5 is the encouragement to walk in love, light, and wisdom and what that will look like in verses 1-21. In verses 22-33, Paul specifically

addresses husband/wife relationships and the marriage and relating to one another that reflects who we are in Christ. Two things are needed to make the living out of this possible. One was already accomplished by grace and through Christ (our spiritual re-creation that gave us a new spiritual identity), and the second must be carried out by faith (in the facts of our new spiritual identity) on a daily basis. That is the “putting on of the new and putting off of the old on a daily basis” by faith.

- Then we come to Chapter 6. Here Paul reveals two more relationship contexts in which it’s important for believers to be walking in light of who they are in Christ: the parent/child relationship and the employer/employee relationship.

B. Parent - child relationship

Ephesians 6:1-4

We can’t forget our context here of Paul encouraging believers to put off the old and put on the new and walk in a manner that is worthy of their calling.

- So in terms of believing children, or kids that have accepted Jesus as their Savior. Paul focuses on two main things that would be a reflection of who they are in Christ.
 1. *“Obey your parents in the Lord.”* The word for “obey” here is different than the word “submit” used for wives in Chapter 5. The wife occupies a place of equality with her husband and submission is merely a question of headship.
 - However, here in Chapter 6, the child is to obey as a servant is to obey. The same word is used in verse 5.
 - Disobedience is one of the last forms of lawlessness to occur on earth. **2 Tim. 3:1-2**
 - Disobedience to parents characterizes the last days.
 - Rejecting parental authority is very common today.

2. Secondly, Paul said that children are to “*honor your father and mother.*”
 - **Ephesians 6:2-3:** This promise originally applied to the Jews as they entered Canaan (**Exodus 20:12**), but here Paul applies it to believers today.
 - It’s interesting that he substitutes “earth for land” and tells us that the Christian child who honors his parents can expect two things:
 - It will be well for him.
 - He will live long on the earth.
 - Now this does not mean that everyone who dies young did not honor his or her parents. Paul was simply stating a principle that when a child obeys his parents in the Lord, he will escape a good deal of sin and danger and therefore avoid the things that will shorten one’s life.
 - But life is not measured merely by quantity but also by quality, and Paul very clearly states that an obedient child’s life will go well/be of good quality.
 - Many times, parents pressure their children to obey, and often they do obey under pressure, but their attitude is one of disrespect. God says children are not only to obey, but they are to do it with the right attitude.
 - Remember, by nature a child is selfish and does not want to obey and honor his parents. Somehow, we parents think that they should be able to obey and honor us just because we say so.
 - We need to see the fact that Paul doesn’t just put all the responsibility for being obedient upon the child. Obviously, children need to be disciplined.
 - The same facts of the faith that need to be in place for us to walk in a manner that is worthy of our calling as adults must also be in place in the lives of children in order for them to truly be able to obey and honor their parents.
 - The role and responsibility for that discipleship, Paul places solely upon the fathers in verse 4.

Ephesians 6:4

If left to themselves, believing children will live fleshly rebellious lives. Therefore, like EVERY believer, it is necessary that they too are clearly discipled in the truth. The responsibility for that discipleship is placed squarely upon the parents, especially the father. Following are some examples from the Bible of fathers who didn't disciple their children well:

- David pampered Absalom and the result was tragic; Eli failed to discipline his sons, and they brought disgrace upon his name and defeat to his nation. Isaac favored Esau, while his wife's favorite was Jacob and it resulted in a divided home. Jacob did the same with his son Joseph, and again there was a division in the family.

Paul says fathers are not to provoke their children to wrath. This comes back to the importance of fathers to be, first and foremost, “walking in a manner that is worthy of their calling” and by faith “putting off the old and on the new.”

- If fathers are walking in the flesh in their own daily lives, then the training and discipleship of their children is going to be carried out in the flesh and not the spirit.
 - It will then be self-centered, obedience focused and not relationship focused, and the result will be a provocation unto wrath rather than a true discipling into learning to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit.
 - When we as parents seek to train our children while walking in the flesh, we respond to them in the flesh, which will often activate their flesh, causing anger and bitterness.
 - Also in the flesh, we can be overprotective and not allow our child the freedom to fail; we can be impatient and demanding and speak carelessly and roughly, instead of lovingly and carefully. We can threaten and harass and be too severe in our punishment. These are all different characteristics

that can and will be true of our child training in the flesh. All of these things will “provoke our children to anger, rather than provoke them to love and good deeds” (**Hebrews 10:24**).

- Furthermore, as fathers and mothers walk in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit will enable us to teach our children, by example, to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh.
 - When we walk in the flesh, we will only be teaching our children to do the same. (John 3:6)
- In verse 4, Paul states what the focus of our discipleship needs to be: “the training and admonition of the Lord.”
 - This isn’t just about obedience. It’s first and foremost about the relationship. “We love because He first loved us,” and the same will be true of children.
 - When a child is first born, do the parents start commanding the child to be obedient within their first week? Of course not. Not even within the first number of months. It takes at least 5-6 months of parents “first loving” their child before the child can even learn what the simple command of “no” means.
 - The heart and foundation of “bringing them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” is first knowing God, Who He is, what He is like, and His heart for them.

D. Christian servants/masters OR employee/employer

Ephesians 6:5-9

The next relationship context Paul addresses where there is a need for our lives to reflect who we are spiritually in Christ is in regard to our employment relations. Most of humanity falls into one category or the other—either we are an employer or an employee. Either we hire others or we have been hired by someone.

When Paul wrote the book of Ephesians, it was commonplace for there to be masters and slaves. Today, most of our societies function with employers and employees.

- First Paul describes from the standpoint of being an employee/servant how our new spiritual identity should be reflected in the work we have been hired to do.
 - Obedient with a sincere heart (as to Christ): Paul tells us in verse 6 that this means we don't work hard and faithfully only when we think our boss is looking. Instead we do this at all times as unto the Lord and not unto men. A really good cross reference for this is **Col.3:22-25. Our real reward doesn't come from any employer, but it will ultimately come from the Lord, because we are in Christ.**

Verse 9: Just as it's important for us as employees or servants to "walk in a manner that is worthy of our calling" in the context of our work that we have been hired to do, so it is for those who are the employer or master.

- The Christian faith does not bring harmony/unity by erasing social positions. Servants are still servants when they trust Christ, and masters are still masters. As the children of God, both are called to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh.
- Employers should remember that they are not more important to God than their employees but that God sees us all alike.
 - Therefore, because the employee is one who God loves, he should be treated accordingly.

E. The Whole Armor of God

In order to correctly understand the meaning of what Paul intended in the rest of this chapter, it's really crucial for us to keep the context in view.

1. Chapters 1-3: We are a new creation with a new spiritual identity with a whole host of things that are now true of us.
2. Chapter 4: We are called to walk or live out our lives in such a way that reflects our new spiritual identity by “putting off the old and putting on the new” by faith on a daily basis.
3. Chapters 5-6:9: Description of what “putting off the old and putting on the new” will look like in the context of various relationships.

With that progression in view, being told to “put off the old and put on the new” can be vague and it can have a different meaning to different people. Beginning in verse 10 and proceeding through the rest of the chapter, Paul gets detailed and specific about where the enabling power to live out his instruction will come from.

Ephesians 6:10-24

Verse 10: This word “power” means the presence of God’s inherent power, that God is omnipotent.

- His “might” then is strength that has prevailed manifestly and demonstratively—God’s strength that has been revealed or manifested.
 - So, in the context of what Paul wrote to the Ephesian church in this letter, where do we see God’s “power and might” revealed? Chapters 1-3 are where Paul describes our new spiritual identity and much of what it consists of.
- When Paul tells us to “be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,” what exactly is he exhorting us to? Obedience? Faithfulness? Exerting more effort? No, FAITH!!
 - We are to have faith in what God has done spiritually in our lives by His power and might!!!

Verses 11-13: Beginning in verse 11, Paul tells us why it's important that we "put on the whole armor of God" by faith, and that is so that we can "stand against" the wiles of the devil.

- "Put on" so that you can stand against Satan's methods, or technical procedures against a subject. "Stand against" means that we can remain firm and not give way to Satan's methods.

Verse 12: Paul goes on to explain that we don't "wrestle against flesh and blood." Our battle is not against flesh and blood. So, what is the battle that Paul is specifically talking about here?

- Again, what is our context? Paul has exhorted believers in this letter from Chapter 4 on to:
 - Walk in a manner that is worthy of our calling.
 - Walk in love, light, and wisdom.
 - Put off the old and put on the new in our marriages, parent-child relationships, and employer-employee relationships.
 - Instructions on how we are to treat one another and even how we view our enemies.
- So, is it possible for us to just decide to do these things? Are these things easy to live out faithfully on a daily basis? No, it's a battle! This is the battle that Paul is talking about.
 - The battle is learning to walk less in the flesh and more in the spirit.
 - This is a spiritual battle and not a physical one. Our flesh often becomes manifested physically towards specific people who hurt or offend us, but our battle is not with that person, it's spiritual.
 - Satan and his cohorts seek to lie and deceive us about the circumstances we face and the battle is in terms of us continuing to appropriate the truths and facts that are true of our new spiritual identity rather than becoming sidetracked by the circumstances and the lies surrounding them.

Verse 13: Here Paul talks about an “evil day.” Remember Satan’s temptation of Jesus in **Matthew 4**? After Jesus withstood his three temptations, the Devil left him for a more opportune time.

- That’s the “evil day” that I think Paul is talking about here—any day or time that Satan or the demons view as an opportune time to seek to lie and deceive us. Usually, this will have to do with circumstances that they know activates our flesh. This could be lust, anger, pride, regret, guilt, condemnation etc.
- Paul says that it’s only the putting on the whole armor of God that will enable us to stand firm and not give in or give way during those “opportune times.”

Verse 14: Paul begins to describe what the whole armor of God consists of and how it’s put on.

- First of all, it’s based in the truth. Girding up the loins speaks of preparedness. Middle Easterners wear loose clothing. When they are going to run or work, they bind up or gird up their clothing so it’s not hanging in the way.
- Girding ourselves up with truth prepares us for faith is the truth because real faith is founded upon the truth. The other pieces of armor are facts that are TRUE about us. We must be girded with the truth of those facts in order to put them on, or to be resting in the reality of them.
- Next is the “breastplate of righteousness.” The breastplate protected the vital organs. It guarded the heart. The breastplate of righteousness speaks of the fact that we have been declared righteous. We have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ.
 - One of Satan’s wiles is to tempt us to sin and then condemn us for sinning. Have faith in the fact that being declared righteous will

prevent us from believing his lies of accusation and the discouragement that will result from it.

- Who believes that he has been declared righteous.
Romans 8:1

Verse 15: Feet shod with the “preparation of the gospel of peace” speaks more of standing on a firm foundation than it does of us going anywhere. It means standing firm on the foundation of the gospel and the peace we have with God because of Jesus’ fulfillment of the gospel.

- To put it simply, we are standing firm (by faith) on the results of the Jesus’ finished work. **Romans 5:1-2**

Verse 16: Faith is how we appropriate or access every aspect of our salvation. It’s how every spiritual blessing that we’ve received in the heavenlies affects our daily lives here and now. It’s how we begin to take possession of those spiritual blessings right now while still living in a fallen world in fallen fleshly bodies.

- Again, the wiles of the devil are lies and deceit and not according to the truth. Faith in the facts is what will quench his fiery darts that are all lies and he seeks to deceive us from the truth.

Verse 17: Here we are told to put on the helmet of salvation. This refers to faith in the facts of all that our salvation entails.

- Justification, sanctification, glorification—every part is all by grace and through Christ. We must first know these facts in order to become convinced of them, and we must become convinced of them in order for it to become faith!! This will lead us to the “sword of the Spirit.”

The sword of the Spirit is the written word of God. Remember **1 Corinthians 2:12**. The Spirit of God was given to reveal to us all the things that we’ve been freely given by God. All requires faith in order to experience and benefit from them here and now. **Romans 10** says faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- So, it's the Holy Spirit who is using the word of God in our lives to reveal to us the things that we've been freely given by grace and as the result of Christ's finished work. The more He reveals these things to us, the more we are confident in the reality that it's true. Faith in these things then becomes both the helmet of our salvation and the shield that quenches all the fiery darts.

Verses 18-19: These verses are often used to go off track and talk about prayer in general that may be true, but I think it's important that we continue to keep the context of Paul's exhortation in view here.

- Following the context of Paul's teaching, I believe that he was being much more specific about what to be praying for and that it's in the context of him encouraging us to be strong in the Lord and the call to put on the whole armor of God. Fulfilling these commands is directly determined by our becoming convinced of the realities of all we've been given by grace and through Christ.
 - Therefore, it's growing in the knowledge of and becoming more convinced of these things that Paul is telling us to be praying always in all prayer and supplication not only for ourselves but for all the saints as well!
- He says we are to watch "there unto" with all perseverance and supplications for all the saints. There unto refers to the things above that he was laying out. We are to watch and pray with all perseverance to make sure that our brothers and sisters in Christ are also growing in the knowledge of and appropriation of these truths as well.
- When Paul talks about praying always, praying without ceasing, I believe he means our communication with God that flows out of our relationship with Him. An example is of our children's communication with us as parents.
 - The only time our children become formal in their communications is when they are communicating with someone that they don't know very well. What

does that tell you about our prayer to God? We often sound like we are talking to someone we don't know very well.

- “Supplication in the Spirit” simply means to pray according to the will of the Holy Spirit. Like praying in Jesus’ name. For something to be done in His name, it must be something that is according to His will.
 - Again, following the context of what Paul was teaching in this passage, if the Spirit was given to us all the things we’ve been freely given by God, then we know without a doubt that all prayer and supplication that has to do with asking God to reveal these truths more and more to us is indeed prayer that is according to the will of the Holy Spirit.

In one sense, the whole “armor of God” is a picture of Jesus:

- **John 14:6** – “I am the truth.” (Gird loins with truth, verse 14a)
- **2 Corinthians 5:21** – He is our righteousness. (Breastplate of righteousness, verse 14b)
- **Ephesians 2:14** – He is our peace. (Shoes of the gospel of peace, verse 15)
- **Galatians 2:20** – Faith in Him. (Shield of faith, verse 16)
- **Luke 2:30** – He is our salvation. (Helmet of salvation, verse 17a)
- **John 1:1, 14** – He is the word of God. (Sword of the Spirit, verse 17b)
- **Remember Ephesians 4:24** – *“Put on the ‘new man.’ Put on the Lord Jesus Christ who is truth, He is our righteousness, our peace, our salvation.”* **1 Corinthians 1:30**

- Salvation is all about Jesus; therefore, to put on the helmet of salvation is to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.
- It's amazing to see how verses 14-17 are so fully intertwined. First, the Holy Spirit girds us about with the TRUTH, which is Christ, the living Word of God. (He places us in Christ). He reveals to us our position before God, totally righteous and at perfect peace; He convinces us of our complete salvation from sin, death, Satan, and punishment and then uses the written Word of God (Jesus Christ) in our lives to cause us to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Paul asked the Ephesians believers to pray for him, that God would impart to him the words and the boldness to continue proclaiming the gospel.
- It's interesting to note that at the time of writing this prayer request, Paul was in prison because of the gospel.

Verse 21: Tychicus may have taken this letter to the Ephesians. He was a man who had traveled with Paul and had helped in teaching God's Word to the churches that had been established.

Verses 23-24: Peace, love, and faith come only from God; as we walk in the Spirit, we will experience it.

Conclusion

If we were to boil down this whole book of Ephesians to one key word, that word would be “grace,” God’s unmerited favor.

- He has done it **all** for us.
- As Paul points out in the book, there we were, a wretched, hopelessly sinful, and condemned human race that God chose to predetermine an eternal plan of redemption for even before the foundations of the world. He bought us out of the slave market of sin with the price of His own blood; then He blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places and empowered us to walk in love and stand in victory.
- It’s all a gift...a free gift...and we appropriate/take possession of it by faith.

Let’s review the “SIT,” “WALK,” and “STAND” principles that we began with in the introduction.

SIT - Ephesians 1-3

- In the first section of the letter, we see the word SIT which is the key to that section. **Ephesians 1:20; 2:6.** God made Jesus SIT and made us SIT with Him. The main concept that “sitting” implies completion and perfection.
- The true Christian life does not begin with walking; it begins with **SITTING**—trusting and resting.
- It really begins with a man, **SEATED** by faith, together with Christ in the heavens.

- So, at the beginning of Ephesians, we are invited to **SIT** and rest in our position and enjoy (depend upon) all that God has done for us. **Ephesians 1:16-19**

WALK - Ephesians 4:1-6-9

Five times in the book of Ephesians we are told to WALK.

- **Ephesians 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15**
- Walking is nothing more than living in such a way that is in line with who we already are, who we are as a new spiritual identity.
- We just can't too strongly emphasize that the real Christian life begins with sitting and resting...but it doesn't end there. **SITTING IS ALWAYS FOLLOWED BY WALKING.**
- **SITTING** describes our position with Christ in the heavenlies.
- **WALKING** is the practical out-working of faith in our heavenly position.

The standard is too high.

- We are told to **WALK** with long suffering (patience), forbearing (tolerating) one another, putting away falsehood, speaking the truth each one with his neighbor, be angry and sin not, steal no more, let all bitterness be put away, be kind, forgiving one another, submitting one to another, provoke not.
- Are you thinking what I am thinking?
- We can't do all these things. These are impossible demands.
- The problem is that most people skip over the “sitting” of Chapters 1-3 and jump right to the walking of Chapter 4.
- Most Christians totally have the wrong view of living the Christian life. This is why the natural thought is “I can't possibly DO those things.”

- This is the why Paul first spent three chapters emphasizing our spiritual identity. Consider your physical identity for a moment—how hard is it for you to live out who you are? How hard is it for you to live as a Kenyan, Chinese, Ecuadorian, South African man or woman?
- Our problem is that we are viewing ourselves in light of our actions and not in light of the spiritual identity that we have received because of the blood of Christ.

STAND - Ephesians 6:10-2

Every Christian must learn to “STAND.”

- Christian experience begins with **SITTING** and leads to **WALKING**, but it does not end there.
- Every Christian must learn to stand before the enemy. **Ephesians 6:10-14a**

STAND or HOLD YOUR GROUND

- The word **STAND** here in **Ephesians 6** actually means to “hold your ground.”
- It implies that the ground disputed by the enemy is already God’s and therefore is ours.
- We don’t need to fight to obtain it; we only need to, by faith, hold our ground. **2 Chronicles 20:1-17** (a physical picture of spiritual truth)
- However, only those who **SIT** can **STAND**. Our power for **STANDING**, as for **WALKING**, lies in our having first been made to **SIT** together with Christ.
- If we Christians are not **SITTING**—resting, abiding in the Lord by faith—we cannot hope to **WALK** or **STAND**. **Exodus 14:13-14**



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