



COMPLETE STUDY GUIDE • LETTER • 6 CHAPTERS • 6 SESSIONS

The Letter to the Ephesians

Grace, and a Life Worthy of It

“for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”

EPHESIANS 2:8



Six sessions

Leader's guide

Answer guide

Full text of Ephesians (WEB)

SIMPLE. ACCESSIBLE. TRANSFORMATIONAL.



CLEAR PATH BIBLE STUDIES

The Letter to the Ephesians

Complete Study Guide

Grace, and a Life Worthy of It

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- 1** Six sessions with every discussion, reflection, and recall question from the online study, and room to write.
- 2** Reference pages: the ten movements of the letter, the themes, the key passages, the people, and the library of all 6 chapters.
- 3** Leader's guide with the group leader notes, a timed plan, an answer guide for every discussion question, and the recall answer key.
- 4** The full text of Ephesians in the World English Bible, so nothing else is needed to do the study.

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The online study, free and with no sign-in: clearpathbiblestudies.com/studies/ephesians

THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

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START HERE

How to use this guide

A complete, six-session walk through the Letter to the Ephesians — built for small groups, Sunday school, and personal study. Read together, observe, interpret, and leave each session with one clear thing to live out.

EVERY SESSION FOLLOWS ONE RHYTHM

1

Read together

The session's chapters and key passages. The text is in Part Four.

2

Observe

What does the passage say? Who is there, and what happens?

3

Interpret

What does it show about Jesus? What did the author want us to see?

4

Apply this week

What will I do with it this week? One thing, lived out.

On your own

A Participant Guide gives you a daily reading rhythm, reflection questions, a memory verse, and one action step to live out.

- Write your answers. Thinking on paper is slower, and it lasts.
- Finish with the recall page: answer from memory first, then check the text.

In a group

Each session has a 60-minute Facilitator Guide for 5–12 people — read together, discuss, and apply, with leader notes built in.

- The leader uses Part Three: leader notes, an answer guide, and the recall answer key.
- Participants need Parts One, Two, and Four.

Of Part Five, pages 72 and 76–82 are for everyone, and pages 73–75 are for leaders.

PRINTING FOR A GROUP

Participant pages (sessions and reference): pages 8–39. Leader's guide: pages 40–62. The text of Ephesians: pages 63–69. Page 70, Six verses to carry, is for everyone. Part Five: pages 71–82.

My progress
☐ 1 Every Spiritual Blessing

☐ 3 The Mystery of Christ

☐ 5 Walk in Love and Light

☐ 2 Saved by Grace

☐ 4 Walk Worthy: Unity and Maturity

☐ 6 Stand Firm: The Armor of God

WHY EPHESIANS

Why read this letter

In six short chapters Ephesians lifts the whole gospel into view — who God is, who you are in Christ, and how that changes the way you live. Read it slowly and let it lead you to worship.

01 The whole gospel, in miniature

Ephesians gathers the heights of the Christian faith into six short chapters — who God is, who you are in Christ, and how that truth reshapes everything about the way you live.

02 Grace from first to last

Few books state it more clearly: salvation is God's gift, not our achievement. "By grace you have been saved through faith... it is the gift of God." Ephesians frees you from earning what Christ has already given.

03 Doctrine that becomes a way of life

The letter turns on a hinge — three chapters of who you are, three chapters of how you walk. Ephesians refuses to separate believing from living; grace always becomes footsteps.

04 One new humanity

Into a divided world, Ephesians announces that Christ has made enemies into one people — Jew and Gentile, near and far — reconciled to God in one body through the cross, and built together into a dwelling place for God.

"for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

EPHESIANS 2:8 · WEB

ORIENTATION

Before you begin

A quick orientation to Ephesians — who wrote it, when, for whom, and the two great movements to watch for as you read: who you are in Christ, then how you walk.

AUTHOR	Background The letter names Paul as its author (1:1; 3:1), and he writes as a prisoner (3:1; 4:1; 6:20). Tradition places it in Rome around AD 60–62, though some suggest Caesarea or Ephesus, and many scholars doubt Paul wrote it. This study reads it as Paul’s letter. Several of the earliest manuscripts lack “at Ephesus” (1:1), so it may have circulated among other churches.
AUDIENCE	To whom Mainly Gentile believers (2:11; 3:1), alongside Jewish believers (2:11–22; the “we” of 1:11–12 is often read that way), addressed as “the saints who are at Ephesus” (1:1).
OCCASION	Why it was written Ephesians names no single crisis. It is a sweeping meditation on the church’s identity and calling in Christ, with warnings along the way (4:14; 5:6).
THEME	The heart “In Christ.” The phrase rings through the first four chapters, and “in the Lord” carries it to the end. Every blessing, every reconciliation, every command flows from union with Christ.
TONE	The voice Worshipful and soaring. Ephesians 1:3–14 is one long sentence of praise in the Greek; the letter prays and teaches together.
CHRIST	The center Christ is the head over all things, the cornerstone, the one who loved the church and gave Himself up for it (5:25), and the one in whom all things in heaven and earth are summed up.
THE CHURCH	The big picture Ephesians gives a rich view of the church — the body, the temple, the new humanity — God’s means of making His wisdom known “to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places” (3:10).
KEY WORD	“Walk” Paul’s word for the Christian life is “walk” — worthy of your calling, no longer as the Gentiles, in love, as children of light, carefully. In Ephesians, faith becomes footsteps.

STRUCTURE

The shape: 6 chapters, 6 sessions

Two movements. Chapters 1–3 unfold the believer’s wealth — what God has done in Christ. Chapters 4–6 call out the believer’s walk — how we then live. Grace first, then a life shaped by gratitude.

Riches in Christ Ephesians 1–3			Walking Worthy Ephesians 4–6		
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

THE SIX SESSIONS

Your study plan

EITHER WAY

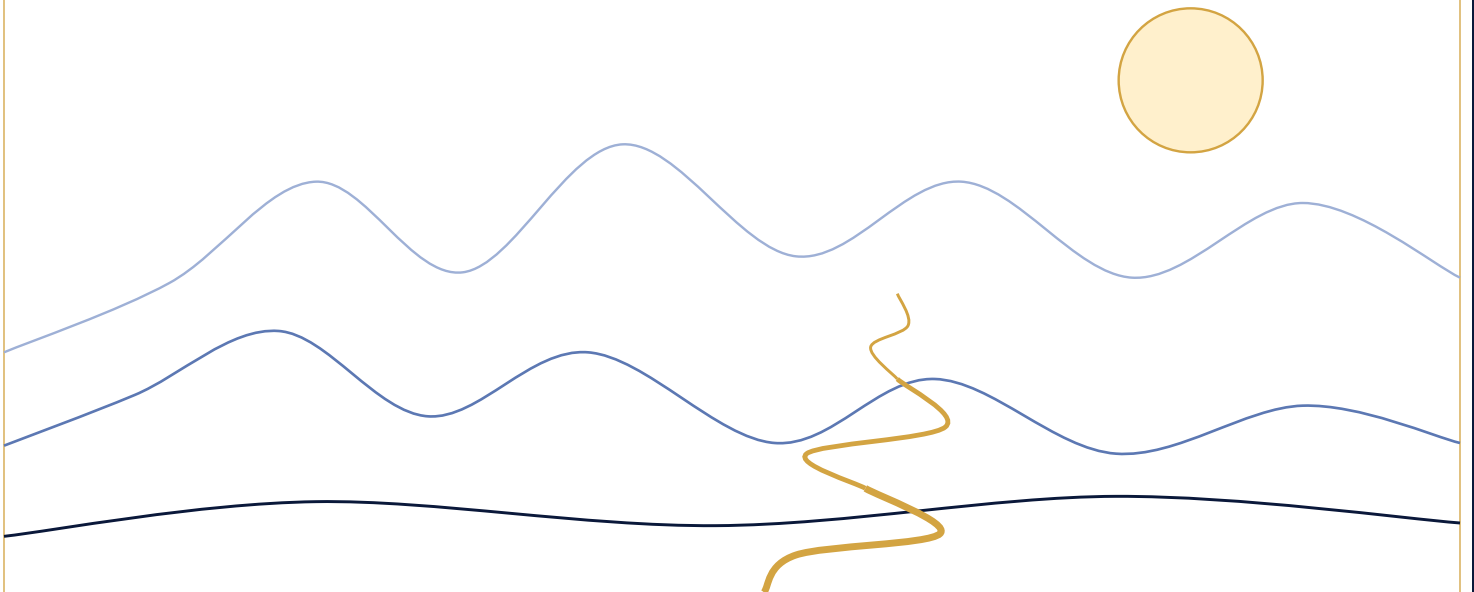
Six sessions carry you through all 6 chapters of Ephesians — from every spiritual blessing in Christ to standing firm in the armor of God.

	SESSION	READ	MEMORY VERSE	SESSION PAGE	LEADER PAGE	TEXT PAGE
1	Every Spiritual Blessing Paul opens not with commands but with worship — pouring out the riches God has lavished on us in Christ, then praying we would actually see them.	Ephesians 1	Ephesians 1:3	9	42	64
2	Saved by Grace From death to life, from far-off to family — chapter 2 is the gospel in two movements: grace that saves the individual, and grace that makes enemies into one new people.	Ephesians 2	Ephesians 2:8–9	13	46	65
3	The Mystery of Christ Paul pauses his argument to marvel at the mystery he's been given to announce — then drops to his knees to pray we would grasp a love beyond knowing.	Ephesians 3	Ephesians 3:20–21	17	49	65
4	Walk Worthy: Unity and Maturity The letter turns. Having shown who we are in Christ, Paul now calls us to walk it out — beginning with the unity and maturity of the body.	Ephesians 4	Ephesians 4:1	21	52	66
5	Walk in Love and Light Be imitators of God. Paul calls us to walk in love and in light, to be filled with the Spirit — and lifts marriage up as a picture of Christ and the church.	Ephesians 5	Ephesians 5:1–2	25	55	67
6	Stand Firm: The Armor of God Paul speaks to children and parents, slaves and masters, then sounds the letter's closing call: be strong in the Lord and stand firm in the full armor of God.	Ephesians 6	Ephesians 6:10–11	29	59	68

PART ONE

The Six Sessions

Read, discuss, reflect, and recall. One session a week carries you through all 6 chapters.



SESSION 1 OF 6

Every Spiritual Blessing

Read **Ephesians 1** · text on pages 64–65

1

Paul opens not with commands but with worship — pouring out the riches God has lavished on us in Christ, then praying we would actually see them.

Ephesians begins with one of the longest sentences in the Bible — a breathless burst of praise. Before Paul asks anything of us, he tells us what God has already done: chosen us before the foundation of the world, adopted us as children, redeemed us through Christ's blood, lavished His grace on us, made known the mystery of His will, and sealed us with the promised Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our inheritance. Many readers hear the Father choosing and adopting (1:3–6), the Son redeeming (1:7–12), and the Spirit sealing (1:13–14). The blessings are “in Christ,” and the refrain rings out “to the praise of his glory” (1:12, 14). Then Paul prays — not for new blessings, but that the eyes of our hearts would be opened to see the hope, the riches, and the power already at work in us. The chapter ends with the soaring picture of Christ raised, exalted, and given as head over all things to the church, which is His body.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ See what God has done for us in Christ, from choosing to sealing (1:3–14)
- ☐ Hear Paul's prayer that the eyes of our hearts would be opened (1:15–19)
- ☐ Recognize Christ as head over all things for the church (1:20–23)

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Ephesians 1:3 Every Spiritual Blessing

Ephesians 1:7 Redemption Through His Blood

Ephesians 1:13–14 Sealed with the Spirit

Ephesians 1:18–19 Eyes of the Heart Enlightened

MEMORY VERSE

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

EPHESIANS 1:3 · WEB

OBSERVE

Read Ephesians 1:3–14 and underline every phrase that begins with or contains “in him,” “in Christ,” or “in the Beloved.” Then read 1:15–23 and note what Paul actually asks God for.

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Ephesians 1 slowly across the week using the plan below. Each day, ask God to open the text to you and to change you through it. In crisis, call or text 988 (U.S.).

- ☐ Day 1 **Ephesians 1:1–2** — Paul greets the saints — grace and peace to those who are “faithful in Christ Jesus.”
- ☐ Day 2 **Ephesians 1:3–6** — Chosen and adopted: God's plan, set in love before the foundation of the world.
- ☐ Day 3 **Ephesians 1:7–10** — Redemption and the mystery of His will — to sum up all things in Christ.
- ☐ Day 4 **Ephesians 1:11–14** — Sealed with the promised Spirit, the guarantee of our inheritance.
- ☐ Day 5 **Ephesians 1:15–23** — Paul prays we would see our hope, our riches, and the power already at work in us.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

- 1** Paul says we have “every spiritual blessing” already. Which of the blessings in 1:3–14 do you most need to believe is true of you?

- 2** Paul writes all of this to believers as praise and comfort (1:3–14). What difference would it make this week to live as someone chosen before the foundation of the world? (Faithful traditions read the choosing in 1:4–5 differently; take what is plain in the verse.)

- 3** Paul prays for the “eyes of your hearts” to be enlightened. Where do you most need that prayer answered right now?

- 4** The chapter ends with Christ as head over all things for the church. How does that reframe whatever feels out of control in your life?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

② Why does Paul open his letter with praise and prayer instead of instruction? What is he establishing about the Christian life before he ever gives a command?

③ Paul's refrain is "to the praise of his glory" (1:12, 14). Where could your week become praise?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Pick one blessing from chapter 1 you tend to forget. Write it where you'll see it this week, and let it shape how you pray and how you face your day.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for blessing me with every spiritual blessing in Christ before I had done anything to earn it. Open the eyes of my heart to see what You have given me in Christ and what You have promised – the hope of Your calling, the riches of the glory of Your inheritance in the saints, the greatness of Your power. Thank You for the Spirit, the pledge of our inheritance. Let me live today to the praise of Your glory. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

1 Paul opens by blessing God, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing — where? (1:3)

☐ A In the heavenly places in Christ

☐ B In the temple and the city of Jerusalem

☐ C In the new church at Ephesus

☐ D In the age that is still to come

2 Having believed, you were sealed with what — described as a pledge of our inheritance? (1:13–14)

☐ A The law of Moses

☐ B The promised Holy Spirit

☐ C The apostles' teaching

☐ D The church's blessing

3 Paul says God chose us before the foundation of the world and “predestined” (chose beforehand) us for adoption (1:4–5). What does Paul say about God’s initiative here? (Traditions differ on how.)

4 What three things does Paul pray the Ephesians would know with enlightened hearts? (1:18–20)

5 Without looking back, write Ephesians 1:3.

Answers are in the leader’s guide, page 44.

SESSION 2 OF 6

Saved by Grace

Read **Ephesians 2** · text on page 65

From death to life, from far-off to family — chapter 2 is the gospel in two movements: grace that saves the individual, and grace that makes enemies into one new people.

Paul now tells us where we started: dead in our trespasses, walking according to the world and the devil, children of wrath like everyone else. Into that hopeless sentence breaks “But God.” Rich in mercy and great in love, God made us alive together with Christ, raised us up, and seated us with Him — by grace, through faith, not as a result of works, so that no one can boast. We are His workmanship, created for good works He prepared. Then Paul widens the lens: the same grace that raised the dead reconciles divided peoples. Gentiles who were “alienated from the commonwealth of Israel” (2:12) are now brought near. Christ has broken down the middle wall of separation between Jew and Gentile, making one new humanity (not replacing Israel), ending the hostility, and building both into a holy temple — a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Those once far off are brought near “in the blood of Christ” (2:13), and both are reconciled “to God through the cross” (2:16). Through Christ we both have access “in one Spirit to the Father” (2:18).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ See where we started: dead in transgressions and sins (2:1–3)
- ☐ Explain how we are saved, by grace through faith and not by works (2:4–10)
- ☐ Trace how Christ makes Jew and Gentile one new people (2:11–22)

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Ephesians 2:4–5 Rich in Mercy

Ephesians 2:8–9 Saved by Grace

Ephesians 2:10 God's Workmanship

Ephesians 2:14 He Is Our Peace

MEMORY VERSE

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast.”

EPHESIANS 2:8–9 · WEB

OBSERVE

Read Ephesians 2:1–10 and mark the turn at “But God” (2:4). List what we were before (2:1–3) and what God did (2:4–10). Then read 2:14–16 and note every “one” and every “both.”

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Ephesians 2 slowly across the week using the plan below. Each day, ask God to open the text to you and to change you through it. In crisis, call or text 988 (U.S.).

- ☐ Day 1 **Ephesians 2:1–3** — The honest diagnosis: dead in trespasses, by nature children of wrath.
- ☐ Day 2 **Ephesians 2:4–7** — “But God” — rich in mercy, He made us alive together with Christ.
- ☐ Day 3 **Ephesians 2:8–10** — Saved by grace through faith, created in Christ for good works.
- ☐ Day 4 **Ephesians 2:11–18** — Once far off, now brought near by the blood of Christ — He is our peace.
- ☐ Day 5 **Ephesians 2:19–22** — No longer strangers: a holy temple, a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

- 1 Paul describes our condition before Christ as “dead in transgressions and sins” (2:1). Why does the word “dead” matter for how we understand grace?

- 2 Where are you still tempted to add your works to grace — to feel you must earn what God calls a gift?

- 3 “We are his workmanship, created... for good works.” How does that hold grace and obedience together without confusing them?

- 4 Christ broke down the middle wall of separation. What dividing wall — in the church, or in your own heart — is grace calling you to let Him tear down? (A boundary that keeps you safe from someone harming you is not one of these walls.)

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

② How does Paul connect personal salvation (2:1–10) with the reconciliation of divided peoples (2:11–22)? Why does he put them in the same chapter?

③ What changes if you believe you are God's workmanship (2:10)?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Name one place you've been keeping score — with God or with another person. This week, treat grace as the gift it is, and extend grace where you safely can. Grace toward someone never requires trust, contact, or staying in harm's way.

PRAYER

Father, I was dead, and You made me alive. I was far off, and You brought me near. Thank You that my salvation is Your gift in Christ Jesus, not my achievement. Where my heart has hardened, soften it in Your time, and keep me safe where I need protection. Build me together with Your people into a place where You are pleased to dwell. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

1 “For by grace you have been saved through faith... it is the gift of God,” not of what? (2:8–9)

☐ (A) Wisdom, so that no one would stumble

☐ (B) Sacrifice, so that no one would fear

☐ (C) Works, so that no one would boast

☐ (D) Joy, so that no one would grieve

2 What does Paul say Christ has done with the “middle wall of separation” between Jew and Gentile? (2:14)

☐ (A) Strengthened it to protect Israel

☐ (B) Moved it inside the church

☐ (C) Left it standing until He returns

☐ (D) Broke it down and made both one

3 In Ephesians 2:1–5, what can the dead do to save themselves, and what does God do? Why does it matter?

4 What does Paul say God prepared beforehand for us to walk in? (2:10)

5 Without looking back, write Ephesians 2:8–9.

Answers are in the leader’s guide, page 48.

SESSION 3 OF 6

The Mystery of Christ

Read **Ephesians 3** · text on pages 65–66

3

Paul pauses his argument to marvel at the mystery he's been given to announce — then drops to his knees to pray we would grasp a love beyond knowing.

Paul calls himself a prisoner of Christ for the sake of the Gentiles, entrusted with a stewardship (a trust to manage) of grace: to make known the mystery hidden for ages and now revealed — that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, sharers in the promise. This was God's plan all along, that through the church His manifold wisdom would be made known to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places. The church has a part in that. Overwhelmed, Paul bows his knees and prays one of the most expansive prayers in Scripture: that we would be strengthened with power through the Spirit in our inner being, that Christ would dwell in our hearts through faith, and that, rooted and grounded in love, we would have power to grasp the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know Christ's love, which surpasses knowledge — and so be filled with all the fullness of God. He ends in a doxology: to Him who is able to do far more than we ask or imagine.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Name the mystery Paul announces: the Gentiles are fellow heirs (3:1–6)
- ☐ See how God's wisdom is made known through the church (3:10–11)
- ☐ Follow Paul's prayer that we would know the love of Christ (3:14–21)

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ephesians 3:6 | Fellow Heirs in Christ |
| Ephesians 3:12 | Bold Access Through Faith |
| Ephesians 3:18–19 | The Love of Christ |
| Ephesians 3:20–21 | Far More Than We Ask |

MEMORY VERSE

“Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to him be the glory in the assembly and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

EPHESIANS 3:20–21 · WEB

OBSERVE

Read Ephesians 3:14–21 slowly. List everything Paul asks God for, and notice the dimensions he names and the love he adds. Then read it again as a prayer for yourself.

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Ephesians 3 slowly across the week using the plan below. Each day, ask God to open the text to you and to change you through it. In crisis, call or text 988 (U.S.).

- ☐ Day 1 **Ephesians 3:1–6** — The mystery revealed: Gentiles are fellow heirs and members of one body.
- ☐ Day 2 **Ephesians 3:7–13** — Paul's stewardship of grace — the church displays God's wisdom to the heavens.
- ☐ Day 3 **Ephesians 3:14–15** — Paul bows his knees before the Father from whom every family is named.
- ☐ Day 4 **Ephesians 3:16–19** — Strengthened to grasp the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.
- ☐ Day 5 **Ephesians 3:20–21** — The doxology (a burst of praise): to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

- 1** Paul's "mystery" in 3:6 is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body. Where do people feel like outsiders, and how does this truth speak to that?

- 2** Paul says the church displays God's wisdom "to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places" (the WEB's wording; traditions differ on who they are). How does that raise your view of the ordinary local church?

- 3** Paul prays we would be strengthened to "comprehend" a love that "surpasses knowledge." What does it mean to know something beyond knowing?

- 4** Where do you need to believe God can do "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" this week?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

② Why does Paul turn from teaching to prayer? What does the content of his prayer reveal about what he thinks believers most need?

③ Paul calls himself the very least of all saints (3:8). Where do you feel too small for the grace you have been given?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Pray Paul's prayer (3:14–19) over yourself and someone you love every day this week. Watch for where God strengthens your grasp of His love.

PRAYER

Father, strengthen me with power through Your Spirit in my inner being. Let Christ dwell in my heart through faith, and root me so deeply in love that I begin to grasp how wide and long and high and deep Your love really is. Do in me far more than I can ask or imagine, and to You be the glory. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

1 Paul names “the mystery” now revealed. What is it? (3:6)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ A The exact date of Christ’s return to the earth | ☐ B The identity of the man of lawlessness in the last days |
| ☐ C That Gentiles are fellow heirs in Christ | ☐ D The meaning of the temple furnishings in the old covenant |

2 Paul’s closing burst of praise says God is able to do what? (3:20)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ A Far more than all we ask or think | ☐ B Only what we ask of Him in prayer |
| ☐ C What the church is able to bear | ☐ D Whatever our faith is strong enough for |

3 In Paul’s prayer (3:14–19), what does he ask that believers, rooted and grounded in love, would come to know — and what is the goal?

4 Paul calls himself “the very least of all saints” (3:8) — yet he preaches to the Gentiles. How do those fit together?

5 Without looking back, write Ephesians 3:20–21.

Answers are in the leader’s guide, page 51.

SESSION 4 OF 6

Walk Worthy: Unity and Maturity

Read **Ephesians 4** • text on pages 66–67

4

The letter turns. Having shown who we are in Christ, Paul now calls us to walk it out – beginning with the unity and maturity of the body.

“Therefore” — the great pivot of the letter. Because of all God has done, walk worthy of your calling. That worthy walk begins not with heroics but with lowliness, humility, patience, and eager effort to keep the unity of the Spirit. There is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God — seven ones (“baptism” is read variously) at the heart of the church. Into that one body the ascended Christ gives gifts: apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers — given for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ, so the whole body grows up into maturity, into Christ the head, building itself up in love. The chapter then gets practical about the new self: no longer walking as the world walks, but putting off falsehood, stealing, corrupting talk, and bitterness (4:26 allows anger that does not turn into sin), and putting on truth, honest work, words that build up, kindness, and forgiveness — “as God also in Christ forgave you.”

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Describe the unity Paul asks us to keep (4:1–6)
- ☐ See why Christ gives gifts to the church (4:11–16)
- ☐ Compare the old self with the new in how we speak, work, and forgive (4:17–32)

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Ephesians 4:1–3 Walk Worthy

Ephesians 4:4–6 Seven Ones

Ephesians 4:11–13 Gifts to Build Up the Body

Ephesians 4:32 Kind and Forgiving

MEMORY VERSE

“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called.”

EPHESIANS 4:1 • WEB

OBSERVE

Read Ephesians 4:1–16 and count the “ones” in 4:4–6. Then read 4:22–32 and list the “put away” commands beside the “put on” command.

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Ephesians 4 slowly across the week using the plan below. Each day, ask God to open the text to you and to change you through it. If a passage here stirs up old hurt, you may stop and talk with a trusted pastor or counselor.

- ☐ Day 1 **Ephesians 4:1–6** — Walk worthy: humility, patience, and the sevenfold oneness of the body.
- ☐ Day 2 **Ephesians 4:7–13** — The ascended Christ gives gifts for the perfecting of the saints and the building up of the body.
- ☐ Day 3 **Ephesians 4:14–16** — Growing up into Christ the head, the body building itself in love.
- ☐ Day 4 **Ephesians 4:17–24** — Put off the old self and put on the new, created in righteousness.
- ☐ Day 5 **Ephesians 4:25–32** — Truthful speech, honest work, kind words — forgive as God forgave you.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

- 1** Paul roots the worthy walk in lowliness, humility, and patience (4:2). Which of those is hardest for you, and where is it tested?

- 2** We are told to “keep” the unity of the Spirit, not create it. How does that change the way you handle disagreement with other believers?

- 3** Gifts are given “for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving.” How does 4:11–16 describe who builds up the body?

- 4** Of the put off / put on pairs in 4:25–32, which one do you most need to practice this week?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

② Why does Paul move from the unity of the body (4:1–16) straight into personal honesty, work, speech, and forgiveness (4:17–32)? How are they connected?

③ Paul says to speak "truth in love" (4:15). Where do you need both this week?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Choose one put off / put on pair from 4:25–32. Name the old habit, name the new one, and take one concrete step to make the trade this week. If one of these is tied to a person who hurt you, a wise first step may be telling a trusted pastor or counselor, not confronting that person.

PRAYER

Lord, help me walk worthy of the calling You gave me — with humility and patience, eager to keep the unity Your Spirit has made. Where I still wear the old self, give me grace to take it off and put on the new. Make me kind and tender-hearted, and lead me in forgiving at the pace of Your grace, just as You forgave me in Christ. Where I have been hurt, keep me safe and heal me. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1 Ephesians 4:4–6 stacks up the “ones” of Christian unity. How does the list run?
 - A One city, one language, one calendar, one market, one house, one road, one song, one table
 - B One temple, one priesthood, one law, one feast, one nation, one king, one altar
 - C One shepherd, one flock, one fold, one gate, one vine, one door, one light, one way, one life
 - D One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father
- 2 Why does the ascended Christ give apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers? (4:11–12)
 - A To make the church’s decisions on behalf of the members
 - B For the perfecting of the saints and building up the body
 - C To make every believer a teacher
 - D To settle doctrinal disputes by a vote of the leaders
- 3 The whole second half of the letter hangs on 4:1. What does Paul beg the readers to do?

- 4 How does Paul say the new life handles anger and speech in 4:26–32, and what is the model for forgiveness?

- 5 Without looking back, write Ephesians 4:1.

Answers are in the leader’s guide, page 54.

SESSION 5 OF 6

Walk in Love and Light

Read **Ephesians 5** · text on pages 67–68

Be imitators of God. Paul calls us to walk in love and in light, to be filled with the Spirit – and lifts marriage up as a picture of Christ and the church.

Paul sets the bar high: be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. He contrasts the works of darkness with the fruit of goodness, righteousness, and truth. Once we were darkness; now we are light in the Lord. Then comes the alternative: “Don’t be drunken with wine... but be filled with the Spirit” — overflowing in song, thanksgiving, and “submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.” From that Spirit-filled life Paul turns to marriage. He tells wives, “be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord” (5:22), says the husband is head of the wife as Christ is head of the assembly (5:23), and tells husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the assembly and gave Himself up for it (5:25). Christians read this passage differently: some hear distinct roles for husband and wife, others hear the mutual submission of 5:21 shaping all of it. Both agree that Christ’s sacrificial love is the measure. “This mystery is great,” Paul says, “but I speak concerning Christ and of the assembly.”

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Understand what it means to walk in love and as children of light (5:1–14)
- ☐ Notice what follows being filled with the Spirit (5:18–21)
- ☐ Read the household instructions with Christ and the church in view (5:22–33)

THIS SESSION’S KEY PASSAGES

Ephesians 5:1–2 Walk in Love

Ephesians 5:8–9 Children of Light

Ephesians 5:18–20 Filled with the Spirit

Ephesians 5:31–32 Christ and the Church

MEMORY VERSE

“Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children. Walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave himself up for us.”

EPHESIANS 5:1–2 · WEB

OBSERVE

Read Ephesians 5:1–21 and mark each command about how to “walk.” Then read 5:22–33 and underline every reference to Christ and the church.

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Ephesians 5 slowly across the week using the plan below. Each day, ask God to open the text to you and to change you through it. If a passage here has ever been used to hurt you, set it down. If you are not safe at home, call 1-800-799-7233 or text START to 88788 (U.S.). In danger now: 911.

- ☐ **Day 1 Ephesians 5:1–7** — Imitate God; walk in love as Christ gave Himself; flee greed and impurity.
- ☐ **Day 2 Ephesians 5:8–14** — Once darkness, now light — walk as children of light, bearing the fruit of goodness, righteousness, and truth.
- ☐ **Day 3 Ephesians 5:15–17** — Walk carefully and wisely, making the best use of the time.
- ☐ **Day 4 Ephesians 5:18–21** — Be filled with the Spirit — singing, thankful, submitting to one another.
- ☐ **Day 5 Ephesians 5:22–33** — Marriage as a living picture of Christ’s love for the church.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

- 1 “Walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave himself up for us.” What does love like that look like when it is freely given, never forced?

- 2 Paul says we were once darkness but are now light. What does it look like to “walk as children of light” in an ordinary week?

- 3 “Be filled with the Spirit” is set against being “drunken with wine.” What do people reach for to fill or numb themselves? What does Paul say being filled with the Spirit looks like (5:19–21)?

- 4 Paul says the whole picture points to Christ and the church (5:32). What does Christ’s self-giving love (5:25) show us about what love is, and what it never does?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

② Why might Paul place the household instructions (5:22–6:9) right after the call to be filled with the Spirit and to submit to one another (5:18–21)?

③ Where is thanksgiving missing from your days, and what would change if it were there (5:20)?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Pick one: a way to “walk in love” this week toward someone safe, or a pattern to bring to God and, if you choose, a trusted friend. Love as Christ loved never means putting up with being hurt. Take one concrete step, depending on the Spirit's filling.

PRAYER

Father, make me an imitator of You, a beloved child who walks in love as Christ loved me and gave Himself for me. Fill me with Your Spirit (5:18) and keep me from looking elsewhere to be filled. Let my relationships put Christ's sacrificial love on display, and help me walk as a child of light. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1 “Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children. Walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and...” (5:1–2)
 - A kept himself separate
 - B taught us the commandments
 - C gave himself up for us
 - D judged the world
- 2 “Don’t be drunken with wine, in which is dissipation, but...” what instead? (5:18)
 - A be filled with the Spirit
 - B drink only at the feasts
 - C abstain from every feast
 - D keep silent at every meal
- 3 “You were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord” (5:8). How does Paul say to live, and what is to be done with the works of darkness?

- 4 What is the measure Paul gives husbands for loving their wives (5:25) — and where does the passage finally point?

- 5 Without looking back, write Ephesians 5:1–2.

Answers are in the leader’s guide, page 58.

SESSION 6 OF 6

Stand Firm: The Armor of God

Read Ephesians 6 · text on pages 68–69

6

Paul speaks to children and parents, slaves and masters, then sounds the letter's closing call: be strong in the Lord and stand firm in the full armor of God.

Paul finishes the worthy walk in the home: children and parents, slaves and masters (the WEB says “servants”; this study does not read it as approval of slavery). Paul reminds all of the Master in heaven, with whom “there is no partiality” (6:9). Then he lifts our eyes to the larger struggle. “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might” — for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities, and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. The answer is not our willpower but God’s armor: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, gospel-readiness for our feet, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God — all of it followed by prayer “at all times in the Spirit” (6:18). Three times Paul says “stand.” Christ is already seated “far above all rule, authority, power, dominion” (1:21); our calling is to stand firm in Him. Paul closes by asking, even from prison, for prayer that he would speak boldly.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Read Paul’s words to children, parents, slaves, and masters (6:1–9)
- ☐ Name the armor of God and what Paul says the struggle is against (6:10–17)
- ☐ Notice Paul’s call to pray at all times and his request for boldness (6:18–20)

THIS SESSION’S KEY PASSAGES

Ephesians 6:10–11 The Armor of God

Ephesians 6:12 Not Against Flesh and Blood

Ephesians 6:14–17 The Full Armor

Ephesians 6:18 Pray at All Times

MEMORY VERSE

“Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

EPHESIANS 6:10–11 · WEB

OBSERVE

Read Ephesians 6:10–20 and list each piece of armor with the truth it represents. Notice how many times Paul uses the word “stand,” and what verse 18 adds around it all.

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Ephesians 6 slowly across the week using the plan below. Each day, ask God to open the text to you and to change you through it. If a passage here has ever been used to hurt you, set it down. If you are in crisis, call or text 988 (U.S.). In danger now: 911.

- ☐ Day 1 **Ephesians 6:1–4** — Children obey. Fathers do not provoke, and nurture in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
- ☐ Day 2 **Ephesians 6:5–9** — Slaves and masters (the WEB says “servants”), and the Master in heaven with whom there is no partiality.
- ☐ Day 3 **Ephesians 6:10–13** — Be strong in the Lord; the struggle is against spiritual forces, not flesh and blood.
- ☐ Day 4 **Ephesians 6:14–17** — The full armor of God — truth, righteousness, gospel, faith, salvation, the Word.
- ☐ Day 5 **Ephesians 6:18–24** — Pray at all times; Tychicus is sent; peace, love, and grace to believers.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

- 1** Paul says the struggle is “not against flesh and blood.” How does knowing people aren’t the enemy change how you face conflict and temptation? (People who do harm are still responsible for it; if you are being hurt, getting safe comes first.)

- 2** Each piece of armor is a truth already true in Christ. Which piece do you most need to “put on” this week — truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, or the Word?

- 3** Three times Paul says “stand.” What’s the difference between standing firm and striving in our own strength?

- 4** Paul adds prayer “at all times in the Spirit” (6:18). What does that add to the armor?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

② Why does Paul end a letter so full of grace and unity with a call to spiritual warfare? How do the armor pieces connect back to the truths of chapters 1–5?

③ Who could you pray for this week the way Paul asks to be prayed for (6:19–20)?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Choose one place where you need to stand firm this week. Put on one piece of armor each day in prayer, and stand in the strength of the Lord. Standing firm is never the same as staying in danger.

PRAYER

Lord, make me strong in You and in the strength of Your might — not in my own. Clothe me in Your armor: gird me with truth, guard me with righteousness, ready my feet with the gospel, lift the shield of faith, set on the helmet of salvation, and put Your Word in my hand. Teach me to pray at all times, and to stand firm in Christ, who is far above every power. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1 Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against... (6:12)**

☐ (A) Rome and the armies that held Paul prisoner ☐ (C) Our own bodies and their weaker desires	☐ (B) False teachers who trouble the young churches ☐ (D) The powers and spiritual forces of wickedness
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- 2 In the whole armor of God, which piece is “the word of God”? (6:17)**

☐ (A) The shield of faith ☐ (C) The helmet of salvation	☐ (B) The sword of the Spirit ☐ (D) The belt of truth
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- 3 Which command in the household section does Paul call “the first commandment with a promise”? (6:1–3)**

- 4 After listing the armor, what does Paul say comes next (6:18)?**

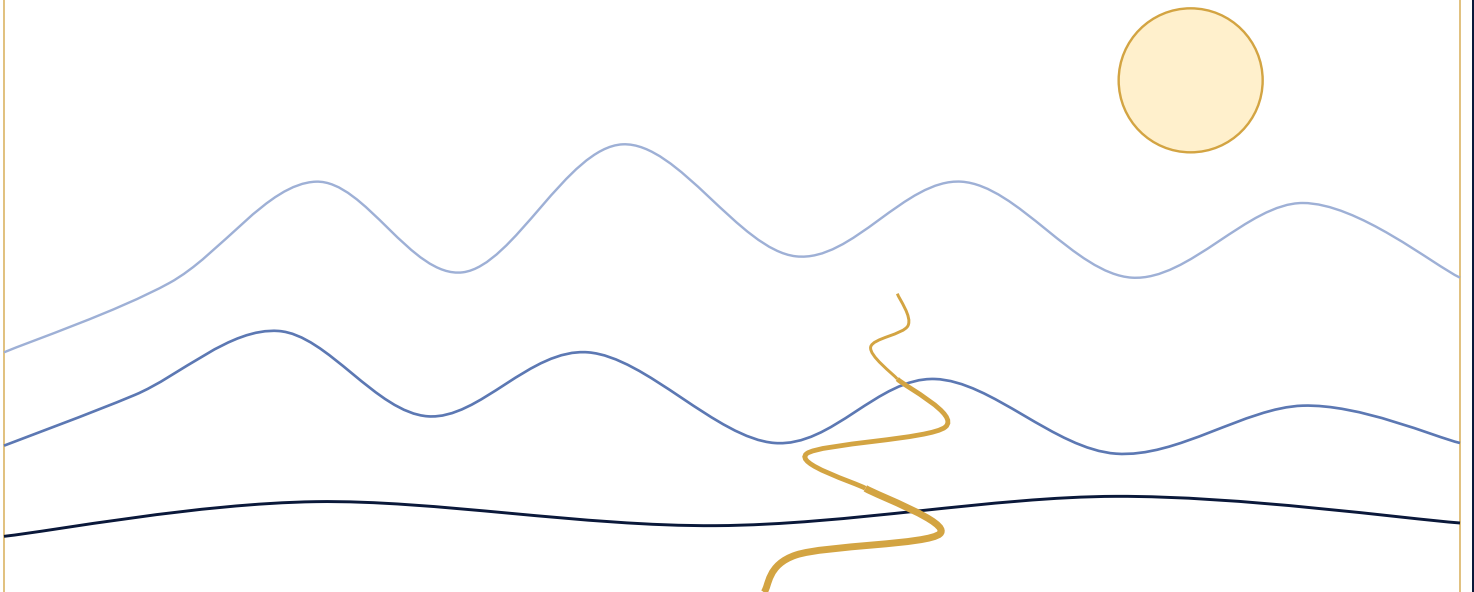
- 5 Without looking back, write Ephesians 6:10–11.**

Answers are in the leader’s guide, page 61.

PART TWO

Reference

The movements, the themes, the passages, the people, and every chapter at a glance.



KEY MOVEMENTS • EPHESIANS 1–6

Ten key movements through the letter

Ephesians moves from praise to prayer to practice. These ten movements carry you from every spiritual blessing, through one new humanity, to the armor of God. Read them with the six sessions.

1	Every Spiritual Blessing Ephesians 1:3–14	IN THE LETTER	Paul bursts into praise: chosen before creation, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, and sealed with the Spirit — all “in Christ,” all to the praise of God’s glory.
2	Made Alive Ephesians 2:1–10	IN THE LETTER	Once dead in our sins, we are made alive together with Christ — by grace, through faith. Not saved by works, but created for them; we are God’s workmanship.
3	One New Humanity Ephesians 2:11–22	IN THE LETTER	Gentiles once “alienated from the commonwealth of Israel” (2:12) are brought near, and Christ tears down the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile, making one new people — a holy temple, a dwelling for God by the Spirit.
4	The Mystery Revealed Ephesians 3:1–13	IN THE LETTER	The mystery hidden for ages is unveiled: the Gentiles are fellow heirs. Through the church, God’s manifold wisdom is made known to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places.
5	Rooted in Love Ephesians 3:14–21	IN THE LETTER	Paul kneels and prays that the church would be strengthened to grasp the height and depth of Christ’s love, and be filled with all the fullness of God.
6	The Unity of the Body Ephesians 4:1–16	IN THE LETTER	One body, one Spirit, one Lord. Christ gives gifts for the perfecting of the saints, building the body up in love until it reaches the maturity of Christ Himself.
7	The New Self Ephesians 4:17–32	IN THE LETTER	Put off the old self and put on the new — truth instead of lies, honest work, words that build up, and forgiveness “as God also in Christ forgave you.”
8	Walk in Love and Light Ephesians 5:1–21	IN THE LETTER	Imitate God and walk in love as Christ loved us. Leave the unfruitful works of darkness, live as children of light, wake from sleep, and be filled with the Spirit — singing, giving thanks, and submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

9 Households Under Christ

Ephesians 5:22–6:9

IN THE LETTER

Christ's lordship reshapes the home. Wives and husbands, children and parents, slaves and masters (the WEB says "servants") are each addressed directly, and husbands are called to the self-giving love Christ showed the church (5:25).

10 The Armor of God

Ephesians 6:10–20

IN THE LETTER

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood. Stand firm in the full armor of God — truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, and the Word.

MY NOTES

MAJOR THEMES

The threads running through Ephesians

The ideas Paul returns to again and again — each a facet of life in Christ.

01 In Christ

Ephesians 1:3

The defining phrase of the letter. Every blessing is located “in Christ” — believers are chosen, redeemed, raised, and seated with Him in the heavenly places.

02 By grace

Ephesians 2:8–9

Salvation is God’s gift from first to last, received by faith and never earned, so that no one can boast.

03 The riches of God

Ephesians 1:7

Paul piles up the language of wealth — the riches of grace, of glory, of His inheritance — an abundance lavished on the undeserving.

04 One new humanity

Ephesians 2:14–16

Christ Himself is our peace, breaking down “the middle wall of separation” (2:14) and ending the hostility, creating one body out of two long-divided peoples.

05 The church

Ephesians 1:22–23

The body of which Christ is head, the fullness of him who fills all in all — the people through whom God’s manifold wisdom is made known (3:10).

06 The mystery

Ephesians 3:6

The long-hidden plan now revealed: the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, sharers together in the promise of Christ.

07 Walking worthy

Ephesians 4:1

Calling becomes conduct. The grace of chapters 1–3 produces the worthy walk of chapters 4–6 — belief that takes its first steps.

08 Filled with the Spirit

Ephesians 5:18

Not drunk with wine but filled with the Spirit — overflowing in song, thanksgiving, and “submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.”

09 Christ and the church

Ephesians 5:31–32

Marriage is a living parable of a greater mystery: Christ’s self-giving love for His church.

10 Spiritual warfare

Ephesians 6:12

Paul says our struggle is against the spiritual forces of wickedness (6:12), and we stand in the strength God supplies, not our own.

KEY PASSAGES

Passages worth knowing well

Ten pivotal texts that carry the heart of Ephesians. Read them, mark them, return to them.

Ephesians 1:3	Every Spiritual Blessing Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.
Ephesians 1:7	Redemption Through His Blood In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.
Ephesians 2:4–5	Rich in Mercy But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us... made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved.
Ephesians 2:8–9	Saved by Grace By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast.
Ephesians 2:10	God's Workmanship We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them.
Ephesians 3:18–19	The Love of Christ ...and to know Christ's love which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
Ephesians 4:1–3	Walk Worthy Walk worthily of the calling with which you were called... with all lowliness and humility, with patience, bearing with one another in love.
Ephesians 4:32	Kind and Forgiving Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God also in Christ forgave you.
Ephesians 5:1–2	Imitators of God Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children. Walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling fragrance.
Ephesians 6:10–11	The Armor of God Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

KEY PEOPLE

The people of Ephesians

Ephesians names few individuals but is full of people — the apostle who wrote it, the brother who carried it, and the one new humanity God is building in Christ.

Paul

The apostle in chains, writing as a prisoner (traditionally in Rome) with a heart full of worship for the church's glory in Christ.

Tychicus

Paul's "beloved brother and faithful servant," sent to tell the Ephesians how Paul was doing and to comfort their hearts (6:21–22).

The Ephesian church

Mainly Gentile believers alongside Jewish believers (2:11–22), built together "for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (2:22).

Jew and Gentile

The two peoples once divided by the middle wall of separation, now reconciled into one new humanity in Christ.

The Church, loved by Christ

The body and temple at the heart of the letter's picture of God's people — God's means of making His manifold wisdom known "to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places" (3:10).

Christ Jesus

The risen, ascended Lord — head over all things, cornerstone, and the one who loved the church and gave Himself up for it — in whom all things are summed up.

ALL 6 CHAPTERS · A CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER JOURNEY

The Library

Read any chapter in full in the World English Bible. Each session's Observe step and one thing to live out are on its pages (9–32).

RICHES IN CHRIST

1 Every Spiritual Blessing

2 Saved by Grace

3 The Mystery Revealed

WALKING WORTHY

4 Unity and Maturity

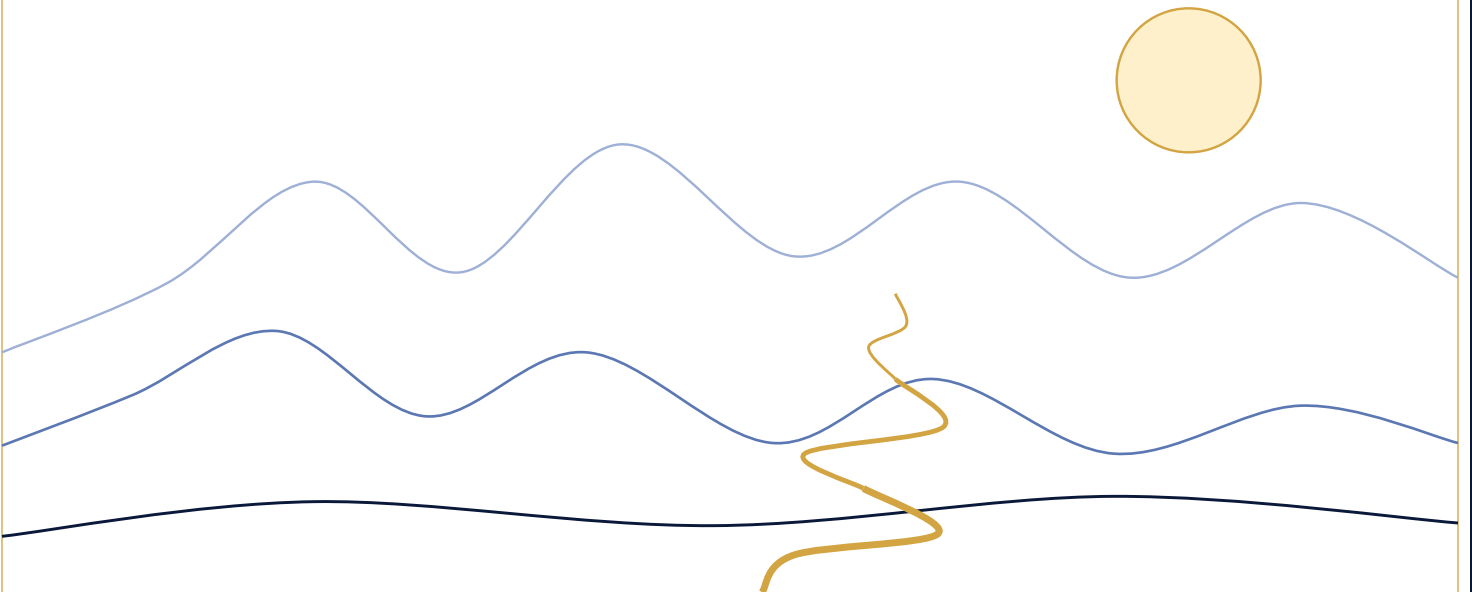
5 Light and Love

6 The Armor of God

PART THREE

Leader's Guide and Answer Guide

Group leader notes, a timed plan, an answer guide, and the recall answer key for every session.



LEADER'S GUIDE

Leading this study

You do not need to be a Bible teacher to lead this study. You need to have read the passage, to ask the questions, and to leave room for people to answer them.

Before you meet

- Read the session's chapters twice, once straight through and once slowly.
- Read that session's leader page, including the note on how to open.
- Decide which questions matter most for your group. You will rarely finish all of them, and that is fine.
- Pray for the people who will be in the room, by name.

In the room

- Read Scripture aloud before discussing it. Let the text speak first.
- Ask the question, then wait. Silence usually means people are thinking.
- When an answer drifts, ask, "Where do you see that in the passage?"
- Keep to the time plan loosely. Protect the closing minutes for reflection and prayer.

How to read a leader page

Group leader notes	How to open the session, and what to keep in view as the group talks.
Timed plan	A suggested use of the hour, drawn to scale.
Answer guide	What the passage supports for each discussion question, with verse references, and a follow-up question to use if the group stalls.
Reflection notes	Reflection questions are personal and have no answer to check. Each has a short note on what it is for and how to lead it.
Recall answer key	The recall practice answers. Online, option order may differ: match by answer.

USING THE ANSWER GUIDE

The answer guide is there so you can lead with confidence. It is not a script to read aloud. Let the group do the finding; use the guide to confirm, to fill a gap, or to bring the conversation back to the text. Questions marked **PERSONAL** have no single right answer. For those, the guide gives what the passage offers and what a good answer tends to include.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 1 OF 6

Every Spiritual Blessing

Ephesians 1 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 9–12 · memory verse Ephesians 1:3

GROUP LEADER NOTES

This chapter can feel like a waterfall — so many blessings rushing by that no one slows down to receive any. Pick two or three (chosen, adopted, sealed) and dwell on them. The goal is not to master the theology but to be moved to worship, the way Paul is. Notice that Paul prays for wisdom, revelation and sight (1:17–18). Believers have far more in Christ than we often see. Ask the group to keep personal stories in the room, and tell them plainly that if someone may be in danger you will get them help. If someone says something that worries you for their safety, talk with them privately afterward, in a way they choose. Before the first session, learn your church's child-protection policy and your state's reporting rules. In many U.S. states clergy and church workers must report suspected child abuse to child protective services or the police, and a call to a hotline may not meet that duty. Never promise a child, or anyone, total secrecy. If anyone mentions suicide in any session, follow the response in the session 6 notes (page 59). Check once now that these U.S. numbers are current, so you are not checking during a crisis: National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1-800-799-7233 or text START to 88788; Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-422-4453; Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, call or text 988; SAMHSA National Helpline, 1-800-662-4357; in immediate danger, call 911. If anyone worries they are not among the chosen, answer plainly from this chapter: Paul writes the whole chapter as comfort to believers, and 1:13 says those who heard the word of truth and believed were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. Jesus says, "He who comes to me I will in no way throw out" (John 6:37). If the worry is constant and tormenting, encourage a private talk with a pastor or counselor, since ongoing fear about salvation can be carried and treated and is not proof of being unchosen. Do not debate predestination (God choosing beforehand) in this session. Invite, never press. Each person shares only what they choose.

SIXTY MINUTES

Read this before you gather — no seminary required. In danger now: 911. Crisis: call or text 988. Abuse at home: 1-800-799-7233 or text START to 88788. Child abuse: 1-800-422-4453. Sexual assault: 1-800-656-4673 (RAINN). Human trafficking: 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733. SAMHSA treatment referral line: 1-800-662-4357. (All U.S.; elsewhere, use your local emergency number.)

5	10	10	20	15
Open	Read together	Observe	Interpret	Apply and pray

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

- 1** Paul says we have “every spiritual blessing” already. Which of the blessings in 1:3–14 do you most need to believe is true of you? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. Paul says God “has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (1:3). Paul then names some of them, that God “chose us in him before the foundation of the world” (1:4) and that in Christ “we have our redemption through his blood” (1:7). Faithful traditions understand the choosing in 1:4–5 differently, and the group can receive the blessing without settling that. Each person can say which blessing they most want to take hold of, and no one has to explain why.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 1:3–7 again. Which blessings does Paul say are ours in Christ?

- 2** Paul writes all of this to believers as praise and comfort (1:3–14). What difference would it make this week to live as someone chosen before the foundation of the world? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. The text says God “chose us in him before the foundation of the world” (1:4) and gives the aim, “that we would be holy and without defect before him in love.” Verse 5 says He acted “according to the good pleasure of his desire” (1:5), and verse 6 gives the end, “to the praise of the glory of his grace.” Faithful traditions read election and predestination (God choosing beforehand) differently, and the group can take what is plain in both verses without settling that. Each person can say what might change in an ordinary day, and no one has to say more than they choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 1:4–5 again. When does Paul say God chose us, and what for?

- 3** Paul prays for the “eyes of your hearts” to be enlightened. Where do you most need that prayer answered right now? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. Paul prays that God “may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him” (1:17), and he asks for “the eyes of your hearts enlightened” (1:18). Paul names what he wants them to see, “the hope of his calling” (1:18) and “the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe” (1:19). People can say which of these they most need to see right now, and they can say as little as they like.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 1:17–19. What does Paul want the eyes of the heart to see?

- 4** The chapter ends with Christ as head over all things for the church. How does that reframe whatever feels out of control in your life? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. Paul says God raised Christ and “made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places” (1:20), “far above all rule, authority, power, dominion, and every name that is named” (1:21). Verse 22 says He “put all things in subjection under his feet” (1:22) and “gave him to be head over all things for the assembly.” The WEB says assembly where many translations say church. People can set whatever feels out of control beside these verses, and they can share as much or as little as they choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 1:20–22. Where is Christ placed, and what is under His feet?

NOTES

Reflection questions

- 1** Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?
This question asks each person to name one phrase or moment from the week where God felt near. The reading is mostly praise, so people may point to a line such as 1:3 or 1:18. Share a short answer of your own first, and let others say as much or as little as they like.
- 2** Why does Paul open his letter with praise and prayer instead of instruction? What is he establishing about the Christian life before he ever gives a command?
Paul opens with praise in 1:3 and moves to thanksgiving and prayer in 1:15–19. Lead the group to notice what he puts first before they talk about application. Keep the answers tied to what the verses say God has done.
- 3** Paul's refrain is “to the praise of his glory” (1:12, 14). Where could your week become praise?
This question looks for one place in an ordinary week that could become praise (1:12, 14). Let people say as much or as little as they like, and leave a minute of quiet before the prayer.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

- 1** Paul opens by blessing God, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing — where? (1:3)
 - A** In the heavenly places in Christ
“every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” — the believer's wealth is located in Christ Himself.
- 2** Having believed, you were sealed with what — described as a pledge of our inheritance? (1:13–14)
 - B** The promised Holy Spirit
Sealed with “the promised Holy Spirit” — “a pledge of our inheritance” (1:14), God's own down payment guaranteeing what is coming.

- 3** Paul says God chose us before the foundation of the world and “predestined” (chose beforehand) us for adoption (1:4–5). What does Paul say about God’s initiative here? (Traditions differ on how.)

God's initiative comes first. Paul says God "chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without defect before him in love" (1:4), and "predestined us for adoption as children through Jesus Christ" (1:5). Christians differ on how that choosing relates to human response, and all agree the praise goes to God (1:6).

- 4** What three things does Paul pray the Ephesians would know with enlightened hearts? (1:18–20)

The hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe — the same power that raised Christ from the dead.

- ## 5 Memory verse

Ephesians 1:3, printed on page 9.

LEADER'S NOTES

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 2 OF 6

Saved by Grace

Ephesians 2 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 13–16 · memory verse Ephesians 2:8–9

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Two truths sit side by side here, and groups often grab one and drop the other. First: salvation is entirely a gift — let people who are tired of performing actually exhale. Second: that same grace creates unity — so invite the group to notice any dividing walls Christ has already broken down (2:14). Paul first speaks of Gentiles who were “alienated from the commonwealth of Israel” (2:12) and are now brought near (2:13, 2:19). They share in the promise (3:6), and Paul says elsewhere that God’s gifts and calling are irrevocable (Romans 11:29). If someone asks about “the law of commandments contained in ordinances” (2:15), many scholars understand it as the ordinances that divided Jew from Gentile, not as Paul calling God’s Law evil (Romans 7:12). Traditions explain it differently. Then bring it home to our own dividing walls. Do not let 2:1–3 become a verdict on a person’s worth. Paul writes it so that “But God” (2:4) can land. If someone sounds crushed rather than grateful, bring them to 2:4–10 and remind them that God loved them (2:4). Christ’s peace between Jew and Gentile does not require anyone to go back to a person who has harmed them. Reconciliation needs repentance and safety. Invite, never press. Each person shares only what they choose.

SIXTY MINUTES

Read this before you gather — no seminary required. In danger now: 911. Crisis: call or text 988. Abuse at home: 1-800-799-7233 or text START to 88788. Child abuse: 1-800-422-4453. Sexual assault: 1-800-656-4673 (RAINN). Human trafficking: 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733. SAMHSA treatment referral line: 1-800-662-4357. (All U.S.; elsewhere, use your local emergency number.)

5	10	10	20	15
Open	Read together	Observe	Interpret	Apply and pray

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

- 1 Paul describes our condition before Christ as “dead in transgressions and sins” (2:1). Why does the word “dead” matter for how we understand grace?

Paul says that we were “dead in transgressions and sins” (2:1) and “by nature children of wrath” (2:3). Then comes “But God, being rich in mercy” (2:4), and verse 5 says He “made us alive together with Christ” (2:5). In these verses every action that gives life belongs to God. Paul adds in the same verse, “by grace you have been saved.”

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 2:1–5. Who is acting in 2:1–3, and who is acting from 2:4 onward?

2 Where are you still tempted to add your works to grace — to feel you must earn what God calls a gift? (PERSONAL)

There is no single right answer. Verse 8 says “by grace you have been saved through faith,” and 2:9 adds “not of works, that no one would boast.” Most readers take the gift in 2:8 to be the whole salvation, grace received through faith, and some also hear faith itself as given. Either way, Paul says plainly that “it is the gift of God.” People can say where they feel a pull to earn, and they can share as much as they choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 2:8–9. What does Paul say about works and boasting?

3 “We are his workmanship, created... for good works.” How does that hold grace and obedience together without confusing them?

Verse 9 says salvation is “not of works” (2:9), so no one can boast. Verse 10 gives the next step in the order, “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (2:10). The works are what “God prepared before that we would walk in them.” In the text, grace comes first, and the good works follow as something God made ready.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 2:8–10. Whose work is described in each verse?

4 Christ broke down the middle wall of separation. What dividing wall — in the church, or in your own heart — is grace calling you to let Him tear down? (A boundary that keeps you safe from someone harming you is not one of these walls.) (PERSONAL)

There is no single right answer. Verse 14 says Christ “broke down the middle wall of separation” (2:14), and 2:15 says He abolished in His flesh “the hostility, the law of commandments contained in ordinances.” Many scholars take this to mean the ordinances that divided Jew from Gentile, not that God’s Law was evil, and traditions explain it differently. Paul says this was done so that He might “create in himself one new man of the two” and “reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross” (2:15–16). The two are the Gentiles and Israel (2:11–12). The verses speak of the wall as already broken down, so people can name a divide they see and ask what that means there. Share only as much as you choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 2:14–16. What does Paul say Christ has done to the wall and the hostility?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where is God meeting you in this session’s reading?

This chapter moves people from dead to alive in 2:5 and from far off to near in 2:13. Invite anyone who wishes to name the phrase that stood out. Let answers be short, and share one of your own first.

- 2** How does Paul connect personal salvation (2:1–10) with the reconciliation of divided peoples (2:11–22)? Why does he put them in the same chapter?
This question asks the group to see how 2:1–10 and 2:11–22 fit together. Let them find the words one and both in 2:14–16 and through him in 2:18 before anyone offers a view. Keep the discussion to what the chapter shows.
- 3** What changes if you believe you are God's workmanship (2:10)?
Ask for a volunteer to read 2:10 aloud. It says we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand for us to walk in. Let each person say as much as they choose.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

- 1** "For by grace you have been saved through faith... it is the gift of God," not of what? (2:8–9)
C Works, so that no one would boast
"not of works, that no one would boast" — salvation is God's gift from first to last.
- 2** What does Paul say Christ has done with the "middle wall of separation" between Jew and Gentile? (2:14)
D Broke it down and made both one
"broke down the middle wall of separation" — in Himself Christ made the two into one new humanity.
- 3** In Ephesians 2:1–5, what can the dead do to save themselves, and what does God do? Why does it matter?
The dead can't make themselves alive. God acts — "God, being rich in mercy... made us alive together with Christ." Grace is God's doing, even when we were dead, and Paul says so mid-sentence: "by grace you have been saved."
- 4** What does Paul say God prepared beforehand for us to walk in? (2:10)
Good works — "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them." Works are the fruit of salvation, never its root.
- 5** Memory verse
Ephesians 2:8–9, printed on page 13.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 3 OF 6

The Mystery of Christ

Ephesians 3 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 17–20 · memory verse Ephesians 3:20–21

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Chapter 3 closes the first half of the letter, on what God has done for us in Christ, before the second half, on how we walk, begins. Don't rush past the prayer (3:14–21). Consider praying it aloud over the group. The aim is not more information about Christ's love but a felt, strengthened grasp of it. Let the doxology (the burst of praise in 3:20–21) land: the God who can do beyond our imagining is at work in ordinary believers. Invite, never press. Each person shares only what they choose.

SIXTY MINUTES

Read this before you gather — no seminary required. In danger now: 911. Crisis: call or text 988. Abuse at home: 1-800-799-7233 or text START to 88788. Child abuse: 1-800-422-4453. Sexual assault: 1-800-656-4673 (RAINN). Human trafficking: 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733. SAMHSA treatment referral line: 1-800-662-4357. (All U.S.; elsewhere, use your local emergency number.)

5	10	10	20	15
Open	Read together	Observe	Interpret	Apply and pray

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

- 1 Paul's "mystery" in 3:6 is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body. Where do people feel like outsiders, and how does this truth speak to that? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. Paul says the Gentiles are "fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of his promise in Christ Jesus" (3:6), and that this comes "through the Good News." Verse 12 adds, "we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him" (3:12). People who have felt on the outside can set their own experience beside these verses. They can share as much or as little as they like.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 3:6 and 3:12. What do the Gentiles share in, and what does Paul say we have in Him?

- 2** Paul says the church displays God's wisdom "to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places" (the WEB's wording; traditions differ on who they are). How does that raise your view of the ordinary local church? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. Verse 10 gives God's intent, and the WEB uses the word assembly where many translations say church: "through the assembly the manifold wisdom of God might be made known" (3:10) "to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places." Verse 11 says this is "according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (3:11). Faithful traditions understand the principalities and powers differently, and the group can stay with what the verse shows, that God's wisdom is made known through the assembly. People can say how that changes the way they see the gathering they belong to.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 3:10–11. Through whom is God's wisdom made known, and whose purpose is it?

- 3** Paul prays we would be strengthened to "comprehend" a love that "surpasses knowledge." What does it mean to know something beyond knowing?

Paul prays that "Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (3:17), and that they "may be strengthened to comprehend with all the saints" (3:18) "what is the width and length and height and depth," and "to know Christ's love which surpasses knowledge" (3:19). Paul asks them to know what he also says "surpasses knowledge," so the text itself holds the two together. The comprehending is done "with all the saints," and its purpose is "that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 3:17–19. What does Paul ask them to be strengthened to do, and with whom?

- 4** Where do you need to believe God can do "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" this week? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. Paul closes the prayer by naming God as the one "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (3:20), "according to the power that works in us." Verse 21 gives the response, "to him be the glory in the assembly and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever" (3:21). The verses speak of what God is able to do, and the group can leave the outcome with Him. People can name a specific need and say as much about it as they choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 3:20–21. What does Paul say God is able to do, and by what power?

NOTES

Reflection questions

- 1** Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

Chapter 3 gives two places to look, the mystery in 3:6 and the prayer in 3:14–19. Ask where in the reading the person felt Christ's love or welcome near. Let short answers stand.

- 2** Why does Paul turn from teaching to prayer? What does the content of his prayer reveal about what he thinks believers most need?

This question asks the group to read 3:14 beside 3:1, where Paul begins with the same words, For this cause. Let them notice what he asks for in 3:16–19 before they say what believers most need. Keep the answers tied to the verses.

- 3** Paul calls himself the very least of all saints (3:8). Where do you feel too small for the grace you have been given?

Paul's own words in 3:8 give the group a place to start. Do not press anyone to explain where they feel small. Leave room and let people answer in a sentence.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

- 1** Paul names "the mystery" now revealed. What is it? (3:6)

C That Gentiles are fellow heirs in Christ

"the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body" — outsiders brought all the way in, sharing the promise in Christ Jesus.

- 3** In Paul's prayer (3:14–19), what does he ask that believers, rooted and grounded in love, would come to know — and what is the goal?

To know the breadth, length, height, and depth, and the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge — that they may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- 2** Paul's closing burst of praise says God is able to do what? (3:20)

A Far more than all we ask or think

"exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" — according to the power that works in us.

- 4** Paul calls himself "the very least of all saints" (3:8) — yet he preaches to the Gentiles. How do those fit together?

His confidence is not in himself but in grace: the privilege of preaching "the unsearchable riches of Christ" was given to him. Low view of self, high view of grace. In Christ we also have "boldness and access in confidence" (3:12).

- 5** Memory verse

Ephesians 3:20–21, printed on page 17.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 4 OF 6

Walk Worthy: Unity and Maturity

Ephesians 4 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 21–24 · memory verse Ephesians 4:1

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Watch the hinge word “therefore” — everything Paul commands grows out of grace, never to earn it. The unity passage (4:1–16) calls for eager effort to keep the unity of the Spirit (4:3), and looks toward “the unity of the faith” (4:13). Paul adapts Psalm 68:18 (“received” becomes “gave”); “lower parts” (4:9) is read variously — don’t settle it. On the new self (4:17–32), keep it concrete — each command (no lying, no stealing, no corrupting talk) names a real habit. The motive throughout is the gospel: forgive “as God also in Christ forgave you.” Three cautions. First, on 4:31–32: forgiving someone does not mean going back to them, trusting them, or calling the harm small. A person can forgive and still keep a safe distance from someone who hurt them. Paul’s “Be angry, and don’t sin” (4:26) allows anger, so do not hurry anyone past it or use “the sun go down” (4:26) as a deadline for forgiving or feeling better. Nobody needs to say who hurt them or what happened, and nobody should be pushed to forgive on a timetable. Second, the unity in 4:3 never means staying silent about harm or staying in a church where leaders abuse people or cover things up. A person who left a church over mistreatment has not failed this passage. Third, the “old man” (4:22) is not a shame label for who someone is. Paul calls believers to “put on the new man” (4:24), who has been created in the likeness of God. If harm happened in a church, outside help may be needed, not only church leaders. Invite, never press. Each person shares only what they choose.

SIXTY MINUTES

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5	10	10	20	15
Open	Read together	Observe	Interpret	Apply and pray

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

- 1 Paul roots the worthy walk in lowliness, humility, and patience (4:2). Which of those is hardest for you, and where is it tested? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. Verse 2 gives the pieces of the walk: “with all lowliness and humility, with patience, bearing with one another in love” (4:2). Verse 1 asks them to “walk worthily of the calling with which you were called” (4:1). People can name the one they find hardest and say where it is tested, and no one needs to say more than they choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 4:1–2. What qualities does Paul name for walking worthily?

2 We are told to “keep” the unity of the Spirit, not create it. How does that change the way you handle disagreement with other believers?

Verse 3 says to be “eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (4:3). The verb is keep, and the verses that follow name what the believers already share: “one body and one Spirit” (4:4), “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (4:5), and “one God and Father of all” (4:6). Paul also says the keeping is done “with patience, bearing with one another in love” (4:2), so the group can start there when ordinary disagreement comes. Keeping unity never means staying silent about harm or staying near someone who is hurting you.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 4:3 and 4:4–6. What does Paul ask them to keep, and what does he say they already hold in common?

3 Gifts are given “for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving.” How does 4:11–16 describe who builds up the body?

Verse 11 lists those Christ gave: “He gave some to be apostles” (4:11), and then prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. Verse 12 gives the purpose as “the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ” (4:12). Verse 7 says “to each one of us, the grace was given” (4:7), and verse 16 says the body grows through “that which every joint supplies” (4:16). Faithful traditions differ on how the gifts in verse 11 work in churches today and on how the phrases of verse 12 fit together, and the group can see that grace is given to each one and every part supplies something.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 4:7 and 4:16. Who receives grace, and who is described as supplying something to the body?

4 Of the put off / put on pairs in 4:25–32, which one do you most need to practice this week?

PERSONAL

There is no single right answer. The verses give several pairs. Paul says “putting away falsehood, speak truth each one with his neighbor” (4:25), and he tells the one who stole to “labor, producing with his hands something that is good” (4:28). Paul sets “only what is good for building others up” (4:29) against corrupt speech, and he sets “be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other” (4:32) against bitterness and slander. People can say which pair is speaking to them this week, and how much to share is their own choice. Forgiving does not require reconciling or trusting, as the leader notes say.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 4:25, 4:28, 4:29 and 4:31–32. What does each verse tell them to put away, and what does it put in its place?

NOTES

Reflection questions

- 1 **Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?**
This question asks people to name one phrase or verse from the chapter that spoke to them. Chapter 4 opens with a calling in 4:1 and closes with forgiveness already given in 4:32, so invite people to start from either end. Let each person say as little or as much as they like.
- 2 **Why does Paul move from the unity of the body (4:1–16) straight into personal honesty, work, speech, and forgiveness (4:17–32)? How are they connected?**
The question asks the group to find the link between the body and the person. Point them to 4:25, where Paul gives the reason for speaking truth, and let them say what they see. Resist supplying the answer before they have looked.
- 3 **Paul says to speak "truth in love" (4:15). Where do you need both this week?**
The question is private by design. Let people name a place where they need both truth and love without naming a person, and keep the reading close to 4:15.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

- 1 Ephesians 4:4–6 stacks up the "ones" of Christian unity. How does the list run?
D One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father
Seven "ones" — the unity of the Spirit we are urged to keep (4:3) is grounded in who God is.
- 2 Why does the ascended Christ give apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers? (4:11–12)
B For the perfecting of the saints and building up the body
Christ gives these for the perfecting of the saints, the work of serving and the building up of the body (4:12); every joint supplies (4:16).
- 3 The whole second half of the letter hangs on 4:1. What does Paul beg the readers to do?
"Walk worthily of the calling with which you were called" — everything from chapter 4 on works out what chapters 1–3 declared. Grace first, then a life shaped by gratitude.
- 4 How does Paul say the new life handles anger and speech in 4:26–32, and what is the model for forgiveness?
Be angry and don't sin — don't let the sun go down on wrath; no corrupt speech, only what builds up and gives grace; be kind and tenderhearted, "forgiving each other, just as God also in Christ forgave you."
- 5 **Memory verse**
Ephesians 4:1, printed on page 21.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 5 OF 6

Walk in Love and Light

Ephesians 5 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 25–28 · memory verse Ephesians 5:1–2

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Two cautions for this chapter. First, keep love and light together — Paul's ethics are warm, not merely strict; the standard is Christ's self-giving love, not bare rule-keeping. Second, handle the marriage passage (5:22–33) with care and with its center in view: it is fundamentally about Christ and the church, and Paul gives husbands the longer instruction, to love as Christ loved the assembly and gave Himself up for it (5:25). Read 5:21, "submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ," and then let the group say what they see in 5:22–33. Someone in your group may be living with a spouse who controls, frightens, or hurts them. This passage never permits anyone to harm, intimidate, or control another person, and it is never a reason to stay where someone is unsafe. If a person tells you privately they are afraid at home, believe them, and do not tell them to submit more. Do not raise it with their spouse, and do not suggest couples counseling or mediation, because these can raise the danger. Do not push them to stay or to leave. Leaving can be the most dangerous time, so let the hotline help them plan. Ask how they want you to contact them, and do not call, text, or email if someone else may see it. Point them to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1-800-799-7233, text START to 88788, or chat at thehotline.org (U.S.). Phones, texts, and browsing history can be seen by someone who shares or monitors the device, so a safer device or a public place may be better. Call 911 if anyone is in danger now. In some early manuscripts verse 22 borrows its verb from 5:21; most, like the WEB, have "be subject." Some readers take that as shaping all of 5:22–33 by mutual submission. Others point out that 5:23 calls the husband "the head of the wife" and that wives and husbands are addressed differently in 5:22–24 and 5:33. Do not settle it for the group. On 5:3–12, never ask anyone to confess sexual sin in the group, because something done to a person is not their sin, and do not use 5:12 to tell anyone to stay quiet about harm done to them. If someone fears the warning in 5:5 describes them, remind them that the forgiven are washed and justified (1 Corinthians 6:11). If someone is fighting addiction, do not ask them to speak up. A private word and a recovery group, or the SAMHSA helpline at 1-800-662-4357 (U.S.), will serve them better, and being filled with the Spirit is not a replacement for treatment. Invite, never press. Each person shares only what they choose.

SIXTY MINUTES

Read this before you gather — no seminary required. In danger now: 911. Crisis: call or text 988. Abuse at home: 1-800-799-7233 or text START to 88788. Child abuse: 1-800-422-4453. Sexual assault: 1-800-656-4673 (RAINN). Human trafficking: 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733. SAMHSA treatment referral line: 1-800-662-4357. (All U.S.; elsewhere, use your local emergency number.)

5	10	10	20	15
Open	Read together	Observe	Interpret	Apply and pray

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

- 1** “Walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave himself up for us.” What does love like that look like when it is freely given, never forced? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. Verse 2 gives the pattern: “Walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave himself up for us” (5:2). It describes His giving of Himself as “an offering and a sacrifice to God.” The verse before it says who is being addressed: “Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children” (5:1). People can say where they have seen love like this, and no one needs to give details they would rather keep.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 5:1–2. What did Christ do, and how does Paul tie that to the way they walk?

- 2** Paul says we were once darkness but are now light. What does it look like to “walk as children of light” in an ordinary week?

Verse 8 says “you were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord” (5:8), and the instruction follows at once: “Walk as children of light.” Verse 9 describes the fruit as “in all goodness and righteousness and truth” (5:9). Verse 10 adds “proving what is well pleasing to the Lord” (5:10), and verse 11 says to “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful deeds of darkness” (5:11). The group can see that the walk is shown in what is good, right and true.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 5:9–11. What does Paul say the walk shows, and what does he say to have no fellowship with?

- 3** “Be filled with the Spirit” is set against being “drunken with wine.” What do people reach for to fill or numb themselves? What does Paul say being filled with the Spirit looks like (5:19–21)?

Verse 18 says “Don’t be drunken with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit” (5:18). The passage names only wine, and the group can name other things people reach for if they wish. What follows the command is described in the next verses: “speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” (5:19), “giving thanks always concerning all things” (5:20), and “submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ” (5:21). No one needs to speak about their own habits to see what the text offers.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 5:18–21. What follows the command to be filled with the Spirit?

4 Paul says the whole picture points to Christ and the church (5:32). What does Christ's self-giving love (5:25) show us about what love is, and what it never does?

Verse 32 names the subject: "This mystery is great, but I speak concerning Christ and of the assembly" (5:32). Husbands are told to "love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly, and gave himself up for it" (5:25). That is the measure of love here, and it is self-giving, never self-serving. Verse 21 comes before the whole passage: "submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ" (5:21). Nothing in the passage gives anyone the right to threaten, control, or harm another person, and the group can say so plainly. Christians read headship and submission in 5:22–24 differently, and the leader does not need to settle that. The WEB says assembly where the study's question says church. Invite people to say what Christ's love shows about what love is and what it never does, and no one needs to speak about their own marriage.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 5:21 and 5:25. What is the measure of love Paul gives, and what does verse 21 say comes first?

NOTES

Reflection questions

- 1 Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?**
This question can start from the way Paul addresses the readers in 5:1, as beloved children. Invite people to say where they have felt that love, or where light has shown them something. Keep it brief and let each person choose how much to share.
- 2 Why might Paul place the household instructions (5:22–6:9) right after the call to be filled with the Spirit and to submit to one another (5:18–21)?**
Let the group look at 5:18–21 and notice the actions that follow the command to be filled with the Spirit. How 5:22 and the marriage passage connect to that command is read differently, so invite people to say what they see and leave the point open.
- 3 Where is thanksgiving missing from your days, and what would change if it were there (5:20)?**
The question starts from what Paul says in 5:19–20. Let people answer in a sentence, and no one needs to give more than they want to.

LEADER'S NOTES

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

1 “Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children. Walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and...” (5:1–2)

C gave himself up for us

“gave himself up for us” — love defined by self-giving sacrifice — “an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling fragrance.”

3 “You were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord” (5:8). How does Paul say to live, and what is to be done with the works of darkness?

“Walk as children of light” — proving what is well pleasing to the Lord, having no fellowship with the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather reproving them. Identity first, then conduct.

5 Memory verse

Ephesians 5:1–2, printed on page 25.

2 “Don’t be drunken with wine, in which is dissipation, but...” what instead? (5:18)

A be filled with the Spirit

“be filled with the Spirit” — and what follows is singing, thanksgiving, and “submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ” (5:19–21).

4 What is the measure Paul gives husbands for loving their wives (5:25) — and where does the passage finally point?

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly, and gave himself up for it.” The marriage passage finally points to Christ and the church — “this mystery is great” (5:32).

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 6 OF 6

Stand Firm: The Armor of God

Ephesians 6 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 29–32 · memory verse Ephesians 6:10–11

GROUP LEADER NOTES

End the study by drawing the whole letter together: chapters 1–3 told us who we are in Christ; chapters 4–6 called us to walk it out; and now Paul says we do that walk on a battlefield, in armor God supplies. Keep the spiritual warfare sober, not sensational — every piece of armor is a gospel truth already ours in Christ. Note that Paul adds prayer at all times in the Spirit after the armor (6:18). Consider closing by praying through the pieces together. On 6:5–9: the WEB says “servants,” but the Greek word means slaves, people owned in a Roman household. This passage does not endorse slavery, and this study does not use it to defend slavery or any oppression. It was misused that way for centuries, and the pain of that history is still real. Paul tells masters to “give up threatening” and says “there is no partiality” with their Master in heaven (6:9). Do not use 6:5 to talk about being a good employee without first saying this, and if anyone in your group has family history tied to slavery, let them decide how much is said. On 6:1–4: this passage is never an instruction for a child to stay quiet about abuse or to obey someone who hurts them. Paul speaks to fathers directly: “don’t provoke your children to wrath” (6:4). Adults who were hurt by a parent may find “honor” hard to hear, and honoring does not mean agreeing with, trusting, or staying close to someone unsafe. If a child or teen tells you they are being harmed, listen, do not question them for details, do not promise secrecy, and follow your church’s child-protection policy and your state’s reporting law. Childhelp, 1-800-422-4453 (U.S.), can tell you which agency takes reports. Call 911 if the child is in immediate danger. On 6:10–20: do not assume sadness, panic, intrusive thoughts, or trauma symptoms are spiritual weakness or demonic attack. Treat them first as real health matters, and let prayer and a doctor or counselor work together. If someone says they are thinking of ending their life, listen without arguing or quoting verses, ask plainly whether they are thinking of suicide, do not leave them alone, and do not promise secrecy. Call or text 988 with them (U.S.). Call 911 if they have a plan or the means and are in immediate danger. Standing firm never means staying in a place where someone is hurting you. Invite, never press. Each person shares only what they choose.

SIXTY MINUTES

Read this before you gather — no seminary required. In danger now: 911. Crisis: call or text 988. Abuse at home: 1-800-799-7233 or text START to 88788. Child abuse: 1-800-422-4453. Sexual assault: 1-800-656-4673 (RAINN). Human trafficking: 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733. SAMHSA treatment referral line: 1-800-662-4357. (All U.S.; elsewhere, use your local emergency number.)

5	10	10	20	15
Open	Read together	Observe	Interpret	Apply and pray

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

- 1** Paul says the struggle is “not against flesh and blood.” How does knowing people aren’t the enemy change how you face conflict and temptation? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. Verse 12 says “our wrestling is not against flesh and blood” (6:12) and names “the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Verse 11 mentions “the wiles of the devil” (6:11). Faithful traditions understand the powers in verse 12 differently, and the group can see that the first instruction is “be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might” (6:10). People can say how this touches a conflict or a temptation, and no one needs to give details.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 6:10–12. What does Paul say to do first, and what does he name as the opposition?

LEADER'S CARE NOTE · 6:12

Saying people are not the enemy never means that the harm a person does is not real or not their responsibility, or that someone being hurt should treat it only as a spiritual battle and stay. If anyone is being harmed, getting safe comes first; the help lines on page 81 can help.

- 2** Each piece of armor is a truth already true in Christ. Which piece do you most need to “put on” this week — truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, or the Word? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. Verses 14 to 17 list six pieces: “the utility belt of truth” (6:14), “the breastplate of righteousness,” “the preparation of the Good News of peace” (6:15), “the shield of faith” (6:16), “the helmet of salvation” (6:17), and “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Paul’s commands are to “put on the whole armor of God” (6:13) and to take up the shield, the helmet and the sword. Paul explains the shield most fully: with it you will be able to “quench all the fiery darts of the evil one.” People can choose the piece they most need and say why, and no one needs to explain more than they wish.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 6:14–17. Which piece does Paul explain with a purpose, and what does it do?

- 3** Three times Paul says “stand.” What’s the difference between standing firm and striving in our own strength?

The word stand appears in 6:11, 6:13 and 6:14. Before the first of them comes the source of strength: “be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might” (6:10). What Paul tells them to wear is “the whole armor of God.” Verse 13 gives the aim: “that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” The believers act by putting on and taking up, and the strength and the armor are God’s.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 6:10, 6:13 and 6:14. Where does the strength come from, and what do the believers do?

4 Paul adds prayer “at all times in the Spirit” (6:18). What does that add to the armor?

Verse 18 comes straight after the armor and begins “with all prayer and requests” (6:18). It adds “praying at all times in the Spirit” and “being watchful to this end in all perseverance and requests for all the saints.” Paul asks for prayer for himself in verse 19, “that utterance may be given to me” (6:19). Paul does not label prayer as a seventh piece, and the group can read verse 18 as it stands and say how they see it joined to the armor.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 6:18–20. Who is prayer for, and what does Paul ask for himself?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

This question can start from the end of the letter. Paul is in chains in 6:20 and asks for prayer for boldness, and in 6:22 he sends Tychicus to comfort their hearts. Invite people to say where they have found comfort or boldness this week.

2 Why does Paul end a letter so full of grace and unity with a call to spiritual warfare? How do the armor pieces connect back to the truths of chapters 1–5?

The question asks why a letter of grace and unity ends with a call to stand. Invite people to look at 6:14–17 and name words they have met earlier in the letter, and let them make the connections themselves. Keep the tone steady and unafraid.

3 Who could you pray for this week the way Paul asks to be prayed for (6:19–20)?

Paul asks the Ephesians to pray for his boldness. Let the group suggest what they would ask for someone else, then close with a time of prayer.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

1 Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against... (6:12)

D The powers and spiritual forces of wickedness

Paul names spiritual opposition, and the armor is God's gift. It does not replace doctors, counselors, or protection from people who cause harm.

2 In the whole armor of God, which piece is “the word of God”? (6:17)

B The sword of the Spirit

“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

- 3** Which command in the household section does Paul call “the first commandment with a promise”? (6:1–3)

“Honor your father and mother” — citing the commandment from the Ten Commandments with its promise, “that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth.” Honoring a parent does not mean obeying or staying near someone who harms you.

- 4 After listing the armor, what does Paul say comes next (6:18)?

Praying — “with all prayer and requests, praying at all times in the Spirit, and being watchful... for all the saints.” The armored believer is a praying believer.

- ## 5 Memory verse

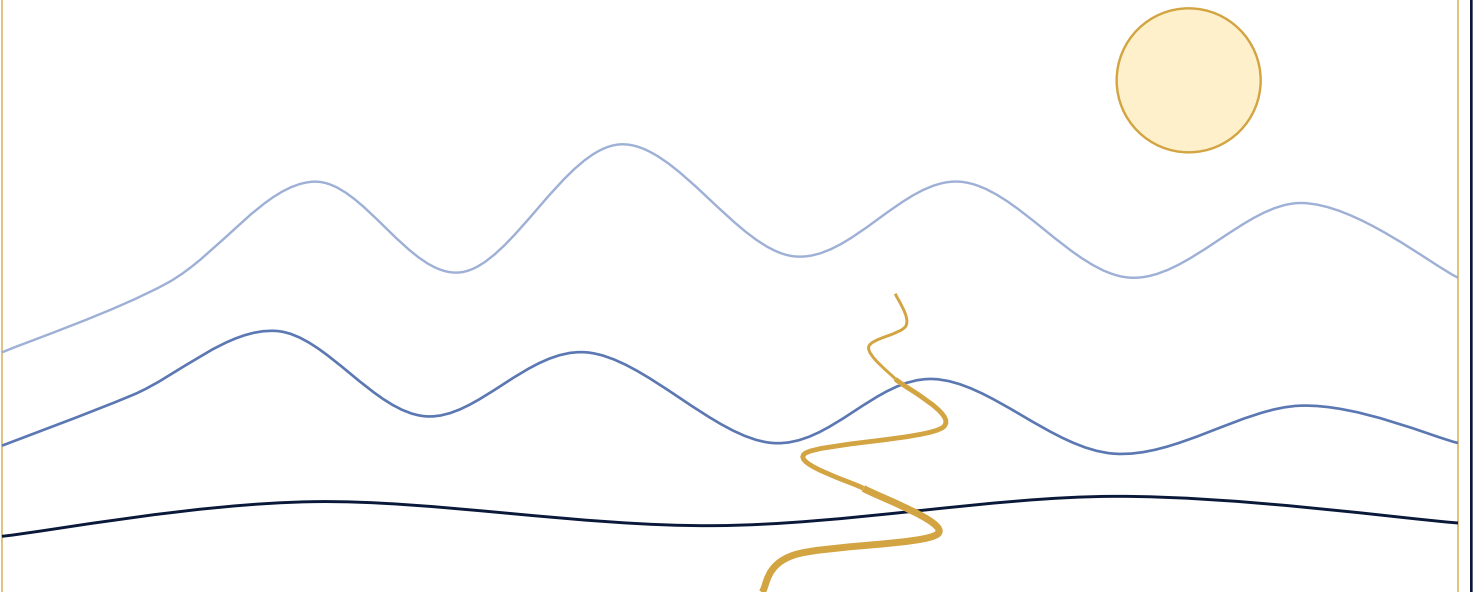
Ephesians 6:10–11, printed on page 29.

LEADER'S NOTES

PART FOUR

The Letter to the Ephesians

The complete text in the World English Bible, arranged by session.



WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

The Letter to the Ephesians

The complete text, arranged by session. Verse numbers are small and raised; each session's reading begins with a tinted heading.

SESSION 1 READING

Ephesians 1

Every Spiritual Blessing · session on page 9

EPHESIANS 1

Every Spiritual Blessing

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus:

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

The words “at Ephesus” (verse 1) are absent from several of the earliest manuscripts. Many scholars take this as a sign that the letter may have circulated to more than one church in the region. It is kept here, as in most Bibles, with this note.

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

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without defect before him in love, ⁵having predestined us for adoption as children through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his desire, ⁶to the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he freely gave us favor in the Beloved, ⁷in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him ¹⁰to an administration of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the

earth, in him. ¹¹We were also assigned an inheritance in him, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who does all things after the counsel of his will, ¹²to the end that we should be to the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ. ¹³In him you also, having heard the word of the truth, the Good News of your salvation—in whom, having also believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is a pledge of our inheritance, to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of his glory.

¹⁵For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and the love which you have toward all the saints, ¹⁶don't cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might ²⁰which he worked in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule, authority, power, dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. ²²He put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head

over all things for the assembly, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

SESSION 2 READING

Ephesians 2

Saved by Grace · session on page 13

EPHESIANS 2

Saved by Grace

¹You were made alive when you were dead in transgressions and sins, ²in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience. ³We also all once lived among them in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus; ⁸for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, that no one would boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them.

¹¹Therefore remember that once you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “uncircumcision” by that

which is called “circumcision” (in the flesh, made by hands), ¹²that you were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off are made near in the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace, who made both one, and broke down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵having abolished in his flesh the hostility, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man of the two, making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, having killed the hostility through it. ¹⁷He came and preached peace to you who were far off and to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, ²⁰being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone; ²¹in whom the whole building, fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

SESSION 3 READING

Ephesians 3

The Mystery of Christ · session on page 17

EPHESIANS 3

The Mystery Revealed

¹For this cause I, Paul, am the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles, ²if it is so that you have heard of the administration of that grace of God

which was given me toward you, ³how that by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I wrote before in few words, ⁴by which, when you read, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ, ⁵which in other generations was

not made known to the children of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit, ⁶that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of his promise in Christ Jesus through the Good News, ⁷of which I was made a servant according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power. ⁸To me, the very least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to make all men see what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ, ¹⁰to the intent that now through the assembly the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places, ¹¹according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²In him we have boldness and access in confidence through our

faith in him. ¹³Therefore I ask that you may not lose heart at my troubles for you, which are your glory.

¹⁴For this cause, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that you may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, ¹⁷that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, to the end that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be strengthened to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know Christ's love which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹to him be the glory in the assembly and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

SESSION 4 READING

Ephesians 4

Walk Worthy: Unity and Maturity · session on page 21

EPHESIANS 4

Unity and Maturity

¹I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, ²with all lowliness and humility, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³being eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, even as you also were called in one hope of your calling, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all, and in us all. ⁷But to each one of us, the grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. ⁸Therefore he says,

*“When he ascended on high,
he led captivity captive,
and gave gifts to people.”*

⁹Now this, “He ascended”, what is it but that he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is the one who also

ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

¹¹He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, shepherds and teachers; ¹²for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴that we may no longer be children, tossed back and forth and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; ¹⁵but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ, ¹⁶from whom all the body, being fitted and knit together through that which every joint supplies, according to the working in measure of each individual part, makes the body increase to the building up of itself in love.

¹⁷This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹They, having become callous, gave themselves up to lust, to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰But you didn't learn Christ that way, ²¹if indeed you heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus: ²²that you put away, as concerning your former way of life, the old man that grows corrupt after the lusts of deceit, ²³and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and put on the new man, who in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

²⁵Therefore putting away falsehood, speak truth each one with his neighbor. For we are members of one another. ²⁶"Be angry, and don't sin." Don't let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷and don't give place to the devil. ²⁸Let him who stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, producing with his hands something that is good, that he may have something to give to him who has need. ²⁹Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but only what is good for building others up as the need may be, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, outcry, and slander be put away from you, with all malice. ³²And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God also in Christ forgave you.

SESSION 5 READING

Ephesians 5

Walk in Love and Light · session on page 25

EPHESIANS 5

Light and Love

¹Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children.

²Walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling fragrance.

³But sexual immorality, and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be mentioned among you, as becomes saints; ⁴nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not appropriate, but rather giving of thanks.

⁵Know this for sure, that no sexually immoral person, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God.

⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words. For because of these things, the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience. ⁷Therefore don't be partakers with them. ⁸For you were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, ⁹for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, ¹⁰proving what is well

pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Have no fellowship with the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather even reprove them. ¹²For it is a shame even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. ¹³But all things, when they are reproved, are revealed by the light, for everything that reveals is light. ¹⁴Therefore he says, "Awake, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

¹⁵Therefore watch carefully how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, ¹⁶redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore don't be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸Don't be drunken with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; ²⁰giving thanks always concerning all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God, even the Father; ²¹submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.

²²Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife,

as Christ also is the head of the assembly, being himself the savior of the body. ²⁴But as the assembly is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their own husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly, and gave himself up for it; ²⁶that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that he might present the assembly to himself gloriously, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without defect. ²⁸Even so husbands also ought to love their own wives as their

own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself.

²⁹For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord also does the assembly; ³⁰because we are members of his body, of his flesh and bones. ³¹“For this cause a man will leave his father and mother, and will be joined to his wife. The two will become one flesh.” ³²This mystery is great, but I speak concerning Christ and of the assembly. ³³Nevertheless each of you must also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

SESSION 6 READING

Ephesians 6

Stand Firm: The Armor of God · session on page 29

EPHESIANS 6

The Armor of God

¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with a promise: ³“that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth.”

⁴You fathers, don’t provoke your children to wrath, but nurture them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

⁵Servants, be obedient to those who according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as to Christ, ⁶not in the way of service only when eyes are on you, as men pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸knowing that whatever good thing each one does, he will receive the same good again from the Lord, whether he is bound or free.

⁹You masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with him.

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the

devil. ¹²For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world’s rulers of the darkness of this age, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having the utility belt of truth buckled around your waist, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having fitted your feet with the preparation of the Good News of peace, ¹⁶above all, taking up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸with all prayer and requests, praying at all times in the Spirit, and being watchful to this end in all perseverance and requests for all the saints: ¹⁹on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the Good News, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

²¹But that you also may know my affairs, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make known to you all

things. ²²I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know our state and that he may comfort your hearts.

²³Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith,
from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁴Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love. Amen.

NOTES

AFTER THE LAST SESSION

Six verses to carry

One verse from each session. Read them aloud once a week and they will stay with you.

1 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

EPHESIANS 1:3

2 “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast.”

EPHESIANS 2:8–9

3 “Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to him be the glory in the assembly and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

EPHESIANS 3:20–21

4 “I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called.”

EPHESIANS 4:1

5 “Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children. Walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave himself up for us.”

EPHESIANS 5:1–2

6 “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

EPHESIANS 6:10–11

WHAT COMES NEXT

Ephesians is step 2 of 3 on the **Church Leadership** path.

1 Acts → 2 Ephesians → 3 Hebrews

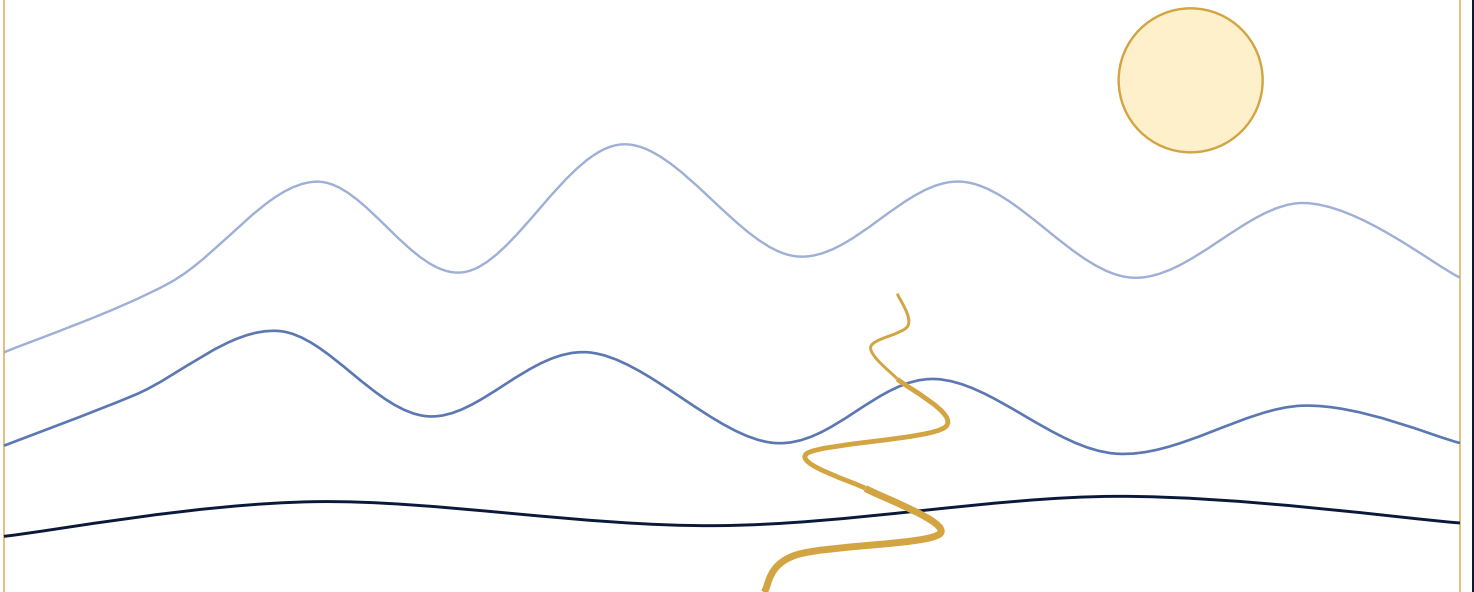
Every study is free at clearpathbiblestudies.com



PART FIVE

Take it with you

A worked example, a harder question for each session, a glossary, a Scripture index, and the pages that connect you to the people behind this study.



PART FIVE · BEFORE YOU BEGIN

What a good answer looks like

Most discussion questions do not have one right answer, but they do have good ones. Here is the first question of Session 2, a sample answer written the way a participant might write it, and the note a leader has beside it. Read all three once. That is what “doing the study” looks like.

- 1 Paul describes our condition before Christ as “dead in transgressions and sins” (2:1). Why does the word “dead” matter for how we understand grace?**

A SAMPLE ANSWER · WRITTEN IN THE MARGIN

Paul says we were “dead in transgressions and sins” (2:1). A dead person can’t make themselves alive, so I can’t say I helped. Then 2:4 starts with “But God,” and 2:5 says He “made us alive together with Christ.” Through 2:7, every verb is about what He did. I think that’s why “dead” matters. If I was dead, I can’t take credit for the part where I came alive. What gets me is that Paul stops in the middle of the sentence to say it: “by grace you have been saved” (2:5).

WHY IT IS A GOOD ANSWER

It stays in the passage. It quotes the words on the page (“dead in transgressions and sins,” “But God,” “made us alive together with Christ”) instead of general church language.

It says something in the writer’s own words. “If I was dead, I can’t take credit for the part where I came alive” is not in the Bible; it is what the writer understood.

It ends with the writer, not with a summary. The last sentence says what stayed with the writer.

THE LEADER’S NOTE FOR THE SAME QUESTION · PAGE 46

Paul says that we were “dead in transgressions and sins” (2:1) and “by nature children of wrath” (2:3). Then comes “But God, being rich in mercy” (2:4), and verse 5 says He “made us alive together with Christ” (2:5). In these verses every action that gives life belongs to God. Paul adds in the same verse, “by grace you have been saved.”

Getting the most from this guide

- **Write before you talk.** In a group, two minutes of silent writing before the first question gives quieter people time to find their words.
- **Watch “in Christ” and “therefore.”** Chapters 1–3 are what God has done. The “therefore” of 4:1 is where the walking begins. Underline both as you read.
- **Do the recall page from memory first.** Guessing and then checking is how the passage stays with you.
- **Keep the one thing small.** The “One thing to live out” is meant to be done, not admired.

PART FIVE · FOR GROUPS THAT WANT MORE

Go deeper

One extra question for each session, for groups that have walked with Ephesians before. Each comes with a leader's note. Leaders can use one in the Interpret minutes of the timed plan if the room has the energy. This section is for leaders.

Session 1 · Ephesians 1:9–10

- Paul says God's plan is "to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth" (1:10). Where else in chapter 1 does Paul show Christ over all things, and why does he put this vision inside a prayer of praise?

LEADER'S NOTE

The plan looks ahead to "the fullness of the times" (1:10), while Christ's rule is already stated in 1:20–22: God "put all things in subjection under his feet." Paul's response is praise (1:3, 6, 12, 14), not speculation. Good answers stay on what the verses say. Christians understand how and when "all things" are summed up in different ways, and the group does not need to settle that.

Session 2 · Ephesians 2:19–22

- Paul gives three pictures of people who were once "strangers and foreigners" (2:19): fellow citizens, the household of God, and a building that grows into "a holy temple in the Lord" (2:21). What does each picture add to the others?

LEADER'S NOTE

Citizens speak of belonging with standing, a household of belonging with closeness, and a temple of a shared life that God is still building. "Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone" (2:20) holds all three, and the building becomes "a habitation of God in the Spirit" (2:22). The Gentiles are "fellow citizens with the saints" (2:19); they are brought near to what God had already begun with Israel (2:12–13), not put in its place. Christians describe how Israel and the church relate in different ways.

Session 3 · Ephesians 2:18 and 3:12

- Paul uses the word "access" twice, in 2:18 and 3:12. Who has it, how do they come by it, and what does he say it lets them do?

LEADER'S NOTE

In 2:18 "we both" have access "through him," in "one Spirit," to the Father. In 3:12 it comes "in him" and "through our faith in him," and Paul pairs it with "boldness" and "confidence." Good answers notice that access is given and not earned, that it is shared by both groups, and that Paul's prayer in 3:14–21 can be read as an example of using it. Keep the answers on the text.

Session 4 · Ephesians 4:26–29

- ✚ Paul writes “Be angry, and don’t sin” (4:26), and then limits what the anger may become (4:26–27). What does he allow, what does he warn against, and what does he say speech is for in 4:29?

LEADER’S NOTE

Paul allows anger and does not command it away. He warns against anger left to settle (“Don’t let the sun go down on your wrath”) and against giving the devil a foothold (4:27). Speech is for “building others up as the need may be” and for giving “grace to those who hear” (4:29). Nothing here asks anyone to hide anger at being wronged or to speak with someone who is unsafe. The verse sets no deadline for forgiving or reconciling. If someone describes being hurt, see the leader note on page 52.

Session 5 · Ephesians 5:14

- ✚ Verse 14 reads like a line from a song: “Awake, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” Where has Paul already used the pictures of death, light, and walking, and who does he say gives the light?

LEADER’S NOTE

Paul has already written of being dead (2:1, 5) and of walking (2:2, 10; 4:1), and in 5:8 he says the readers “are now light in the Lord.” The light here is something Christ gives: “Christ will shine on you.” Scholars do not agree on whether this line is a hymn or a free quotation of the Old Testament, and the group does not need to settle that. Keep the conversation on what the verse promises.

Session 6 · Ephesians 6:14–17

- ✚ Many readers hear an echo of Isaiah 59:17, where the Lord Himself is pictured putting on righteousness and salvation. What does it suggest that Paul tells believers to put on what God wears?

LEADER’S NOTE

Read Isaiah 59:16–17 aloud first. The Lord sees that no one will help and acts Himself, putting on righteousness as a breastplate and salvation as a helmet. Paul’s list shares those two pieces, so the armor is God’s and is given to believers. That fits how he begins, “be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might” (6:10). Paul does not name Isaiah, so keep the answers modest and tied to the two texts. Read only 59:16–17 and do not build on the verses that follow. If anyone links the armor to their own distress, see the leader note on page 59.

PART FIVE • FOR LEADERS

Objectives and questions, aligned

Every session names what it is for. This table shows which discussion (D) and reflection (R) questions carry each objective, so a leader who is short on time can cut a question without cutting an aim.

D = discussion questions on the session's second page; R = reflection questions on its third page. A dash means no question asks that directly. A star means a partial fit: the question touches the objective without asking it outright. A leader who wants a dashed objective covered can raise it from the passage or the leader page. The recall practice on each fourth page serves most objectives by retrieval. Session 6's first objective, Paul's words to children, parents, slaves, and masters (6:1–9), has no discussion or reflection question; recall question 3 touches 6:1–3. The leader notes cover it, so raise it from the passage.

	LEARNING OBJECTIVE	DISCUSSION	REFLECTION
1	See what God has done for us in Christ, from choosing to sealing (1:3–14)	D1, D2	R2, R3
	Hear Paul's prayer that the eyes of our hearts would be opened (1:15–19)	D3	R2
	Recognize Christ as head over all things for the church (1:20–23)	D4	—
2	See where we started: dead in transgressions and sins (2:1–3)	D1	—
	Explain how we are saved, by grace through faith and not by works (2:4–10)	D2, D3	R3
	Trace how Christ makes Jew and Gentile one new people (2:11–22)	D4	R2
3	Name the mystery Paul announces: the Gentiles are fellow heirs (3:1–6)	D1	R3*
	See how God's wisdom is made known through the church (3:10–11)	D2	—
	Follow Paul's prayer that we would know the love of Christ (3:14–21)	D3, D4	R2
4	Describe the unity Paul asks us to keep (4:1–6)	D1*, D2	—
	See why Christ gives gifts to the church (4:11–16)	D3	R3*
	Compare the old self with the new in how we speak, work, and forgive (4:17–32)	D4	R2
5	Understand what it means to walk in love and as children of light (5:1–14)	D1, D2	—
	Notice what follows being filled with the Spirit (5:18–21)	D3	R2, R3
	Read the household instructions with Christ and the church in view (5:22–33)	D4	R2*
6	Read Paul's words to children, parents, slaves, and masters (6:1–9)	—	— (Recall 3*)
	Name the armor of God and what Paul says the struggle is against (6:10–17)	D1, D2, D3	R2
	Notice Paul's call to pray at all times and his request for boldness (6:18–20)	D4	R3

PART FIVE · WORDS EPHESIANS USES

Glossary

Short definitions of the words a first-time reader of Ephesians is most likely to stumble on. Chapter and verse point to where Paul uses them.

Adoption

Being made God's child, with a child's place and inheritance, through Jesus Christ (1:5).

Apostle

Someone sent with Christ's authority. Paul begins as "an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God" (1:1; 2:20; 3:5).

Assembly

The WEB's word where many translations say "church." It means a gathered people (1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23–32).

Boldness

Free and fearless speech before God and before people (3:12; 6:19–20).

Calling

God's summons to belong to Him and live for Him. Paul urges believers to walk worthily of it (1:18; 4:1, 4).

Cornerstone

The stone that sets the line for the whole building. Paul says Christ Jesus Himself is the chief cornerstone (2:20).

Fullness

A word Paul uses for what God and Christ fill and for what believers are headed toward (1:23; 3:19; 4:13). Christians read its details in different ways.

Gentile

Anyone who is not Jewish. Paul writes mainly to Gentile believers (2:11; 3:1, 6).

Good News

The WEB's phrase for the gospel: God's saving news in Christ (1:13; 6:15, 19).

Grace

God's undeserved favor, given freely and not earned (2:5, 8).

Heavenly places

Paul's phrase for the unseen realm where Christ reigns and where blessing and spiritual struggle are located (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). Christians read the details differently.

Inheritance

What God gives to His people as His children, with the Spirit as a pledge of it (1:11, 14, 18; 3:6).

Mystery

In Paul, a purpose of God once hidden and now made known. In 3:3–6 it is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs; see also 1:9; 5:32; 6:19.

Peace

Reconciliation: hostility ended between God and people, and between Jew and Gentile (2:14–17; 6:15).

Powers

The WEB speaks of "principalities" and "powers" in the heavenly places (3:10; 6:12). Christians understand who they are in different ways.

Predestined

The WEB's word for God choosing beforehand (1:5; "foreordained," 1:11). Christians differ on how this relates to human response, and all agree the praise goes to God (1:6).

Reconcile

To bring together those who were enemies. Christ does this "in one body to God through the cross" (2:16).

Redemption

Release won at a cost, a word used of freeing a captive (1:7, 14; 4:30).

Saints

God's holy people. All believers are meant, not a special class (1:1, 15, 18).

Salvation

God's rescue. Paul writes that believers have been saved (2:5, 8), and calls salvation a helmet (6:17).

Sealed

Marked as God's own with the promised Holy Spirit (1:13; 4:30).

Servants

In 6:5–9 the WEB says “servants” where the Greek word means slaves. Paul addresses both inside a Roman household; the passage does not endorse slavery, and this guide does not use it to defend slavery or any oppression.

Spirit

God's own Spirit, who seals believers (1:13), gives access to the Father (2:18), and fills them (5:18).

Walk

Paul's word for daily conduct. It runs through the letter from 2:2 to 5:15.

Wiles

Cunning schemes or tricks. Paul says to stand against “the wiles of the devil” (6:11).

Workmanship

Something God has made. Believers are “his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (2:10).

MY NOTES

PART FIVE • WHERE EACH PASSAGE IS USED

Scripture index

Every passage cited by chapter and verse in the sessions, the reference pages, the leader's guide, and this Part Five, with the pages where it appears. The full text of Ephesians is in Part Four, pages 64–69.

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PART FIVE · YOUR TURN

Tell me what helped.

You've just spent some hours in this study. Before you put it on the shelf, I'd like to know how it went: the part that landed, the part that lost you, and the part you'd fix if it were yours.

Three questions. No account needed. Name and email only if you want me to write back.

1 What helped? A session, a question, a line you underlined.

2 What confused you, or slowed you down? Be blunt. If a question didn't make sense, that's my writing, not your reading.

3 What would you add, cut, or change?

What you write helps shape the next edition of this study.

— *Ron Givens*

Founder — Executive Director, Clear Path Bible Studies



SCAN TO ANSWER

clearpathbiblestudies.com/s/ephesians/feedback

Opens the three questions with this study already selected.

Jotted your answers above? Type them into the form when you're ready. Nothing on this page is sent anywhere until you do. Hand it to your group leader, too, if you'd rather say it out loud.

PART FIVE · FOR EVERYONE WHO LEADS, AND EVERYONE WHO SHARES

Care in the room

People say real things in a Bible study, and that's the point. These four agreements keep the room safe. The lines at the bottom are for the moments that are bigger than a study.

Four agreements

What's said here stays here. Names, stories, and struggles don't leave the room, not even as prayer requests somewhere else. The one exception is safety: if someone is in danger, or a child is being hurt, you get help.

No one has to speak. Silence is fine. A person who listens for six sessions has still done the study.

The text comes first. The leader isn't the last word. When we disagree, we go back to the page together.

Disagree, but don't scorn. A question is never a threat. No mocking, no interrupting, no fixing people.

Ephesians has passages that land hard on real people in the room: 1:4–5, 2:1–3, 4:26–32, 5:3–12 and 5:22–33, 6:1–9, and 6:10–20. The notes are on leader pages 42, 46, 52, 55, and 59. Read each ahead of time.

If someone shares something heavy

Thank them. Don't rush to a verse. Say, "That took courage. Can we talk after?" and then do. If what they shared involves danger to them or to someone else, now or at home, the help lines below come first, and, if they want it and it is safe, you stay with them while they call.

If a child is being hurt, call Childhelp, below, any hour, and report to child protective services or the police as your state requires. Reporting laws vary by state, and in some states every adult is required to report. If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

A study isn't counseling. Before you ever need it, know the name of one counselor, one pastor, and one help line, so you can hand them over without scrambling.

Help lines · United States

Emergency — call 911.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call or text 988, any hour. For anyone thinking about ending their life, in a mental-health crisis, or worried about someone who is. Veterans and service members: call 988 and press 1, or text 838255.

National Domestic Violence Hotline — 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788. Danger or fear at home.

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline — 1-800-422-4453. A child who is being hurt, or an adult who suspects it.

National Human Trafficking Hotline — 1-888-373-7888, or text 233733. Forced labor or forced sex.

RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline — 1-800-656-4673. Free and confidential.

SAMHSA National Helpline — 1-800-662-4357. A treatment referral and information line for substance use and mental health; it is not a crisis line.

Verified October 2026. The current list, with lines for other situations, is kept at clearpathbiblestudies.com/help. These pages are not a substitute for a doctor, a counselor, or a pastor who knows you.



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