



Institute Bible Study Series

EPHESIANS

An Inductive Study



Institute



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

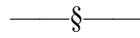
1.	Preface to the Institute Bible Studies Series	v
2.	A Brief Overview of Ephesians	vii
3.	Lesson 1: Praise for Spiritual Blessings (1:1–14)	1
4.	Lesson 2: Prayer for Spiritual Enlightenment (1:15–23)	9
5.	Lesson 3: New Life in Christ: From Death to Life (2:1–10)	17
6.	Lesson 4: New Community in Christ: From Division to Unity (2:11–22)	25
7.	Lesson 5: Paul’s Ministry to the Gentiles (3:1–13)	33
8.	Lesson 6: Prayer for Inner Strengthening (3:14–21)	41
9.	Lesson 7: Unity in the Body of Christ (4:1–16)	49
10.	Lesson 8: The New Life Contrasted with the Old (4:17–32)	57
11.	Lesson 9: Living in Love and Light (5:1–21)	65
12.	Lesson 10: Relationships in the Christian Household (5:22–6:9)	73
13.	Lesson 11: Spiritual Warfare (6:10–20)	81
14.	Lesson 12: Closing Remarks (6:21–24)	89
15.	Bibliography	97

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

—Ephesians 4:15–16

P R E F A C E

TO THE INSTITUTE BIBLE STUDY SERIES



Purpose

In Ps 16:11 David writes of God, “You make known to me the path of life, in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” This God of whom David speaks has written a book, the Bible, so that we might know him and experience this “fullness of joy” found only in his presence. The purpose of this series of studies is not only to help you behold God in the pages of Scripture, but also to equip you to read, study, and rightly apply the Bible on your own to all of life. Our desire is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who can feed themselves on the rich banquet that is God’s Word.

The Process

Many come to the Bible unsure of where to start. You may feel intimidated by the gap in culture and time between now and when the Bible was written. Maybe you are unsure of your ability to understand what is written. Perhaps you come to the Bible with preconceived ideas of what is in a text or simply to look for a quick point of application to help get you through the day. We have intentionally designed these studies to help you slow down and see what the text actually says. In fact, that is the *first* place to start when you study the Bible. We must first understand what a text *says* before we can understand what it *means*. And only after we have considered what it *means* can we then rightly know how it *applies*. Think of the Bible study process in three phases:

- *Observation*: What does the passage say?
- *Interpretation*: What does the passage mean?
- *Application*: What affect ought this to have?

As you look first to *observe* a passage, you want to slow down enough to notice the actual words that are being used. Are there any key theological ideas in the text? Who is the author? Who is the audience? What connecting words are present? Are certain words or phrases repeated? What arguments are made? What is the flow of the passage?

Once you have observed these textual details

then you can start to *interpret* them by putting the different pieces together. What is the relationship between different propositions? How does this passage relate to what is taught in Scripture elsewhere? Where does this passage fit within the grand story of redemption that runs through the Scriptures from beginning to end? What is the author’s main point in the passage?

Only when you have spent time *observing* the details of a passage and then putting those details together to rightly *interpret* the author’s intent can you then *apply* what you have discovered the passage to teach. In light of what you now understand the author’s intended point and meaning to be, you’re in a position to ask how might the passage bear on your faith and practice, in what you believe and how you are to live. What promises are there that you might trust in? What commands are there to obey? How does the truth of the passage lead you to worship?

Also, as you go through this process of studying a text, know that you are not alone. As Christians, we have the Holy Spirit within us helping us come to know his Word and walk in its truth. Paul tells us, “For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit

who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God” (1 Cor 2:10–12). In fact, Jesus himself prayed for you that you would not only know the truth of his Word but be transformed by it. We read his prayer in John 17:17, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”

How To Use These Studies

These guides are designed to help you walk through a book of the Bible in a faithful and careful way. We have also built into these studies several different components that each serve a distinct purpose. Each week you will have individual homework questions that will help you *observe*, *interpret*, and *apply* the week’s passage. Make sure you spend some time working through the assigned passage and these questions before you meet with your study group. If you are not able to answer all the questions or have additional questions as you read the text, that is not a problem. Wrestle with those questions. Don’t feel the need to quickly resolve the tension, but diligently work to make sense of what you are reading.

Then, when you gather with your study group, you each will come having already spent some time individually working through the text which

will allow you to use your discussion time to confirm, correct, and sharpen your understanding of the passage. Bible study is best done in community and so this time will allow you see what others have learned from their time in the passage that week. You will also work together as a group to *synthesize* what you have read and studied with the aim of establishing a clear understanding of the point of the text.

Finally, part of the class time will be devoted to *instruction*. A teacher will walk through the passage and help to further clarify any lingering questions, reinforce the main point of the text, and point to faithful ways the text might apply.

The Bible is God’s revelation of himself to us. As you begin this study, pray that God would give you grace to look upon him through the pages of Scripture.

“O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you” (Ps 63:1–3).

Josh Price
Series Editor

EPHESIANS

A Brief Introduction

B. Spencer Haygood

Paul's letter to the Ephesian church¹ is relatively brief—2,422 words across various scholarly editions of the Greek text, divided into only 155 verses in our English translations. It takes about fourteen minutes to read the entire letter aloud. However, its brevity does not diminish its significance. Its small size belies its widely recognized importance. New Testament professor Klyne Snodgrass considers it as consequential as “the Psalms, the Gospel of John, and Romans ... in shaping the life and thought of Christians.”² Biblical scholar Raymond Brown agreed, stating, “Among the Pauline Writings, only Romans can match Ephesians as a candidate for exercising the most influence on Christian thought and spirituality.”³ The Anglican philologist F. W. Farrar regarded it as “the most sublime, the most profound, the most advanced and final utterance of St. Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles.”⁴ The poet-philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge counted it among “one of the divinest compositions of man.”⁵ The Australian theologian Peter O'Brien considers it “one of the most significant documents ever written.”⁶ And the esteemed Southern Baptist professor of missions W. O. Carver deemed it “the greatest piece of writing in all history.”⁷

All hyperbole aside, the letter's literary beauty, thematic breadth, theological depth, redemptive scope, pastoral wisdom, unifying vision, and transformative hope are indisputable, warranting its praise and love. Yet at the heart of its immense value and power lies one staggering truth: *it is the very Word of the living and true God!* As Scripture, the letter to the Ephesians is “breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,” so that we “may be

¹ Despite the authorship of Ephesians being hotly debated among New Testament scholars at large, few evangelicals doubt that it was written by Paul the apostle. And there are many good reasons for thinking so. See the discussion in Clint E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Clint E. Arnold, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2010), 46–50.

² Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, The NIV Application Commentary, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2009), 17.

³ Raymond Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Anchor Bible Reference Library, (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1997), 620.

⁴ F. W. Farrar, *The Messages of the Books: Being Discourses and Notes on the Books of the New Testament* (New York, NY: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1885), 328.

⁵ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Specimens of the Table Talk of the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: John Murray, 1858), 82.

⁶ Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, ed. D. A. Carson, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 1.

⁷ W. O. Carver, *The Glory of God in the Christian Calling* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1949), 3.

complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16–17). As Scripture, it “cannot be broken” (John 10:35). It remains unwaveringly strong and unfailingly reliable, regardless of circumstances. Nothing in all the created order can annul, disarm, or overrule it. It is “a lamp to [our] feet and a light to [our] path” (Psa 119:105). As Scripture, it is “living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4:12). It is the Word of him who “reigns forever,” whose “throne endures to all generations” (Lam 5:19). “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever” (Isa 40:8). Jesus himself has told us, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Matt 24:35). Here lies the only safe place! As the Spirit of God invites us to anchor our lives in the Word of truth and discover all we need for “life and godliness” (2 Pet 1:3), let us continue to confess with trusting hearts: “Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens” (Psa 119:89), and pray, “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law” (Psa 119:18). If we abide in the Word, we “will know the truth, and the truth will set [us] free” (John 8:31–32).

Historical-Cultural-Religious Context

Of course, God’s Word didn’t simply drop from heaven fully formed. Each biblical writing was produced within a specific historical and cultural context. Every book was shaped not only by its human author and audience but also, to some extent, by the time in which it was written. Factors such as geographical location, political climate, cultural practices, societal norms, and religious beliefs, along with the particular circumstances that prompted its composition, all played a role. This means that the God-breathed letter of Ephesians is rooted in the real lives of real people in a real world, facing many of the same troubles, trials, challenges, questions, decisions, dangers, and outcomes that we encounter today. Therefore, taking a moment to consider the letter’s historical and cultural context serves several crucial purposes:

1. It allows us to interpret the text more accurately by gathering essential background information that clarifies the author’s intent, the original audience, and the specific issues or concerns being addressed.
2. It prevents us from imposing modern ideas and assumptions onto the text, which can lead to *anachronistic* interpretations⁸ that do not reflect the author’s original meaning.
3. It helps us identify literary devices, such as idioms, metaphors, and other figures of speech rooted in ancient Near Eastern or Greco-Roman culture, allowing

⁸ By “anachronistic interpretations,” I refer to the interpretive malpractice known as “eisegesis,” which involves reading modern assumptions, cultural values, contemporary concepts, and so on back *into* the ancient text, rather than drawing *out* of the text what Paul actually meant in his first-century context.

us to read and understand the text as intended.

4. It often highlights the theological significance of a passage by addressing the specific concerns and challenges faced by the original audience.

All these considerations are essential elements for effectively understanding and applying biblical teachings and principles in our lives. If we cannot determine what the text actually *means* (the author's intent), we will never uncover its *significance* for us.

A Word About the Letters from Prison

Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossae were *not* neighboring cities. Ephesus was a major Greek city located on the western coast of the Roman province of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). Approximately 120 miles southeast of Ephesus, in the Lycus Valley of Asia Minor, lay the city of Colossae, a journey of 4 to 5 days from Ephesus. In the opposite direction, Philippi was situated 450 to 550 miles northwest of Ephesus, in the Roman province of Macedonia in northern Greece, requiring a journey of 10 to 12 days, depending on the route taken. Paul founded the church in Philippi during his second missionary journey (generally dated to AD 49–52) and established the church in Ephesus on his third missionary journey (generally dated between AD 53–58). During those same years, the church in Colossae was likely founded by Epaphras, a partner of Paul in the work of the gospel (mentioned only in Col 1:7; 4:12; Philem 1:23).

During the years AD 60–62, while imprisoned in Rome, Paul wrote these “Prison Epistles”—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Three of the letters are addressed to “the saints” in their respective cities,⁹ while one is primarily directed to an individual among the saints in Colossae.¹⁰

These letters share thematic similarities that reflect Paul's ministry and theological perspective while he was imprisoned for the gospel (Eph 6:20; Phil 1:13–14; Col 4:18). Despite his chains, they convey (1) *remarkable joy*, testifying to the sufficiency of Christ; (2) *spiritual liberty*, as his chains had “served to advance the gospel”; (3) *counter-cultural authority*, with his chains becoming his credentials; and (4) *doctrinal depth*, as the Lord had opened expansive horizons of truth to him during his confinement.

In *Ephesians* and *Colossians*, Paul explores the cosmic significance of Christ's lordship and the mystery of the church as the body of Christ. *Philippians* overflows with expressions of joy amidst suffering and exhortations to humble service. Although *Philemon* is the briefest of the four letters, it powerfully applies gospel principles to social

⁹ “To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus” (Eph 1:1b); “To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi” (Phil 1:1b); “To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae” (Col 1:2a).

¹⁰ This individual is Philemon himself, the main addressee and likely the homeowner and head of the household. Others addressed secondarily include Apphia, Archippus, and the entire house church that met in Philemon's home (Philem 1:1–2).

relationships, as Paul appeals for the restoration of a runaway slave as a brother in Christ. Together, these prison letters illustrate how Paul's physical constraints became an occasion for pastoral ministry, allowing him to unpack and apply some of the most profound theological implications of Christ's supremacy and the nature of Christian community.

Thus, these "prison epistles" present a striking paradox. The apostle, known for his relentless movement and tireless journeys, found his ministry enriched and deepened during a period of forced stillness. His chains didn't halt his apostolic work. Instead, they transformed it into something even more strategic—a ministry of delegation and encouragement that emphasized persuasion over command and focused on the new identity of believers and the church "in Christ."¹¹ The irony is both rich and unmistakable. Satan's attempt to silence the gospel's messenger to the Gentiles through imprisonment ultimately provided Paul with the quiet needed to explore and express the gospel's deepest mysteries. The man who had established churches across the Mediterranean now nurtured them through letters that revealed Christ's supremacy, the believer's union with him, salvation by grace through faith, reconciliation, spiritual warfare, and the church's cosmic significance in the "mission of God" (*missio Dei*).

When read together, Paul's "prison letters" present a unified vision of cosmic transformation grounded in Christ's supreme authority and expressed through the church's unity and love. They illustrate that the gospel is both deeply personal and cosmically significant. Furthermore, the prison context in which these letters were written serves as a powerful reminder that God's purposes advance not through human strength and freedom, but through divine power working in and through human weakness and limitation—a truth Paul had learned early on (2 Cor 12:9–10).

The City of Ephesus

At the time Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, the city was one of the most magnificent in the Roman Empire, a thriving urban center and the premier metropolis of the province of Asia.¹²

- **Geographic and Commercial Importance.** The city was situated at the mouth of the Cayster River on the western coast of Asia Minor, serving as

¹¹ "In Christ" appears a dozen times in Ephesians alone (1:1, 3, 12, 20; 2:6–7, 10, 13; 3:6, 11, 21; 4:32), is implied nine more times in the phrase "in him" (1:4, 7, 10–11, 13; 2:22; 3:12; 4:21), and once more by "in himself" (1:9).

¹² See, e.g., Mitchell G. Reddish, "Ephesus," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. Chad Brand, Charles Draper and Archie England (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2003). Campbell calls it a "regional hub" and the "'mother city' for Western Asia Minor." See Constantine R. Campbell, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, ed. D. A. Carson, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2023), 14.

one of the empire's most important commercial hubs connecting the eastern provinces to Rome. Ships from across the Mediterranean docked in its harbor, allowing goods from Mesopotamia, Persia, and beyond to flow westward toward Rome. Regularly arriving caravans brought spices, textiles, precious metals, and other exotic merchandise, which were then loaded onto ships bound for various ports across the Mediterranean.

Believers in Ephesus, then, were daily navigating a diverse, cosmopolitan environment where social divisions were constantly visible, where material prosperity was defining, but also where gospel opportunities abounded. Paul's themes of unity in Christ across ethnic and social divisions, the "riches" believers possess in Christ, and the church as God's means for displaying his wisdom to "the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (3:10) would have resonated powerfully with the church.

- **Urban Development and Architecture.** By the time Paul wrote his letter, Ephesus had been extensively developed under Roman patronage. The city featured a sophisticated, but modified, grid layout¹³ with marble-paved streets, some of which were illuminated at night—a luxury few ancient cities enjoyed. The main thoroughfare, the *Arcadian Way*, stretched nearly half a mile from the theater to the harbor, lined with columns and adorned with statues.



Figure 1. The Arcadian Way

Public buildings showcased Roman architectural brilliance. The theater (*theatron*), carved into the slope of Mount Pion, could seat 24,000 spectators and was the largest in Asia Minor. This location was the site of the riot described in Acts 19:23–41, when silversmiths who made shrines of Artemis protested against Paul's preaching of the gospel, which they thought threatened their livelihood.

The city also boasted impressive public baths, gymnasiums, and a stadium where athletic competitions were held. The marketplace (*agora*) bustled with

¹³ Called the "Hippodamian Design," an urban planning style named after Hippodamus of Miletus, an ancient Greek architect and urban planner. Ephesus incorporated this grid system, particularly evident in the layout of the "Terrace Houses" and public buildings. However, the city's development was also shaped by its natural topography, with major monuments such as the Temple of Artemis and the Theater positioned according to religious and practical considerations rather than strict adherence to the grid.

commercial activity, while multiple aqueducts provided fresh water for the metropolitan population of around 250,000 inhabitants, making it the fourth-largest city¹⁴ in the empire after Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch.

- **Religious Significance.** Ephesus was primarily dominated by the worship of Artemis, similar to but more popular than *Diana* of the Romans. Her temple, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, stood about a mile northeast of the city center. This massive structure measured 425 feet long by 220 feet wide and featured 127 columns, each standing 60 feet tall. The temple

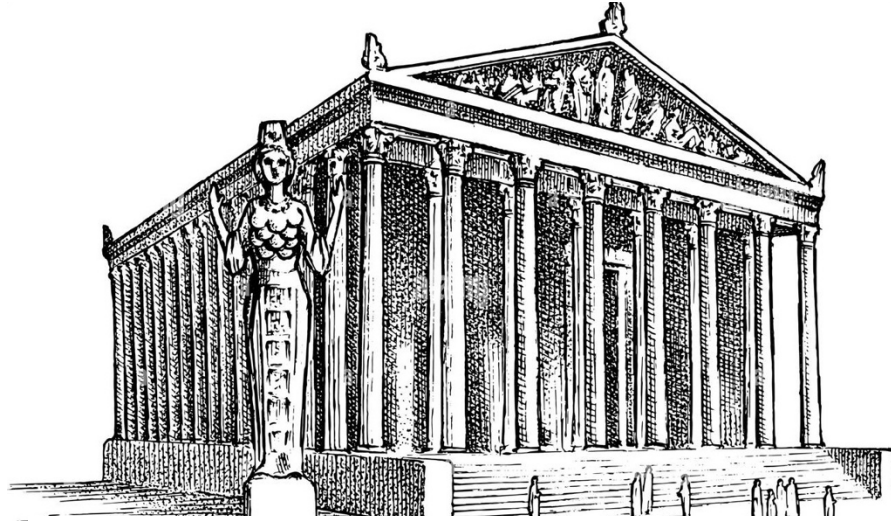


Figure 2. The Temple of Artemis

served not only as a religious center but also as a major banking institution where merchants, kings, and cities deposited funds for safekeeping.

The Artemis cult was central to Ephesian identity. The goddess was depicted as a many-breasted figure, likely symbolizing fertility, and also worshiped as the hunter-goddess.¹⁵ Annual festivals attracted visitors from across Asia Minor, generating substantial economic activity through tourism and the sale of votive objects and sacrificial animals.¹⁶

¹⁴ M. W. Wilson, *Biblical Turkey: A Guide to the Jewish and Christian Sites of Asia Minor* (Istanbul: Ege Yatinlari, 2010), 200. Some even say the “third-largest city.” Campbell, *Ephesians* (PNTC), 14.

¹⁵ Artemis was the “Greek goddess of the moon, the daughter of Zeus and Leto” who was “the patron deity of wild animals, protecting them from ruthless treatment and at the same time regulating the rules of hunting activities for humans.” See the article on “Artemis” in Chad Brand, Archie England and Charles W. Draper, *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary: The Complete Guide to Everything You Need to Know About the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2003), 121.

¹⁶ Artemis’ “relationship to the city could best be described as a covenant bond and thus she was often called ‘Artemis of the Ephesians’” (ἡ Ἀρτεμις Ἐφεσίων, *hē Artemis Ephesiōn*; Acts 19:28). Arnold, *Ephesians* (ECNT), 31.

Beyond the Artemis cult, Ephesus was home to temples dedicated to Serapis and Isis, shrines to various other Greco-Roman deities, and *The Prytaneion*, a sacred space for Hestia, the goddess of the hearth, where the city's sacred flame was maintained.¹⁷ The city also boasted a robust Jewish population, including at least one synagogue, where Paul preached during his earlier mission there (Acts 18:19; 19:8–10).

This diverse religious landscape helps explain why Paul emphasized themes of spiritual warfare and the supremacy of Christ in his letter. He was addressing believers surrounded by dominant spiritual influences behind which stood dark and deadly realities—"the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience," and "the rulers ... the authorities ... the cosmic powers over this present darkness ... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph 2:2; 6:12).

- **Social and Political Context.** Ephesus enjoyed the status of a free city within the Roman Empire, which granted it certain privileges of self-governance under its own council and assembly. However, ultimate authority rested with the Roman proconsul of Asia who resided there.

Social stratification was pronounced in Ephesus. Wealthy merchant families and Roman officials occupied luxurious villas on the hillsides, while the majority lived in crowded apartment buildings or modest dwellings. Slavery was widespread, with perhaps a third of the population enslaved. The city's cosmopolitan character contributed to a diverse population that included native Ionian Greeks, Romans, Jews, Egyptians, and people from throughout the empire.

Magic and occult practices flourished in Ephesus. The famous "Ephesian letters" were magical formulas inscribed on amulets and parchments, believed to provide protection and power. Acts 19:11–20 records that many Ephesian converts publicly burned their magical scrolls after embracing Christianity—scrolls valued at "fifty thousand pieces of silver,"¹⁸ indicating both the prevalence and economic significance of these pagan practices.

The Church in Ephesus

By the time Paul wrote this letter, the Ephesian church had been established for several years. He had himself spent nearly three years there (c. AD 52–55; Acts 20:31),

¹⁷ Arnold notes that there were as many as "fifty other gods and goddesses" who were worshiped in Ephesus. Arnold, *Ephesians* (ECNT), 33. Therefore, one of the significant challenges faced by the church was this religious pluralism and "the regional focus on magic, worship, and power." Campbell, *Ephesians* (PNTC), 15.

¹⁸ One silver coin represented roughly a day's wage for the average worker. Therefore, fifty thousand silver coins equate to 8,333 work weeks (at six days a week) or roughly 160 man-years of labor.

making it one of his longest missionary stays. The community likely met in house churches throughout the city, particularly in the homes of wealthier believers like Priscilla and Aquila.

The Ephesian church faced challenges from both Jewish opposition and the dominant pagan culture, particularly the economically powerful Artemis cult. The themes in Paul's letter—unity across ethnic divisions, spiritual warfare, and the renunciation of old pagan practices—directly addressed the realities this church faced in a city steeped in religious pluralism, economic stratification, and Roman imperial ideology.

When Paul wrote to the Ephesians about being “built together into a dwelling place for God” (Ephesians 2:22), the church would have instinctively contrasted this *spiritual* temple with the magnificent but *spiritually empty* Temple of Artemis towering over their city. Paul's emphasis on Christ's supremacy over all powers and authorities would have resonated powerfully with believers living under the shadow of Roman imperial might and pagan spiritual dominance.

This vibrant, complex urban environment forms the backdrop against which Paul's theological and ethical instructions to the Ephesian believers are to be understood and applied in our daily lives.

The Letter to the Ephesians

Again, the letter to the Ephesians is one of the most theologically rich texts in the New Testament. It provides deep insights into God's saving purposes, the nature of the church, sovereign grace, and Christian unity. Often regarded as the pinnacle of Pauline theology, this letter offers a magnificent vision of God's redemptive plan for the ages. “It clarifies the heart of the Christian faith, explores the dynamics of a personal relationship with Christ, sets forth God's overall plan for the church, and draws out the implications of what it means to live as a Christian.”¹⁹

Purpose

Unlike some of Paul's other letters, which are “occasional” (addressing specific church conflicts or crises like those we see in Corinthians or Galatians), Ephesians was likely a “circular” letter—meant to be passed from church to church throughout the region.²⁰ Rather than responding to specific and pressing problems, Paul offers a sweeping, comprehensive vision of what it means to live as the church in God's grand story of redemption.

This broader scope gives Ephesians a unique character and profound relevance for us today. Paul writes not as a “crisis manager” putting out church “fires,” but as a

¹⁹ Arnold, *Ephesians (ECNT)*, 21.

²⁰ Other churches in the immediate region would have included those in Hierapolis, Laodicea, Pergamum, Smyrna, Sardis, Thyatira, and Philadelphia.

master architect laying out the blueprint for Christian community. He addresses the fundamental questions of our faith. Who are we as God's people? How do we live together across racial, social, and cultural divides? What does it mean to be the body of Christ in a broken world? In answering these questions, Ephesians serves as both a theological foundation and a practical guide. It illustrates not only what we *believe* but also how those beliefs should transform every aspect of how we *live* together.

First, Paul's opening blessing and prayer (1:3–23) grounds believers in their true identity. His purpose is for them—and us—to understand our position “in Christ,” to marvel at the cosmic scope of God's redemptive plan, and to grasp how Jews and Gentiles have been reconciled into one new humanity. None of this is merely academic. When Paul writes that God has “raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (2:6), he sets before us our new spiritual reality and identity. This understanding of who we are “in Christ” serves as the foundation for how we should live.

Second, one of the distinctive purposes of Ephesians is to emphasize the unity of the church across *all* that would divide us. Focusing on the Jew-Gentile divide, Paul devotes significant attention to this truth, particularly in chapter 2:11–22, where he explains how Christ “has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility” (2:14). This isn't merely abstract or theoretical posturing. The early church grappled with significant ethnic/social/relational tensions. Thus, the question, e.g., of how Jews and Gentiles could form one community was a pressing reality. Paul argues that the church represents a new community—one he calls a “mystery” revealed in Christ—where previous ethnic and social boundaries no longer define identity or determine relationships.

Third, the second half of the letter (chapters 4–6) shifts from theological exposition to practical application. Here, Paul's purpose becomes explicitly ethical, guiding us on how to live out our faith in concrete ways. He addresses unity and maturity in the church (4:1–16), personal moral conduct (4:17–5:20), relationships within households (5:21–6:9), and preparation for spiritual conflict (6:10–20). This helps us understand how our new identity “in Christ” should transform *all* of our fundamental relations—with ourselves, with one another, and even with “the rulers, ... authorities, ... cosmic powers over this present darkness,” and “... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (6:12).

Genre, Style, and Rhetoric

Genre, *style*, and *rhetoric* are three related yet distinct analytical categories that enrich our understanding of the text of Ephesians. *Genre*²¹ refers to the formal category

²¹ From the German *Gattung*, denoting “a group of things or beings that have important or distinguishing (i.e., ‘typical’) characteristics in common.” See “*Gattung*; *Gattungsforschung*; *Gattungsgeschichte*” in Soulen, Richard N. and Soulen, R. Kendall, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* 4th ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 74.

or type of literature to which Ephesians belongs. *Style*²² pertains to how Ephesians is written—its linguistic features, vocabulary choices, sentence structures, and aesthetic qualities. *Rhetoric*²³ concerns the methods of persuasion employed in Ephesians, including how Paul structures arguments, appeals to his readers, and organizes material for maximum effect. Of course, in the larger picture, when we open the letter to the Ephesians, we're not merely reading ancient words and arguments; we're encountering God's living message to us.

What *kind of writing is this (genre)*? Ephesians is a *letter*. Although Paul wrote it following the letter-writing customs of his time, he intended it to be shared among multiple churches, which is why it feels both personal and universal. Here is a message from God that:

- First helps us understand who we are in Christ (chapters 1–3).
- Then shows us how to live out this new identity (chapters 4–6).
- And further even exhibits some “sermon-like” qualities. So, as you read it, engage with its message as if it is speaking directly to you.

How does Paul *speak to us (style)*? He writes with a sense of wonder and worship. His sentences often read like prayers—sometimes long and overflowing with joy! This is *not* dry theology; it is “teaching” that’s awed and worshipful. The rich imagery he employs lingers in our minds:

- We are “in Christ” and in the “heavenly places” with him (1:3; 2:6).
- We have been moved from darkness into light (5:8).
- We are to put off the old self and put on the new (4:22–24).
- We are being built together into God’s living temple (2:19–22).
- We must put on God’s armor for the spiritual battle we face (6:10–17).

These are not merely literary devices; they are windows that help us see spiritual realities more clearly. Though more polished and formal than some of Paul’s other letters, these stylistic features not only articulate complex theological concepts precisely but also create a solemn, worship-oriented tone that directs our hearts toward God.

How does Paul *persuade our hearts (rhetoric)*? Remember, Paul aims not just to *inform* us but to see us *transformed*! Notice how he accomplishes this.

- He begins with praise, inviting us into wonder before making demands (*captatio benevolentiae*, 1:3–14).
- He establishes his authority as Christ’s apostle while also writing as a fellow

²² “In literature, a particular manner of employing language.” See “Style” in Edward Quinn, *A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms* (New York, NY: Checkmark Books, 2006), 402.

²³ “In the narrower, classical sense, rhetoric ... is the art of persuasive speech.” See “Rhetoric” in Soulen, Richard N. and Soulen, R. Kendall, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 182.

- believer (*ethos*, 1:1; 3:1–8, 13; 6:19–20).
- He appeals to our emotions through powerful imagery and contrasts (*pathos*, 2:1–5, 11–13, 19; 3:1, 13; 4:1; 5:8; 6:10–12, 20).
 - He builds logical arguments rooted in what God has done (*logos*, 1:3–14; 2:11–22; 4:17–24; 5:1–2, 25–32; 6:1–3, 10–11).
 - He strategically transitions from the *indicative* (what God has done, 1–3) to the *imperative* (how we should respond, 4–6).
 - He poses questions that encourage reflection (explicitly in 4:9; implicitly in many assertions, 4:1, 20–21; 5:1, 8, 15–16, 32; 6:1).
 - He offers practical guidance for daily living (4:17–6:20).
 - He concludes with a powerful exhortation to prepare for spiritual warfare (6:10–20).

Paul’s goal is to help us grasp our new identity in Christ so profoundly that we instinctively begin to live it out in our relationships, families, work, and witness.

As you study Ephesians with others, don’t simply analyze the text. Instead, *let it analyze you!* Ask yourself: In what God has truly said, how is he speaking to me through this letter today? How might my life change if I fully embraced who God says I am in Christ and how I, then, am to live?

Major Themes

As we read and study Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, several major theological and practical themes emerge throughout the text:

1. Union with Christ

The theme of union with Christ permeates the letter to the Ephesians as the foundational reality underlying all Christian identity and experience. It is “deeply woven into the fabric of Ephesians. It is central to every other major theme in the letter.” In fact, “it could be argued that union with Christ is the single most essential theological ingredient for the argument of Ephesians.”²⁴ Union with Christ, thus, forms the theological backbone of the letter, establishing believers’ secure position in God’s eternal plan.

This union transcends ethnic barriers as Christ “has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility” between Jew and Gentile (2:14), creating one new covenant people. Paul’s description of the church as Christ’s body (1:22–23, 4:15–16) demonstrates the organic nature of this union. Believers aren’t merely “associated” with Christ but are mystically joined to him as members of his very body. The practical outworking of this union demands believers “walk in a manner worthy of the calling” to which we have been called (4:1), living out our new identity through Spirit-

²⁴ Campbell, *Ephesians* (PNTC), 21.

enabled obedience and love (4:17–5:21).

2. Unity “in Christ.”

Christ has broken down the dividing walls between Jews and Gentiles to create “one new humanity” (2:14–16). Thus, we are transformed from being “strangers and aliens” into “fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,” and “are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit” (2:19–22). This *horizontal* unity with others is grounded in the *vertical* relationship between Christ and the church (i.e., *union*; 1:22–23, 4:15–16). We can love one another because Christ first loved the church and made us one with himself. The church’s *horizontal* relationships reflect, participate in, and flow from the *vertical* relationship with Christ.

3. Identity “in Christ.”

The phrase “in Christ” or “in him” pulses through Ephesians like a heart-beat, appearing repeatedly as Paul’s signature description of the Christian life. For Paul, being “in Christ” isn’t just a theological concept. It represents the *new address* where believers live, move, and find their identity. This concept forms the foundation for understanding and enjoying all our spiritual blessings (1:3–14), for resting in hope (2:6–7), and for defining and guiding our ethical conduct (4:1). Everything changes when we come to terms with our *true address*.

4. Supremacy of Christ.

Speaking of Christ, Paul declares that God “raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.” (1:20–21), establishing Christ’s supreme position over all cosmic powers. God has “put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church” (1:22). That is, God has given Christ victory over the entirety of every category of enemies in existence in every age so that he now has full authority over all things for the benefit of his church.²⁵ Hallelujah!

5. Salvation by Grace Through Faith.

Paul delivers one of Scripture’s most liberating declarations in 2:8–9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” This is not merely a theological subtlety; it’s the groundbreaking heart of the gospel that turns all human religion upside down. Salvation is not a “quid pro quo” transaction; it’s a

²⁵ See the extended exposition in Arnold, *Ephesians (ECNT)*, 110–16.

sovereign gift. It's not earned; it's received. Rather than resulting in pride and boasting, it produces humility and wonder.

6. The Church as God's New Creation.

Paul presents one of the most stunning descriptions of the church in all of Scripture. We are God's "workmanship" (*poiēma*), literally his "masterpiece" or "work of art" (2:10). The church is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets," representing the solid bedrock of divine truth, with "Christ Jesus himself" as its cornerstone (2:20). This process is dynamic, as "the whole structure, being joined together," grows "into a holy temple in the Lord" (2:21). Its purpose is to serve as "a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" (2:22). God isn't just saving individuals; he's crafting a new humanity, a living temple more glorious than anything built with human hands. Every believer is both a precious stone in God's masterpiece and a member of his eternal dwelling place.

7. Cosmic Reconciliation.

Paul unveils a cosmic drama in which Christ stands as the supreme Victor (*Christus Victor*) over all forces in creation. He outranks every conceivable power—political, spiritual, cosmic, or demonic.

And "the mystery" of God's will is his purpose "to unite all things in him [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth" (1:9–10). The term rendered "unite" (*anakephalaiōsasthai*) means to "sum up" or "bring together under one head." Ultimately, all the puzzle pieces will be gathered into the complete picture. The gospel isn't just about going to heaven. It's about a new heaven and earth, as Christ's victory is applied to every aspect of reality.

8. The Holy Spirit's Role.

The Holy Spirit plays a prominent role in the church in essential ways.

- a. *As the seal and guarantee of salvation.* Every believer is "sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory" (1:13–14). We are marked as God's authentic property and given the Spirit as the "down payment" on eternal life.
- b. *As the means of access to the Father.* Through Christ, we "have access in one Spirit to the Father" (2:18). He doesn't just point the way to God. He personally escorts us into the throne room.
- c. *And as the source of power for Christian living.* The Spirit is not just present with us but empowers us to live Christianly—by building and unifying the church (2:22), strengthening our inner life (3:16), creating and maintaining unity in the church (4:3), and enabling us to live counter-culturally (5:18).

9. Christian Conduct.

Paul refuses to leave us floating with only theological propositions. The second half of Ephesians (chapters 4–6) drives home the “So what?” question. If all these incredible truths about our identity in Christ are real, how should we actually live? His answer unfolds in five transformative areas:

- a. *Unity and Maturity in the Church (4:1–16)*. The church is to be the place where diverse gifts create unity, not division, and where every member contributes to the body’s spiritual growth and maturity.
- b. *Putting off the old self and embracing the new (4:17–24)*. This isn’t behavior modification. It’s becoming who you truly are in Christ. Out with the corrupt desires of the old life, in with the righteousness and holiness of the new.
- c. *Living as children of light (5:8–14)*. Paul doesn’t say believers *have* light. *They are light*. This identity transforms everything—relationships, entertainment choices, speech, values, and so on.
- d. *Relationships within households (5:21–6:9)*. Paul revolutionizes marriage, parenting, and work relationships by showing how Christ’s love redefines every human connection. With Jesus as Lord of the home and workplace, ordinary relationships become displays of gospel truth.
- e. *Spiritual warfare (6:10–20)*. The Christian life isn’t a peaceful stroll through a fairy-tale field of flowers. It’s active combat against spiritual forces of evil. Paul reminds believers of their divine armor and that their real battles aren’t against people but against cosmic powers of darkness.

We don’t live this way to *become* God’s children. No! We live this way because we *are* God’s children.

10. The Mystery of God’s Plan.

This isn’t abstract theology. It’s the most shocking plot twist in human history. The mystery? The Gentiles are “fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (3:6). In God’s new humanity, there are no second-class citizens, no separate entrances, no ethnic hierarchies. And that changes everything!

11. Prayer and Knowledge.

Paul interrupts his theological exposition twice with major prayers (1:15–23 and 3:14–21) that reveal his deepest longing, viz., that believers would *truly know* the God they serve. He isn’t praying for just more Bible

knowledge or religious information. He's praying for *experiential* knowledge—that believers might *personally encounter* the living God in transformative ways. "To know God is both to know about him and to come to know him experientially as Father and God."²⁶ These prayers remind us that *spiritual knowledge* should be a supreme passion, not merely for *intellectual understanding* but for *life-changing encounter* with the living Christ.

12. Spiritual Warfare.

Believers are engaged in a war (6:10–20), an invisible battle that rages behind every struggle, temptation, and challenge we face. Our *true* opponents aren't difficult people, circumstances, or personal weaknesses, but organized cosmic evil—powerful spiritual beings with intelligence, strategy, and murderous intent toward God's people (cf. 2 Cor 10:3–5). Everything we typically rely on—willpower, education, therapy, positive thinking—is utterly insufficient for this conflict. This is why it is essential to "put on the whole armor of God." There is *no* other way to "be able to stand against the schemes of the devil" (6:11). Although the battle is real and the stakes are eternal, victory is guaranteed for those who "take up the whole armor of God" (6:13).

These interconnected themes combine to present a comprehensive and breathtaking vision of Christian identity, unity, mission, and hope grounded in God's cosmic redemptive purposes accomplished in and through Christ.

Paul refuses to let theology remain theoretical. He answers the ultimate "So what?" question by moving from the *indicative* ("Here's what God has done") to the *imperative* ("Here's how you respond"). The result? A cosmic manifesto where the church isn't just a religious club. It's God's *strategic masterpiece*, simultaneously *demonstrating* his reconciling power to the watching cosmos and *implementing* his kingdom agenda in real time.

²⁶ Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries, (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 37–38.

Outline

1. Introduction (1:1–2).
 - a. AUTHOR: Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God’s will (1:1a).
 - b. RECIPIENTS: The “saints” at Ephesus, faithful in Christ Jesus (1:1b).
 - c. GREETING: Grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:2).
2. Theological Foundations: The Believer’s Position in Christ (1:3–3:21).
 - a. Praise for Spiritual Blessings (1:3–14; note the Trinitarian structure).
 - i. The Father’s election before creation (1:3–6).
 - ii. The Son’s redemption through his blood (1:7–12).
 - iii. The Spirit’s sealing as a guarantee (1:13–14).
 - b. Prayer for Spiritual Enlightenment (1:15–23).
 - i. Thanksgiving for the Ephesians’ faith and love (1:15–16).
 - ii. Request for deeper knowledge of God (1:17).
 - iii. Specific understanding requested (1:18–19):
 1. hope of their calling,
 2. riches of inheritance,
 3. power available to believers.
 - iv. This power is demonstrated in Christ’s resurrection and exaltation (1:20–23).
 - c. New Life in Christ: From Death to Life (2:1–10).
 - i. The believer’s former condition: dead in sins (2:1–3).
 - ii. God’s merciful intervention through Christ (2:4–7).
 - iii. Salvation by grace through faith, not works (2:8–9).
 - iv. Created for good works as the outcome (2:10).
 - d. New Community in Christ: From Division to Unity (2:11–22).
 - i. The Gentiles’ former alienation (2:11–12).
 - ii. Christ’s peacemaking through the cross (2:13–18).
 - iii. The new united humanity as God’s household (2:19–22).
 - iv. The metaphor of temple: believers as living stones, with Christ as the cornerstone.
 - e. Paul’s Ministry to the Gentiles (3:1–13).
 - i. Paul’s unique role as steward of the “mystery” (3:1–7).
 - ii. The mystery revealed: Gentiles as full co-heirs (3:8–9).
 - iii. God’s wisdom displayed to the spiritual realm (3:10–13).
 - f. Prayer for Inner Strengthening (3:14–21).
 - i. Request for spiritual power and Christ’s indwelling (3:14–17).
 - ii. Prayer for comprehension of Christ’s love (3:18–19).
 - iii. Doxology celebrating God’s unlimited power (3:20–21).
3. Practical Applications: The Believer’s Practice in the World (4:1–6:20).
 - a. Unity in the Body of Christ (4:1–16).

- i. Call to live worthy of their calling (4:1–3).
 - ii. The basis for unity: one body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God (4:4–6).
 - iii. Diversity of gifts for building up the church (4:7–13).
 - iv. Growth toward maturity in Christ (4:14–16).
- b. The New Life Contrasted with the Old (4:17–32).
 - i. Warning against returning to Gentile ways (4:17–19).
 - ii. Learning Christ means putting off the old self (4:20–22).
 - iii. Putting on the new self through renewal (4:23–24).
 - iv. Specific ethical instructions flowing from our new identity (4:25–32).
- c. Living in Love and Light (5:1–21).
 - i. Imitation of God through love (5:1–2).
 - ii. Rejecting behaviors of darkness (5:3–7).
 - iii. Walking as children of light (5:8–14).
 - iv. Walking in wisdom and being filled with the Spirit (5:15–21).
- d. Relationships in the Christian Household (5:22–6:9).
 - i. Wives and husbands (5:22–33; mystically reflecting Christ and the church).
 - ii. Children and parents (6:1–4).
 - iii. Slaves and masters (6:5–9).
- e. Spiritual Warfare (6:10–20).
 - i. The source of strength: God’s mighty power (6:10).
 - ii. The spiritual armor of God described (6:11–17).
 - iii. Prayer as spiritual weaponry (6:18–20).
- f. Closing Remarks (6:21–24).
 - i. Personal notes about Tychicus as messenger (6:21–22).
 - ii. Final blessing of peace, love, faith, and grace (6:23–24).

Key theological movements in the letter include:

1. From *divine election* to *human responsibility*.
2. From *spiritual blessings* to *practical living*.
3. From *individual salvation* to *corporate identity*.
4. From *position in Christ* to *practice in the world*.
5. From *heavenly reality* to *earthly relationships*.

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spir-
itual blessing in the heavenly places ...”*
—Ephesians 1:3

1

PRAISE FOR SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

Ephesians 1:1–14

Main Themes: Read the passage through slowly and aloud. Make a list of up to 3 “themes” you see show up in the passage. (ex. “discipleship, suffering, trust, joy, peace, etc.) Noticing these at the start of your study will prepare you to formulate a clear main point after you’ve worked through the passage using the questions.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Preliminary Main Point: Write a preliminary, ***one-sentence main point*** based on your reading of the passage and the themes you have seen in it. This main idea will be revised after working through the discussion questions.

Work Through The Passage: Develop a deeper understanding of the passage by working through it again and answering the following questions. These questions are simply tools to help you slow down and process what the passage is saying.

1. **Who is Paul writing this letter to? How do you think keeping this in mind will affect the way you read the rest of the letter?**

Ephesians 1:1–14

2. Christians often talk about being “blessed” by God. According to Paul in this passage, what are the primary ways Christians are blessed? What is the source of this blessing (our performance, our superiority compared to others, something else...)?

3. Underline every instance of the phrase “in him” in this passage. What is Paul emphasizing through the repeated use of this phrase?

4. Sometimes when people hear the word “predestined,” they think that it means human beings are simply robots with no will, mindlessly doing a predetermined script. Does this passage support such a definition? Why or why not?

5. In what ways does this passage describe the entire Trinity at work in saving sinners?

6. Which of the Trinity’s actions in salvation are you most prone to forget and be grateful for in your daily life? Are there any that especially encouraged or comforted you as you read?

- 7.** If you think of God as a miserly, begrudging, stingy kind of deity, what in this passage corrects that view? What adjectives would you use to describe the kind of God you see in this passage?

- 8.** From this passage, how would you answer the question: “What is the point of the Christian life?”

Ephesians 1:1–14

Revised Main Point: Review the main themes, your preliminary main point, and what you discovered through the questions and write a *revised one sentence main point* of the passage. If a friend were to ask you, “What is that passage about?” this sentence should be general and short enough to answer that question.

Put the Truth to Work. Considering this week's passage:

1. **What am I/are we to know and believe? (about God, about myself, or about the world?)**

2. **What am I/are we to love and pursue? (What should our hearts long for?)**

3. **What am I/are we to do and sacrifice for?**

Ephesians 1:1–14

Notes From The Group Discussion Time:

“I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, would give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints ...”

—Ephesians 1:17–18

2

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT

Ephesians 1:15–23

Main Themes: Read the passage through slowly and aloud. Make a list of up to 3 “themes” you see show up in the passage. (ex. “discipleship, suffering, trust, joy, peace, etc.) Noticing these at the start of your study will prepare you to formulate a clear main point after you’ve worked through the passage using the questions.

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Preliminary Main Point: Write a preliminary, ***one-sentence main point*** based on your reading of the passage and the themes you have seen in it. This main idea will be revised after working through the discussion questions.

Work Through The Passage: Develop a deeper understanding of the passage by working through it again and answering the following questions. These questions are simply tools to help you slow down and process what the passage is saying.

1. **Why does Paul thank God for the Ephesians?**

Ephesians 1:15-23

2. What does Paul want the Ephesians to know? Make a list.

3. Paul knows these Christians already believe the gospel, but he still prays that they would understand it even more. Why do you think that is?

4. What connections do you see in this passage between love for the Lord and love for his people (the church)?

5. According to Paul, what must take place for us to “know what is the hope to which he has called us?” Is this something we can do in our own strength simply by virtue of our Bible study skills and our own intellect?

6. According to this passage, what was displayed when Christ was raised from the dead? Why does the resurrection matter for you and me?

- 7.** Sometimes Christians will use the expression “don’t be so heavenly minded that you’re no earthly good,” implying that too much focus on what is to come in the Christian’s eternal life will limit one’s effectiveness here. Do you think Paul would agree with this statement? What in this passage makes you say yes or no?

- 8.** What comfort is there in this passage for Christians who live in a politically contentious age?

9. Thinking about what this passage teaches, give some reasons why the local church matters to Jesus? Why should it matter to us?

Revised Main Point: Review the main themes, your preliminary main point, and what you discovered through the questions and write a *revised one sentence main point* of the passage. If a friend were to ask you, “What is that passage about?” this sentence should be general and short enough to answer that question.

Put the Truth to Work. Considering this week's passage:

1. **What am I/are we to know and believe? (about God, about myself, or about the world?)**

2. **What am I/are we to love and pursue? (What should our hearts long for?)**

3. **What am I/are we to do and sacrifice for?**

Ephesians 1:15-23

Notes From The Group Discussion Time:

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

—Ephesians 2:8–9

3

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST: FROM DEATH TO LIFE

Ephesians 2:1–10

Main Themes: Read the passage through slowly and aloud. Make a list of up to 3 “themes” you see show up in the passage. (ex. “discipleship, suffering, trust, joy, peace, etc.) Noticing these at the start of your study will prepare you to formulate a clear main point after you’ve worked through the passage using the questions.

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- _____
- _____

Preliminary Main Point: Write a preliminary, ***one-sentence main point*** based on your reading of the passage and the themes you have seen in it. This main idea will be revised after working through the discussion questions.

Work Through The Passage: Develop a deeper understanding of the passage by working through it again and answering the following questions. These questions are simply tools to help you slow down and process what the passage is saying.

1. **What is our primary problem, according to Paul? How does this differ from the way the world often identifies the primary problem with us?**

Ephesians 2:1–10

2. What does it mean to be “dead in our trespasses and sins” according to this passage?

3. Make a list of the verses in this passage that work against self-righteousness, pride, and boasting in the life of the Christian.

4. Why does God love us?

5. For what purpose or purposes did God save us, according to this passage?

6. In what ways has the salvation discussed in this passage already happened? What is still to come?

Ephesians 2:1–10

- 7. How are we to think about our good works, according to Paul? Are they a necessary part of the Christian life?**

- 8. When did God choose to love us? Why does that matter?**

9. This is one of the most beautiful gospel passages in all of Scripture. As you have thought through it, what aspects of God’s goodness towards you in Christ were most moving or encouraging? Why do you think those aspects resonated with you in such a strong way?

Revised Main Point: Review the main themes, your preliminary main point, and what you discovered through the questions and write a *revised one sentence main point* of the passage. If a friend were to ask you, “What is that passage about?” this sentence should be general and short enough to answer that question.

Put the Truth to Work. Considering this week's passage:

1. **What am I/are we to know and believe? (about God, about myself, or about the world?)**

2. **What am I/are we to love and pursue? (What should our hearts long for?)**

3. **What am I/are we to do and sacrifice for?**

Ephesians 2:1–10

Notes From The Group Discussion Time:

*“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one
and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of
hostility ...”*

—Ephesians 2:14

4

NEW COMMUNITY IN CHRIST: FROM DIVISION TO UNITY

Ephesians 2:11–22

Main Themes: Read the passage through slowly and aloud. Make a list of up to 3 “themes” you see show up in the passage. (ex. “discipleship, suffering, trust, joy, peace, etc.) Noticing these at the start of your study will prepare you to formulate a clear main point after you’ve worked through the passage using the questions.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Preliminary Main Point: Write a preliminary, *one-sentence main point* based on your reading of the passage and the themes you have seen in it. This main idea will be revised after working through the discussion questions.

Work Through The Passage: Develop a deeper understanding of the passage by working through it again and answering the following questions. These questions are simply tools to help you slow down and process what the passage is saying.

1. This passage begins with the word “therefore”. What is it calling the reader to keep in mind?

Ephesians 2:11–22

2. What is the main conflict in the church in Ephesus that Paul is addressing here?

3. In what ways does Paul say the gospel re-shapes the identity of the Gentiles?

4. What has Jesus done “in his flesh”? What is the effect of this for Jews and Gentiles?

5. Make a list of metaphors Paul uses at the end of this section to describe the church. (Hint: You can figure out what the metaphors are by answering the question: “What does Paul say the church is ...?”)

6. Why, according to this passage, does unity and affection in the church matter? Would the Lord be pleased with a church where people get along okay with each other, but don’t have much affection for—or interaction with—one another? What in this passage makes you say yes or no?

- 7. What is the church founded upon? How would you know if your local church had drifted from the cornerstone?**

- 8. Most American churches are not prone to division along Jew and Gentile lines. What are some *other* lines of division that may be more common to our context to which this passage can speak?**

Ephesians 2:11–22

Revised Main Point: Review the main themes, your preliminary main point, and what you discovered through the questions and write a *revised one sentence main point* of the passage. If a friend were to ask you, “What is that passage about?” this sentence should be general and short enough to answer that question.

Put the Truth to Work. Considering this week's passage:

1. **What am I/are we to know and believe? (about God, about myself, or about the world?)**

2. **What am I/are we to love and pursue? (What should our hearts long for?)**

3. **What am I/are we to do and sacrifice for?**

Ephesians 2:11–22

Notes From The Group Discussion Time:

*“This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs,
members of the same body, and partakers of the promise
in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”*

—Ephesians 3:6

5

PAUL'S MINISTRY TO THE GENTILES

Ephesians 3:1–13

Main Themes: Read the passage through slowly and aloud. Make a list of up to 3 “themes” you see show up in the passage. (ex. “discipleship, suffering, trust, joy, peace, etc.) Noticing these at the start of your study will prepare you to formulate a clear main point after you’ve worked through the passage using the questions.

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Preliminary Main Point: Write a preliminary, ***one-sentence main point*** based on your reading of the passage and the themes you have seen in it. This main idea will be revised after working through the discussion questions.

Work Through The Passage: Develop a deeper understanding of the passage by working through it again and answering the following questions. These questions are simply tools to help you slow down and process what the passage is saying.

1. What is the “mystery” that Paul is speaking of in this passage? Why is it significant that this mystery was revealed to Paul specifically?

2. What is significant about the fact that Paul considers his ministry a “stewardship of God’s grace that was given to [him] for [them]”?

3. As human beings, we tend to look for reasons to compare ourselves favorably to others. We long to be on the “inside” and can relish any opportunity to look down on others we perceive to be on the “outside.” How does v. 6 undermine our sinful tendency to do this in the church?

4. Throughout Paul’s letters, he often has to defend himself against false teachers who hold themselves up as “super-apostles.” They bragged of their intellectual gifting and personal ability. How does Paul understand himself and his ministry in this passage? In what ways is it the opposite of a bragging “super-apostle”?

5. How long has God been planning for his people to be a mix of those from “every tribe, nation, and tongue,” according to this passage?

6. We often long for “more” spiritually. Some people are attracted to secret codes they believe are hidden in the Bible, or mystic powers in religious rituals, or “new” teachings that see

things in the Bible that no one else has seen before. According to Paul, where are the “unsearchable riches” in the Christian life? Why is it important that we see this?

7. Most commentators think the “rulers and authorities” mentioned in v. 11 are evil spiritual beings who rebelled against God. In light of this, why is the life of the local church important?

8. How does Paul say we should approach God in Christ? Why is it that we can approach him in this way? By what means do we do so?

9. Why might the Ephesians be discouraged by Paul's suffering? Why is it their glory?

Revised Main Point: Review the main themes, your preliminary main point, and what you discovered through the questions and write a *revised one sentence main point* of the passage. If a friend were to ask you, "What is that passage about?" this sentence should be general and short enough to answer that question.

Put the Truth to Work. Considering this week's passage:

1. **What am I/are we to know and believe? (about God, about myself, or about the world?)**

2. **What am I/are we to love and pursue? (What should our hearts long for?)**

3. **What am I/are we to do and sacrifice for?**

Ephesians 3:1–13

Notes From The Group Discussion Time:

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

—Ephesians 3:20–21

6

PRAYER FOR INNER STRENGTHENING

Ephesians 3:14–21

Main Themes: Read the passage through slowly and aloud. Make a list of up to 3 “themes” you see show up in the passage. (ex. “discipleship, suffering, trust, joy, peace, etc.) Noticing these at the start of your study will prepare you to formulate a clear main point after you’ve worked through the passage using the questions.

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Preliminary Main Point: Write a preliminary, ***one-sentence main point*** based on your reading of the passage and the themes you have seen in it. This main idea will be revised after working through the discussion questions.

Work Through The Passage: Develop a deeper understanding of the passage by working through it again and answering the following questions. These questions are simply tools to help you slow down and process what the passage is saying.

1. Why does Paul draw attention to the fact that the God who he prays to is the Father from whom every family is named? (Hint: remember the divisions in Ephesus)

2. What connection does Paul make between God's glory and our strength?

3. What do we need strength for, according to Paul?

4. How can someone comprehend something that surpasses knowledge? If we're going to have strength to do this, what must we be grounded in first?

5. How would you explain the "power at work within us" in v. 20 to someone who is confused by that phrase? What is that power?

6. While it is a good thing to pray along with Paul these things for ourselves as individuals, is this passage focused primarily on individuals, or a larger group? Make a list of the language Paul uses throughout this section that notes references to the universal church.

- 7.** It may seem selfish to pray that Christians would experience the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, and to be filled with all the fullness of God. But, who gets the glory from this love-saturated people of God? Why?

- 8.** This is a simple passage that teaches a staggering truth about God's intention for you and for us as a church. What does God want us to *know* and to *feel*, according to this passage.

9. Write a short prayer for our church using this passage.

Revised Main Point: Review the main themes, your preliminary main point, and what you discovered through the questions and write a *revised one sentence main point* of the passage. If a friend were to ask you, “What is that passage about?” this sentence should be general and short enough to answer that question.

Put the Truth to Work. Considering this week's passage:

1. **What am I/are we to know and believe? (about God, about myself, or about the world?)**

2. **What am I/are we to love and pursue? (What should our hearts long for?)**

3. **What am I/are we to do and sacrifice for?**

Ephesians 3:14-21

Notes From The Group Discussion Time:

*“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit
through the bond of peace.”*

—Ephesians 4:3

7

UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Ephesians 4:1–16

Main Themes: Read the passage through slowly and aloud. Make a list of up to 3 “themes” you see show up in the passage. (ex. “discipleship, suffering, trust, joy, peace, etc.) Noticing these at the start of your study will prepare you to formulate a clear main point after you’ve worked through the passage using the questions.

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Preliminary Main Point: Write a preliminary, *one-sentence main point* based on your reading of the passage and the themes you have seen in it. This main idea will be revised after working through the discussion questions.

Work Through The Passage: Develop a deeper understanding of the passage by working through it again and answering the following questions. These questions are simply tools to help you slow down and process what the passage is saying.

1. Chapter 4 marks a shift from the teaching of gospel doctrine to the application of it in the life of Christians throughout the rest of the letter. Knowing this, why is the word “therefore” in v.1 so very, VERY important? What danger is there if we don’t remember the “therefore”?

- 2. Make a list of things that Paul describes as “walking in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called”? In light of these things, why is the local church so important in the life of the believer?**

- 3. What is the basis of unity in the church, according to verses 4–6?**

4. Verses 7–13 make the simple point that the same Christ who purchased all of us gives a variety of gifts to the unified body so that it may be built up. To make this point, Paul refers to Psalm 68:18 and interprets it Christologically. According to Paul’s interpretation, what is the significance of the incarnation and the resurrection?

5. What are the purposes of teachers and leaders in the church? What are the differences between these different roles?

6. What is “the work of ministry?” What is the goal of this work, according to Paul?

- 7.** In our culture, what “waves and winds of doctrine, human cunning, and craftiness in deceitful schemes” are Christians in danger of being tossed about by? What is the antidote, according to Paul?

- 8.** One might expect Paul to conclude by saying that the body grows by building itself up in the knowledge of God. Why do you think Paul says “it builds itself up in love” as the mark of growth and working properly?

9. Drawing on all you have seen from this passage, how would you describe what it means to be a “mature Christian”?

Revised Main Point: Review the main themes, your preliminary main point, and what you discovered through the questions and write a *revised one sentence main point* of the passage. If a friend were to ask you, “What is that passage about?” this sentence should be general and short enough to answer that question.

Put the Truth to Work. Considering this week's passage:

1. **What am I/are we to know and believe? (about God, about myself, or about the world?)**

2. **What am I/are we to love and pursue? (What should our hearts long for?)**

3. **What am I/are we to do and sacrifice for?**

Ephesians 4:1–16

Notes From The Group Discussion Time:

“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

—Ephesians 4:22–24

8

THE NEW LIFE CONTRASTED WITH THE OLD

Ephesians 4:17–32

Main Themes: Read the passage through slowly and aloud. Make a list of up to 3 “themes” you see show up in the passage. (ex. “discipleship, suffering, trust, joy, peace, etc.) Noticing these at the start of your study will prepare you to formulate a clear main point after you’ve worked through the passage using the questions.

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Preliminary Main Point: Write a preliminary, *one-sentence main point* based on your reading of the passage and the themes you have seen in it. This main idea will be revised after working through the discussion questions.

Work Through The Passage: Develop a deeper understanding of the passage by working through it again and answering the following questions. These questions are simply tools to help you slow down and process what the passage is saying.

1. What similarities do you see between 4:17–24 and 2:1–3? Given that Paul has just finished talking about how Gentiles are now welcomed as a part of the family of God in the church, what Gentiles is he referring to in v.17?

2. Think about the connection between Jesus and the “new self” Paul discusses in this passage. What is it that believers have learned in v. 20? Why do you think that Paul doesn’t say “learned about Christ”?

3. Why do you think that Paul uses the phrase “be renewed” in v. 23 rather than “renew yourselves”? Who does the renewing? What connection do you see between this renewing and the commands in verses 25-32.

- 4. Make a list of the commands in verses 25-32.**

- 5. Paul includes motivations for obeying these commands right next to the commands in verses 25-32. What are they?**

- 6. Imagine you have a friend who identifies as a Christian but sees no need for the local church. They say that they can “put on the new self all by themselves!” Is this possible? What in the passage makes you say yes or no?**

- 7. Thinking about this section as a whole, write out the process of sanctification, starting with God making someone alive in Christ. What happens next? What precedes behavior change? Does behavior have to change? Do we have any guarantee that we will change?**

- 8. Read through the Fortified Hills Baptist Church Membership Covenant below. Where do you see it being shaped by this passage?**

FHBC Membership Covenant

Having been led By God's grace to repent of our sins and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on our profession of faith, having been baptized, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit we do, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, solemnly and joyfully make this covenant with each other.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We will look to the interest of others as we humbly consider them more significant than ourselves. Furthermore, we will be slow to take offense but always ready to forgive.

We will walk together in Christian love, exercising an affectionate care for and watchfulness over one another; praying for one another; faithfully encouraging, stirring one another up to love and good works, warning, rebuking, and admonishing one another as occasion may require.

We will regularly assemble together to worship God and build each other up in Christ while also pursuing the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, and practice of spiritual disciplines.

We will cooperate with, submit to, and prayerfully support the leadership of the pastors (elders) who have been raised up and entrusted by God to serve and care for this body by preaching the Word of Christ, shepherding the flock, exercising oversight, and modeling the character of Christ before us.

We will rejoice in each other's happiness and work with tenderness and sympathy to help carry each other's burdens and sorrows.

We will seek to live intentionally in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly passions, and remembering that, as we have been buried with Him and raised again to newness of life, so we now have a special obligation to lead a new and holy life.

We will give ourselves to the task of making disciples both locally and among the nations as we display Christ in our lives and proclaim Christ in our message.

We will work together to maintain a faithful gospel witness in our worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines.

We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel around the world.

We will endeavor to lead gospel-centered homes, raise up those in our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and seek the salvation of our family and friends.

Ephesians 4:17–32

We will, if we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God’s Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Revised Main Point: Review the main themes, your preliminary main point, and what you discovered through the questions and write a *revised one sentence main point* of the passage. If a friend were to ask you, “What is that passage about?” this sentence should be general and short enough to answer that question.

Put the Truth to Work. Considering this week's passage:

1. **What am I/are we to know and believe? (about God, about myself, or about the world?)**

2. **What am I/are we to love and pursue? (What should our hearts long for?)**

3. **What am I/are we to do and sacrifice for?**

Ephesians 4:17-32

Notes From The Group Discussion Time:

9

LIVING IN LOVE AND LIGHT

Ephesians 5:1–21

Main Themes: Read the passage through slowly and aloud. Make a list of up to 3 “themes” you see show up in the passage. (ex. “discipleship, suffering, trust, joy, peace, etc.) Noticing these at the start of your study will prepare you to formulate a clear main point after you’ve worked through the passage using the questions.

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Preliminary Main Point: Write a preliminary, ***one-sentence main point*** based on your reading of the passage and the themes you have seen in it. This main idea will be revised after working through the discussion questions.

Work Through The Passage: Develop a deeper understanding of the passage by working through it again and answering the following questions. These questions are simply tools to help you slow down and process what the passage is saying.

1. Paul continues with the imperatives (commands) of the Christian life in this passage. What does he ground them in in v.1–2? In other words, why should we obey these?

2. **Why is sexual immorality, impurity, and covetousness so serious, according to Paul? What is our identity?**

3. **Why is filthiness, foolish talk, and crude joking out of place?**

4. Throughout this section, Paul uses the language of “partnership” and “taking part” and “having an inheritance.” Using this language, summarize what Paul is saying sin is and why believers should not sin.

5. Rather than sin and the works of darkness, what does Paul say believers’ lives should seek to discern and do? What does that look like in your life on a random weekday?

6. Someone might read this section Ephesians and *wrongly* conclude that Christians live in fear of the wrath of God. They might summarize what Paul is saying as “God’s wrath is coming to punish sin, so don’t sin. That’s the Christian life: living in fear of God’s wrath and trying not to incur it.” Why would this be a misreading of the text? If that’s not what Paul is saying, what is the Christian motivation for not sinning?

- 7.** Our culture often thinks about corporate worship as a time where the leaders facilitate an individual worship experience between you and God. In light of verses 19–20, how would you explain what’s happening in corporate worship?

- 8.** Verse 21 sets up the relationships Paul explains in the next section. What reason does he give for why we should “consider others more important than ourselves” and in love “not insist on our own way”?

Ephesians 5:1–21

Revised Main Point: Review the main themes, your preliminary main point, and what you discovered through the questions and write a *revised one sentence main point* of the passage. If a friend were to ask you, “What is that passage about?” this sentence should be general and short enough to answer that question.

Put the Truth to Work. Considering this week's passage:

1. **What am I/are we to know and believe? (about God, about myself, or about the world?)**

2. **What am I/are we to love and pursue? (What should our hearts long for?)**

3. **What am I/are we to do and sacrifice for?**

Ephesians 5:1–21

Notes From The Group Discussion Time:

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”
—*Ephesians 5:21*

10

RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD

Ephesians 5:22–6:9

Main Themes: Read the passage through slowly and aloud. Make a list of up to 3 “themes” you see show up in the passage. (ex. “discipleship, suffering, trust, joy, peace, etc.) Noticing these at the start of your study will prepare you to formulate a clear main point after you’ve worked through the passage using the questions.

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Preliminary Main Point: Write a preliminary, *one-sentence main point* based on your reading of the passage and the themes you have seen in it. This main idea will be revised after working through the discussion questions.

Work Through The Passage: Develop a deeper understanding of the passage by working through it again and answering the following questions. These questions are simply tools to help you slow down and process what the passage is saying.

1. Paul begins this section by speaking about marriage. What commands are given to wives? What does it look like for a wife to obey this command? Why ought wives obey this command?

- 2. What commands are given to husbands? What does it look like for a husband to obey this command? Why ought husbands obey this command?**

- 3. Verses 31–32 quote and then interpret Genesis 2:24. What does this mean marriage is a picture of? How long has this been God’s design for marriage?**

4. 6:1–4 concerns the family. What commands are given to children? What does it look like for children to obey this command? Why ought children obey this command?

5. What commands are given to fathers? What does it look like for fathers to obey this command? Why ought fathers obey this command?

6. Are mothers exempted from v. 4? Why do you think Paul specifically addresses fathers?

7. **Verses 5–9 concludes what has been called “the household code.” What commands are given to bondservants? What does it look like for bondservants to obey this command? Why ought bondservants obey this command?**

8. **What commands are given to masters? What does it look like for masters to obey this command? Why ought masters obey this command?**

9. How does the believer's new identity in Christ empower obedience to the commands laid out in this passage?

Revised Main Point: Review the main themes, your preliminary main point, and what you discovered through the questions and write a *revised one sentence main point* of the passage. If a friend were to ask you, "What is that passage about?" this sentence should be general and short enough to answer that question.

Put the Truth to Work. Considering this week's passage:

1. **What am I/are we to know and believe? (about God, about myself, or about the world?)**

2. **What am I/are we to love and pursue? (What should our hearts long for?)**

3. **What am I/are we to do and sacrifice for?**

Ephesians 5:22–6:9

Notes From The Group Discussion Time:

*“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able
to stand against the schemes of the devil.”*

—Ephesians 6:11

11

S P I R I T U A L W A R F A R E

Ephesians 6:10–20

Main Themes: Read the passage through slowly and aloud. Make a list of up to 3 “themes” you see show up in the passage. (ex. “discipleship, suffering, trust, joy, peace, etc.) Noticing these at the start of your study will prepare you to formulate a clear main point after you’ve worked through the passage using the questions.

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Preliminary Main Point: Write a preliminary, ***one-sentence main point*** based on your reading of the passage and the themes you have seen in it. This main idea will be revised after working through the discussion questions.

Work Through The Passage: Develop a deeper understanding of the passage by working through it again and answering the following questions. These questions are simply tools to help you slow down and process what the passage is saying.

1. Sometimes when studying this passage, Christians can unhelpfully isolate the elements of the armor as if they were standalone pieces. Read verses 10–13. Which piece of armor is the most important?

- 2.** Where does the Christian’s strength to stand come from? Where does the Christian’s armor come from? Who, then, gets the glory in the Christian’s war against Satan’s schemes? Why is this good news for you, Christian?

- 3.** Christians often talk about making war against sin, but this passage notes that we make war against the devil and supernatural beings in rebellion against God (the rulers, the authorities, the cosmic powers over this present darkness). What is the connection between these enemies and our sin?

- 4. List all of the pieces of armor given in this passage, along with what they do for the Christian.**

- 5. What connection is there between the armor and prayer? In other words, why does Paul follow up the command to “take the sword of the Spirit and the helmet of salvation” with “praying at all times”?**

6. List each time “stand” or “withstand” is used in the passage. What picture of the Christian life does this paint?

7. Briefly list some things you know about the Apostle Paul (see 2 Corinthians 6 and Philippians 3). Why is it significant that he is asking for prayer in verses 19–20? Some commentators believe that 2 Timothy 4:16–18 records the answer to these prayers.

8. How would you answer someone who reads this passage and concludes that if you ever experience suffering, if you still sin, or if you just struggle in the Christian life, you just aren’t putting on the armor of God sufficiently? Does this passage teach that putting on the armor of God will prevent all suffering?

9. Think about Ephesians 1–3. What connection does the gospel Paul proclaimed there have to the armor of God? Is this passage a call to reach deep within ourselves and do something great for God?

Revised Main Point: Review the main themes, your preliminary main point, and what you discovered through the questions and write a *revised one sentence main point* of the passage. If a friend were to ask you, “What is that passage about?” this sentence should be general and short enough to answer that question.

Put the Truth to Work. Considering this week’s passage:

1. **What am I/are we to know and believe? (about God, about myself, or about the world?)**

2. **What am I/are we to love and pursue? (What should our hearts long for?)**

3. **What am I/are we to do and sacrifice for?**

Ephesians 6:10-20

Notes From The Group Discussion Time:

*“Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ
with love incorruptible.”*

—Ephesians 6:24

12

CLOSING REMARKS

Ephesians 6:21–24

Main Themes: Read the passage through slowly and aloud. Make a list of up to 3 “themes” you see show up in the passage. (ex. “discipleship, suffering, trust, joy, peace, etc.) Noticing these at the start of your study will prepare you to formulate a clear main point after you’ve worked through the passage using the questions.

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Work Through The Passage: Develop a deeper understanding of the passage by working through it again and answering the following questions. These questions are simply tools to help you slow down and process what the passage is saying.

1. Why is a passage like this, with details about Tychicus and ministry updates, important for our understanding of the trustworthiness of Scripture?

- 2. Where else in Scripture is Tychicus mentioned? Based on this, who was he?**

- 3. This is one of three prayers Paul prays for the Ephesians throughout the letter. Read the other two, found in 1:15-23 and 3:14-21. What similarities do you notice? What differences?**

4. The second half of Ephesians has focused on “gospel imperatives,” or commands that are empowered and motivated by the good news of our forgiveness in Christ. Paul departs from that focus with this conclusion. Why do you think he concludes with blessings, rather than further instructions? What does that show us about his pastoral heart?

5. Why do you think Paul says, “love with faith” and not just “love” in v. 23?

6. What do you think Paul means by “love incorruptible” in v. 24?

- 7. Read back over the whole letter. Write out the main themes in a few sentences.**

- 8. Over the course of this study, what have you grown to love more about Jesus? About the local church?**

Ephesians 6:21–24

Revised Main Point: Review the main themes, your preliminary main point, and what you discovered through the questions and write a *revised one sentence main point* of the passage. If a friend were to ask you, “What is that passage about?” this sentence should be general and short enough to answer that question.

Put the Truth to Work. Considering this week’s passage:

1. **What am I/are we to know and believe? (about God, about myself, or about the world?)**

2. **What am I/are we to love and pursue? (What should our hearts long for?)**

3. **What am I/are we to do and sacrifice for?**

Ephesians 6:21–24

Notes From The Group Discussion Time:

“I have sometimes thought that if I had to preach my last sermon, and I could choose my text, it would be from the Epistle to the Ephesians, for it contains the richest cluster of truths to be found in all Scripture.”

—Charles Spurgeon

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MAKING MATURE DISCIPLES