

EPHESIANS

Finding Purpose



A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study
by Sue LeBoutillier

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❧ *Finding Purpose — in a Confused World* ❧
The Book of Ephesians

Dear Friend,

Welcome to our verse-by-verse exploration of the New Testament book of Ephesians. It's actually a letter written by the Apostle Paul to some dear people that he had previously spent quite a bit of time with. These people had heard and believed in the gospel of grace — they were Christians. But even from his current residence, miles away in prison, Paul's heart leaned in their direction. His desire was to encourage them to live out that gospel in their daily lives, and to seek to fulfill the purpose for which God had created them and saved them.

I titled this study *Finding Purpose* because we also need encouragement to live out the gospel in a world that is very confused about almost everything — especially truth. One of my favorite exhortations is found in chapter five: ***Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.*** (Ephesians 5:15)

Fortunately, God has a **purpose** and a **plan** for us — that's not just a cliché — that is a repetitive theme in Ephesians. God's *purpose*, His *plan*, and His *will* are mentioned a total of 13 times! And one of the most exciting parts of His will is that we would really know Him ...***the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge!*** (Ephesians 3:18-19)

As you study through Ephesians, I pray that each week's passage will help you *find real purpose* to ***walk as children of light and discern what is pleasing to the Lord!*** (Ephesians 5:8,10)

May the Lord richly bless you as you study His Word!

Sue LeBoutillier

sue@ccontario.com

How to use this Bible Study

Finding Purpose is a five-day-a-week, verse-by-verse study through the book of **Ephesians**.

Whether you are meeting with a friend, in a small group, or doing this study on your own, the following would be an ideal path:

#1 Your first step will be to watch/listen to **Week One — Introduction** either independently or in your group.

#2 Begin **Week Two in your Study Guide**

- ◆ Read the assigned Scriptures and answer the questions for each day. This Study Guide is intended to be completed independently **before** you watch or listen to the teaching associated with each week's lesson. (Take note of the *Questions for Thought and Discussion* at the end of each week's lesson).
- ◆ Then watch/listen to that week's teaching using the links below. You can do this privately or in your group.
- ◆ Then discuss the week's lesson in your group and pray together about applying the passages to your lives.

Repeat this process as you do all eight weeks in your Study Guide.

One last reminder — be sure to approach each of the above steps with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to give you understanding and speak to your heart.

To watch the video teachings for this Bible Study go to:

ccontario.com/womens-studies

or

[YouTube.com/calvarychapelontario](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvYchapelontario)

The best translation of the Bible to use is the one you understand best, and using more than one translation can be a useful aid in your study! This study guide was created using the ESV (English Standard Version).



Week One — Introduction

The first step in any Bible Study is getting a *big picture* perspective of the book — that's what our **Week One Introduction** is all about — background, history, and the purpose of the book of Ephesians.

The **Introduction** is intended to be the first thing you do — either by attending our live **Women of the Word Bible Study**, or by watching or listening to the **Week One Introduction** via our website:

www.ccontario.com/wow-ephesians
Week One—Introduction

The next two pages are provided to take notes on this teaching. After this, you'll be ready to start your independent study on Week Two of *Finding Purpose in a Confused World*.

Map of the Area Surrounding Ephesus



Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. The words *blessed* or *blessing* are used four times in **v.3-6**. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you consider yourself *blessed*? What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase *spiritual blessings*?
2. The book of Ephesians emphasizes the connection between what we *believe* and how we *behave*. Discuss why it's so important to reinforce our *beliefs* through our study of God's Word.
3. How can believing that you were actually *chosen before the foundation of the world* (v.4) shape your view of yourself, and affect your behavior today?
4. **V.5** tells us that *the purpose of His (God's) will* is our adoption as children of God. In what ways might an *adoption* seem more purposeful than bearing *natural* children? What does this mean in terms of our relationship with God?
5. Are you a *saint*? Why or why not?

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

John 1:12-13

Week Two — Ephesians 1:1-23

I hope that our Introduction to Ephesians has inspired you to begin your journal. Even though we covered the first few verses in the Introductory Teaching, today will be your opportunity to write those verses in your journal.

Here is a useful tip for your personal study — the heading for each week (*above*) will indicate the entire passage to be studied during that week. If you're able, begin each day by reading the entire *weekly passage*. Then, as you write your verses in your journal, you can simply concentrate on the words you are writing for each day.

Day 1:

 **READ** and **WRITE** Ephesians 1:1-6 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline *saints, in Christ, in Him*
- With a green pencil, underline *blessed, blessing* (4x)
Circle *chose us* and *adoption*
- With a red pencil, underline *purpose of His will*

We've already explained *who* this letter was written to and *why*. Like most of the other letters that Paul wrote from prison, this letter was addressed to *the saints*. Unlike many of the other letters, we find no glaring points of correction in his writing. Maybe that's why we're able to underline '*blessings*' FOUR TIMES in these opening verses.

Every time you mark words in **green** it will draw our attention to something wonderful that God has done for us!

In the first fourteen verses, the various ways in which we saints are *blessed* can be neatly distributed into three buckets: *blessed by the Father* — *blessed by the Son* — *blessed by the Holy Spirit*.

Let's fill in the first of three charts that list how we are blessed...

Our spiritual blessings that stem from God the Father:

V.4 He _____ before the foundation of the world

V.5 He planned for us to be _____ as children

Day 2:

 **READ** and **WRITE** Ephesians 1:7-12 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline *in Him* (3x) *in Christ* (2x)
- With a green pencil, circle *redemption, forgiveness*
- With a red pencil, underline *His will* (2x), *purpose, plan*

You just wrote the second portion of one very long sentence that began in **v.3**. Our Bible translators have included helpful punctuation for our benefit, but at the time, Paul seemed to be writing very enthusiastically — almost without taking a breath — about all the ways that God has blessed us spiritually! With the proper inflection we can read about our blessings just as enthusiastically!

The blessings in today's passage we attribute to the work of Jesus Christ. We know that God is ONE, and the three persons of the God-head don't work separately, but we *can* see their distinct ministry in our lives.

It's because of **Jesus** that we're **redeemed, forgiven** and then handed an **inheritance!** That's why we marked the words *in Him*, and *in Christ* five times! (All words marked in **purple** note *our position* or *our relationship* to God.) Let's investigate these blessings...

Redeemed— consult a dictionary and write a definition of what it means to **redeem** something:

- From **v.7**, what did Jesus use as a form of payment in order to redeem us?

Forgiven— we generally think of forgiveness as something we offer someone when they do something bad to us. In a way, we all have done something bad to God.

- From **v.7**, what did we do that needed to be forgiven?

- READ **2 Corinthians 5:19**. What is a slightly different word used in this passage in place of forgiveness?

Don't you think that elevates any experience of forgiveness? In your own life, simply forgiving someone is step one, but if you take the next step to become **reconciled** and re-establish a relationship, that's a completely different story.

That's why the third blessing that we attribute to Jesus is so special.

- From **v.11** what has been handed to us?

WOW! Who doesn't dream of an inheritance! Read these passages and note anything additional that you learn about your inheritance:

Galatians 4:4-7

Colossians 3:23-24

James 2:5

1 Peter 1:3-5

Finally, fill in the second of our three charts that list how we are blessed by Jesus Christ:

Our spiritual blessings that stem from Jesus the Son:

V.7 We have _____ through His _____

V.7 _____ of trespasses because of His grace

V.11 We have obtained an _____ according to His will

Day 3: _____

 READ and WRITE Ephesians 1:13-14 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline *in Him* (2x)
- With a green pencil, circle *sealed, guarantee of inheritance*
- With a pink pencil, underline *heard* and *believed*

Today we consider how the **Holy Spirit** contributes to our spiritual blessings. Our salvation experience happens in a particular order and you actually marked these steps with your pink marker. (Pink marks will always indicate some directive or action needed on our part.)

- From **v.13**, we learn that a person needs to

first — *hear* the _____ ,

then — *believe* _____ (speaking of Jesus Christ).

Sealed with the Spirit— The Holy Spirit plays a unique role in authenticating or proving our new relationship with God — we are *sealed with the promised Holy Spirit*. God marks us with a stamp of belonging — we might consider it a Holy Spirit tattoo!

Read these passages and note any other aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit you see once we *hear* and *believe*.

John 14:17

2 Corinthians 1:22

Guarantee of our inheritance— Not only are we *marked* by the Holy Spirit, but His very presence in our lives serves as a guarantee! It's like wearing an engagement ring — the presence of that ring signifies that the fiancée will come and claim his bride at some future date.

Now, fill in the final chart that list how we are blessed by the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation experience:

Our spiritual blessings that stem from the Holy Spirit:

V.13 We have been _____ with the Holy Spirit

V.14 We have a _____ of our inheritance

We have just one thing left to discover in these first 14 verses.

- ❑ With a red pencil, go back to **v.6, 12, 14** and circle the phrases *to the praise of his glory (or glorious grace)*.

Do you see what Paul did in this opening — in triplet? He reinforced the reality that God’s purpose in blessing us so lavishly is that **He** would receive glory.

Everything you listed in those three charts are blessings that you have received because God is good and God has chosen to bless you. You didn’t earn any of it, you aren’t deserving of any of it, it’s ALL meant for the purpose of bringing glory to God!

So that the tested genuineness of your faith —
may be found to result in praise and glory
and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:7

Day 4:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 1:15-18 in your journal.

- ❑ With a purple pencil, underline *in the saints*
- ❑ With a green pencil, underline *knowledge of Him, hope, glorious inheritance*
- ❑ With a pink pencil, underline *give thanks, prayer*

While studying the letters of the Apostle Paul, it’s always thrilling to read his opening prayers. This particular letter has TWO prayers, this one and a second one in chapter three.

From **v.15** note the report that came to Paul about the Ephesians:

- Their FAITH is in: _____
- Their LOVE is shown toward: _____

Since they are *in Christ*, as the Apostle prays for them, one aspect we notice right away is that he doesn’t seem to ask God to give them something they don’t already have — he always asks God to help them understand what they do have — *in Him*.

That aspect alone should speak volumes to us. How many blessings do we already possess that we either take for granted or just don't fully utilize. Let's identify the first two...

Knowledge of Him — I'm sure we will live out our entire lives without grasping the full revelation of Christ, but it is both our privilege and responsibility to continue to grow in *wisdom* and *revelation* of Him.

- List a few phrases that describe the truths that God has already shown you about Himself:

Hope to which He has called You — Hope is a very powerful word. We thrive on hope. In a similar way that humans can't last long without water, we also can't last long without hope.

- From v.18, to what kind of blessing is Paul connecting the word *hope*?

And now, O Lord, for
what do I wait?
My hope is in you.
Psalm 39:7

We marked the phrases *give thanks* and *prayer* in **pink** because they highlight something we observe Paul doing that is also a directive for all Christians. More than anything else, prayer helps us flourish in our own God-given purpose.

We're grateful for the prayers we have modeled for us in the Bible.

- What is one thing that strikes you about this prayer that you are inspired to follow?

Day 5: _____

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 1:19-23 in your journal.

- With a green pencil, underline *power*
- With a normal pen, put the letters “AT” over the phrase *all things* in v.10, 11, 22 (4x)

Power — As we finish Paul’s first prayer, this is the final focus, **power!**

- From v.19, who is this great *power* extended to?

- From v.20, how is this great *power* described? What was Paul comparing it to?

- Read **Romans 8:11**. What is the immediate benefit of this same resurrection *power* in our lives?

- Read **Acts 1:8**. What did Jesus tell the disciples would be an additional significant purpose for His **power**?

I think we know that God is powerful — even non-Christians would agree with that. But it’s good for us to meditate on the aspects of His power that He shares with us.

Since you marked the phrases *all things*, let’s wrap up chapter one by reinforcing the magnitude of the work of Christ:

V.10 to _____ *all things in him*.

V.11 He _____ all things according to his _____.

V.22 God put all things _____.

V.22 He is _____ all things to the church.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Repetition is a clue to finding themes that authors consider important. It's one reason we mark repetitive phrases or ideas. Name one repetitive word/phrase in chapter one that caught your attention. Explain why.
2. The report came to Paul of the Ephesians *love toward all the saints*. If someone had been watching you for the last 30 days, what might be their report about you?
3. Of what practical significance in your life is the idea that *God chose you before the foundation of the world*?
4. We talk about the *mark of the beast* in connection with end-times. We rarely talk about the *mark of the Lord* in our lives today. Share why being sealed with the Holy Spirit (our mark of ownership) is so relevant to our lives.
5. Read **Jeremiah 17:9**. Discuss some reasons we need God's power active in our lives to overcome the deceitfulness of our hearts.
6. What would you say was the main prayer inspiration for your life from Paul's first prayer in this book?

Week Three — Ephesians 2:1-22

Ephesians chapter two conveys some of the most powerful contrasts in all of the New Testament. How does something *dead* become *alive*? How does something *condemned* make it's way to a *throne*? The answer, of course, is God's mercy and kindness.

Day 1:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 2:1-3 in your journal.

Before and After— We'll use our purple pencil quite a lot this chapter, because words marked with purple indicate our position or relationship. Until now, purple words have conveyed positive meanings like *saints* or *in Christ*. But chapter two is a walk down memory lane for the believer. Paul masterfully places the *before* and *after* pictures side by side so we can fully comprehend what God has done for us.

It's so beneficial for every Christian — no matter how long one has been *in Christ* — to reflect on exactly how hopeless our situation was without Christ and how we were lifted into the family of God.

We'll use our same purple pencil to indicate both positions —
— The *before position* (negative relationship) will be **bracketed**.
— The *after position* (positive relationship) will be **underlined**.

- ☐ With a purple pencil, bracket *dead in trespasses and sins, children of wrath*

The important concepts here about our life before Christ are: *what we were* and *what we did!*

- From **v.1**, what was our original spiritual condition?
- From **v.2**, what two influences were at work in our lives that we followed?

- From **v.3**, what desire or purpose did we live for at this time?

Today's verses are perhaps the most concise Biblical passage regarding our original condition, and should clear up any notion that people are basically good! Below are additional Scriptures that will add greater dimension. Read and note any additional understanding these provide.

Isaiah 53:6

John 3:3

Romans 5:12

Well, that's a clear picture of our *before Christ* condition. It's not too difficult to understand. But even if we come to agreement about our sin there are still some pitfalls to watch out for:

#1 The suggestion from the enemy that *you* need to *do something* to improve your relationship with God — maybe help the less fortunate, or get to church every Sunday, or get baptized, or even teach Sunday School — maybe God will be impressed at your effort and your good stuff will outweigh the bad stuff. Satan knows all about redemption and forgiveness of sin, so he loves it when people spin their wheels trying to change their relationship to God by their own means.

#2 The idea that your *before Christ* condition is past the point of God wanting you. When you read the phrases *sons of disobedience* and *children of wrath*, perhaps that resonated with you. Maybe the world has conditioned you to believe *you* are not someone that God wants in His family.

#3 An expectation that temptations to sin will come to an abrupt end once you are transferred to your *after* Christ relationship. Often, when people realize they are still influenced by the same stuff as before, discouragement can easily set in.

More on avoiding these pitfalls in the following chapters!

Day 2:

 READ and WRITE Ephesians 2:4-7 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline *together with Christ*, and *with Him* (2x)
- With a green pencil, underline *made us alive, raised us up, seated us*
- With a red pencil, circle four aspects of God's character that we are intended to note: *mercy, love, grace, kindness*

Jesus Changes People— Everything in v.1-3 leaned toward hopelessness. What a delight to discover that v.4 begins with transitional words that change the mood of the entire chapter.

- Write those two words here: _____

Those two words change the focus from *us* to *God*, and *death* to *life*.

Since the focus is now on God, let's identify the four character qualities that He possesses in abundance and extends toward us:

v.4 M _____

v.4 L _____

v.5 G _____

v.7 K _____

Paul didn't explain right here all of the technicalities about *how* Jesus' sacrifice became acceptable as payment for our sins — the main point is His **kindness** lavished upon us, which has the potential to produce a drastic change in our life.

- From v.5, *when* did God extend his mercy and love toward us?

- From v.5, explain the transformation we can experience because of God's **mercy**:

Mercy is often simply described as *not getting what we deserve*.

- READ **Romans 6:23** and explain what we *do deserve*.

An important part of Bible study, after asking ‘*what does it say?*’ and ‘*what does it mean?*’ is to ask ‘*what does it mean to me?*’


- Using two sentences, share how God’s **mercy** has transformed your life. (I know you could write a book, but try two sentences.)

Grace is often very simply described as *getting what we don’t deserve*.

- From **v.6**, explain the elevated position or relationship we can now experience because of God’s **grace**:

- From **v.7**, what is the **purpose** for which God save us from the consequences of our sin?

Day 3:

-  **READ** and **WRITE Ephesians 2:8-10** in your journal.
- With a purple pencil, underline *his workmanship*
 - With a green pencil, underline *saved*
 - With a red pencil, circle God's attribute of *grace*

The Role of Faith— Everything that God has done for us comes to a crescendo in these verses. But we also become aware of another important element — one that we bring to the relationship — **Faith!**

- According to **v.9**, what is useless for our salvation?

- According to **v.8**, what activates God's grace?

Does the role that faith plays seem like it could use more explanation?

- Read **Romans 10:8-10** and write one sentence that explains what faith looks like in practical terms?

- Because we are now seated with Him, what is our purpose in life according to **v.10**?

The phrase *good works* can be challenging. Because our works don't save us, we can tend to minimize their importance. Consider what these verses add to the idea that God has a purpose for us to fulfill.

Matthew 5:16

Romans 12:6

Colossians 1:10

Hebrews 10:24-25

Here is a summary of **Ephesians 2:1-10** in a chart form:

JESUS CHANGES PEOPLE
Our condition before and after Jesus saved us

BEFORE: Dead in sins and transgressions
Our Relationship: Objects of Wrath

Influences in that relationship:

- Ways of the world (world)
- Ruler of the kingdom of the air (devil)
- Sinful nature (flesh)

COMPONENTS OF CHANGE:

On God's Part	On Our Part
Mercy	Faith
Love	
Grace	
Kindness	

AFTER: Alive in Christ Jesus
Our Relationship: Children of God

Influenced in our new relationship:

- Seated with Christ
- Saved by Grace
- God's Workmanship

Now, summarize these same verses in two sentences:

Day 4: _____

✎ READ and WRITE Ephesians 2:11-16 in your journal.

☐ With a red pencil, circle *peace* (2x)

Have you ever felt like an *outsider*? Most of us have probably felt a bit on the *outside* in some situation! Most of the Ephesian believers were Gentiles. They knew that God had chosen the Jewish nation to be the carriers of His blessing to the whole world. *They* were not part of that nation — *they* were on the *outside* in terms of race.

List four phrases from v.12 that described the situation of the Gentiles before they were saved. (Then bracket them with a purple pencil in your journal.)

-
-
-
-

The truth is, they didn't just *feel* like outsiders — they *were* outside of God's family. But, once again we find a transitional phrase in v.13 that changes the mood of the passage. Complete the missing words:

“But Now, _____”

Only God can bring lasting peace! We understand that God reconciles people to Himself, making peace with God — but Paul was actually commenting here on the tension between Jews and the Gentiles.

The very day that I was preparing this passage we happened to watch a short documentary that featured a middle-ages cathedral in an English village. We noticed an ornate *veil* separating two sections of pews in the Abby. The commentator told of a sharp disagreement that grew between the monks and the villagers, which was ultimately laid to rest by erecting this wall. The monks then worshiped on one side and the villagers on the other — problem solved!

That's how people attempt to create peace — building walls — but God breaks down walls for the sake of peace and unity!

The differences between Jew and Gentile *were* real, and they were established by God himself (as odd as that sounds).

- Read **Romans 9:4-5** and bullet point the advantages and blessings that God gave to Israel:

Human nature can easily turn blessings into hostility, and that is what had happened between Jew and Gentile. But this chapter is all about CHANGE. **JESUS CHANGES PEOPLE.**

God's Plan to Reconcile— We've realized that the *hostility* described in this section is actually two-fold — Jews against Gentiles and people against God. But it was God's purpose, through Jesus, to reconcile both groups and to establish *unity* within the Body of Christ.

We've been given this same ministry, to facilitate God's reconciliation, both between people who are at odds and between people and God.

- Read **2 Corinthians 5:18-21**. What is one purpose that all believers in Christ are to fulfill?

- List one specific situation in your life that this message of reconciliation speaks to. Note what you believe God is showing you.

We don't make our own peace with God,
Jesus made peace for us through His work on the cross.

Day 5:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 2:17-22 in your journal.

- ❑ With a purple pencil, underline *through Him, in Him, citizens, saints, members of the household,* and bracket *strangers and aliens*
- ❑ With a red pencil, circle *peace* (2x)

Turning Strangers into Saints— To restate the theme of this chapter, God made peace with humanity through the cross of Christ. It's Jesus' work on the cross that changes people and transforms relationships. Because of Jesus, an **alien** can become a **citizen**, and a **stranger** can become a **saint** and all people can potentially be at peace with God and with one another.

Household of God— Our Christian relationships can now be described as family, or a household, or (as these verses help us visualize) a dwelling place like a temple.

- Who is the cornerstone? (v.20)
- Describe the foundation (v.20) and why it's important.
- Describe the entire structure. (v.21-22)

As a reminder, Paul was expressing that God's household included people who may have nurtured centuries of prejudice against one another and were now required to lay those differences aside.

Our cultural biases might not be as pronounced, but every generation has it's concept of who is considered *acceptable* and who is not.

- Consider one way you can help God's church thrive as we are all building this structure together.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. You've undoubtedly heard someone say that they believe all people are born basically good. Given the right environment and/or a proper education, they will be good people. How can you accurately and winsomely share the truth of God's Word regarding our *dead spiritual* condition at birth?
2. People often think they need to *clean up a bit* in order for God to accept them. How does **v.5** of this passage explain that's not the order that our relationship with God follows?
3. Discuss the differences between *mercy* and *grace* and share how God has lavished these attributes on you personally.
4. Read **Hebrews 11:6** and discuss the importance of **faith** in our before and after transformation.
5. Most Christians think that we *go to heaven* after we die, and that's true. How does **v.6** broaden our thinking on that matter?
6. Read **1 Peter 2:5**. The image is a variety of stones, tightly stacked together to form a structure. What are some of the potential challenges that we face living in such close proximity? And what are some strategies for getting along in such close proximity?

Week Four — Ephesians 3:1-21

Chapter three is essentially Paul's second prayer — at least it begins that way. But He barely gets started before he veers off on a fairly long parenthesis from **v.2-13** in order to explain God's purpose for his life. He does eventually make his way back to praying, but for the first three days this week, we'll investigate the parenthesis!

Day 1:

✎ READ and WRITE Ephesians 3:1-3 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline *prisoner of Christ Jesus*
- With a green pencil, underline *God's grace*

A Prisoner — If you hadn't read any other portion of the Bible, this would be your first hint that the author wrote this letter from prison. (Paul repeats this at the beginning of chapter 4.) This could be confusing because Paul had just told us in the last chapter that God has *good works prepared for His kids* — *prison doesn't seem good*.

Since the title of this study is **Finding Purpose**, we'll follow the detour to look at Paul's *calling*, his *purpose*, and his situation in life. We might find something useful to apply to our own situation and purpose.

Read and consider these verses that explain a bit more about Paul's calling from the Lord.

Acts 13:1-3

Acts 13:47

Acts 21:10-11

Paul spent time in various prisons, at least three times that we know of. None of his prison experiences were due to committing evil acts, but were always a result of being faithful to God's particular call on his life, which was to share the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Paul was actually put in chains at the request of the Jews and by the hands of the Romans. Yet, you underlined the phrase in **v.1** that indicated his perception of who was really behind his imprisonment.

- Write it again here:

You underlined that phrase in purple to indicate a particular relationship to the Lord — in this case *a prisoner*. WOW! Does God work like that? Does our relationship with Him sometimes take the form of uncomfortable things in our lives? Even if those situations might be a benefit to others?

- Check a few other translations to see what words are used in **v.2** to describe God's grace (or the work given to Paul):
- Also in **v.2**, *who* received the benefit from that grace/work?

It's time to consider the ***administration of God's grace*** in your own life.

- How has God lead you? What is the work He has given you to do?
- Who might benefit from that act of grace/work?
- What are some of the inconvenient or uncomfortable aspects that go along with your faithfulness to that work.

For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.

Philippians 1:29

Day 2:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 3:4-6 in your journal.

- ☐ With a purple pencil, underline *fellow heirs, members of the same body, partakers of the promise, in Christ Jesus*
- ☐ With a red pencil, circle *mystery of Christ (v.4), mystery (v.3,6)*

The secret plan — It might be a surprise to some that God didn't share His entire plan of redemption with the Old Testament saints. The idea that His Kingdom would one day be open to people beyond the children of Abraham, and that these outsiders would have equal standing, was concealed in the Old Testament.

It was God's intention to let this remain a mystery until Christ came. This is the mystery Paul spoke of in his letters — that God's family, the church, would include both Jews and Gentiles — that literally anyone who believed could be included in God's plan of grace!

- From v.5, along with Ephesians 2:20, who else was this revelation given to besides Paul?

- How did God reveal this mystery to them? (v.5)

- From v.6, list the three main benefits of this mystery to the Gentiles (or actually, to anyone who would believe)?
 -
 -
 -

Day 3:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 3:7-13 in your journal.

- With a green pencil, underline *gospel* (v.6,7) *grace*, *power*
- With a red pencil, circle *mystery*, and *eternal purpose*

So far, in Paul's 12-verse detour, we've learned...

- ◆ **About God's mystery**— that the door has been opened for Gentiles to become just as much a part of the Body of Christ as the Jews.
- ◆ **About God's timetable**— that God determined this arrangement long ago, only to be revealed after Jesus Christ opened the way of redemption.
- ◆ **About God's administration of grace**— that He chose Paul to carry this gospel to the Gentiles.

Even though Paul wrote authoritatively and made sure his readers knew that God's power was at work in his life, he made an interesting disclaimer about himself in v.8.

- Read **Acts 22:4**. Why do you think Paul referred to himself as *the least of all the saints*?

- With Paul's situation in mind, write a truth that you learn about how God equips and uses those that truly belong to Him. If possible use the words *grace* and *power*.

Minister — A biblical concept that means "to serve" or "to be a servant"

According to v.10,

- What did God want to be made known?
- To whom did He want this to be made known?
- And through whom did He want this to be made known?

This makes us curious about the rulers and authorities in heavenly places. Here is something that Warren Wiersbe wrote that may give us insight: *“Paul means the angelic beings created by God, both good and evil (Colossians 1:16). Angels are created beings and are not omniscient. In fact, Peter indicates that during the Old Testament period, the angels were curious about God’s plan of salvation then being worked out on earth (1 Peter 1:10–12). God is ‘educating’ the angels by means of the church!”*¹

- With all of this in mind, how is God using US (the Body of Christ) to display His Glory?

Glory — the honor resulting from a good opinion¹

- How does this all play into Paul instructing his friends not to *lose heart over what he was suffering*. What positive benefit was the result of his suffering?

Day 4:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 3:14-19 in your journal.

- ☐ With a purple pencil, underline the phrases *Christ dwell in your hearts, and filled with fullness of God*
- ☐ With a green pencil, underline *glory, power, rooted and grounded in love, know the love of Christ*

Finally, we return to the prayer that Paul began at the beginning of this chapter. Today's words have so much depth and inspiration, we want to try our best to really comprehend them.

Let's consider some of the key phrases in Paul's prayer:

Every Family in Heaven and on Earth— Since the Gentiles may have felt that they somehow wiggled their way into God's family (that really belonged to the Jews) Paul emphasized that every family (race) is named by God, or has God-given identity and purpose.

- How would you rephrase this to encourage people today?

Christ may Dwell in your Hearts— The word *dwell* carries the idea of residing permanently. That's what Jesus does, He actually takes up residence in us when we believe in Him.

Read these Scriptures and note what you learn:

John 14:15-17

John 14:23

Romans 8:9,11

Without any revelation in the Word of God, the concept of God dwelling *in us* wouldn't come naturally. We should meditate on this truth. That's why Paul asked God to give believers strength to understand and comprehend this reality.

Strengthened with power — This is what we need!

- Through what means does God strengthen believers?

- Where are we strengthened?

Being Rooted and Grounded— Both of these phrases describe the beginning stage of something that will eventually grow in stability.

- What is initially rooted and then grows into a stable structure?

Read **Jeremiah 17:7-8** for more insights.

- What is grounded (has a foundation) that grows into a stable structure?

Read **1 Peter 2:5** for more insights.

- From **v.17**, what are we to be rooted and grounded in?

To Know the Love of Christ— This is the goal! I've often said that our spiritual roots can only grow downward in direct proportion to our understanding of the love of Christ. If we don't grow in comprehending the love of Christ, we risk going through life thinking that God is displeased with us, or worse, out to get us.

- From **v.19**, what is the result of knowing God's love?

- What does that mean?

Day 5:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 3:20-21 in your journal.

- ☐ With a green pencil, underline *power*

Paul wrapped up his prayer by asking God that the believers would be helped to comprehend His love.

- In v.20, he described God's power as greater than what?
- Also, in v.20, where is God's power at work?

Read 2 Timothy 1:7 and note additional insights.

When facing a challenging situation in your life, have you ever said the words "*well, I'm just powerless to do anything about it?*"

- How does v.20 change your perspective?
- From v.21, who is to receive the glory for all of the above?
- What portion of this second prayer is the most inspiring to you?

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Why do you think Paul inserted the parenthesis in this chapter related to his own mission, purpose, and suffering? What sort of example did those verses convey to the Ephesians and how is it useful today?
2. Briefly discuss Paul's mission. What are some things that hinder Christians from considering their own mission and pursuing that mission from God?
3. We can be very quick to want to relieve someone's suffering, but God is sometimes bringing glory to himself through suffering. Read **2 Corinthians 11:24-29** and summarize the suffering that Paul endured in order to do what God called him to do. According to **v.13**, how did Paul view that level of suffering?
4. Name one practical way to *grow in the love of Christ*?
5. Why do you think we sometimes avoid hard prayer requests, as if we're protecting God? This passage says that ***God is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think!*** In what specific area of your life do you want to change your expectation?

Week Five — Ephesians 4:1-32

We're now halfway through our Bible study and also halfway through the book of Ephesians. Chapter four changes the focus significantly in that, up until now, we've been encouraged about **what** to **believe**. From here on, we'll be encouraged about **how** to **behave**, based on **what we believe**.

Our *green* and *purple* pencils will rest a bit while our *pink* pencil (which indicates instructions for the believer's behavior) will get a workout for the second half of our study.

Day 1:

 **READ** and **WRITE** Ephesians 4:1-6 in your journal.

- With a pink pencil, circle *humility, gentleness, patience, love, peace*.

Walking worthy— From infancy to old age, our journey through this life on earth could be described as one long *walk*.

- Write out the phrase from **v.1** that instructs us as to what our *walk* should look like?
-
-

Websters 1828 Dictionary of the American Language defines **worthy** as *equal in value, having qualities suited to*. As Paul builds upon this opening sentence (above), we can expect to find instructions about our **behavior** being *equal in value, or suited to* our calling.

List five character qualities found in **v.2** (that you circled in pink) that describe traits *equal in value* to our calling. Write a brief definition of each of them (using a dictionary if desired).

- ---

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

The Blessing of Unity— *Peace* is an essential component in promoting *unity*. Unity means *agreement, harmony*. God’s order provides a pleasant harmony to our walk as believers.

- From **v.4**, what things are unified, or in agreement?

- From **v.5**, what things are unified, or in agreement?

- From **v.3**, with what attitude should we try to maintain unity in the Body of Christ?

Behold, how good and pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity!
Psalm 133:1

Day 2:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 4:7-14 in your journal.

- ☐ With a green pencil, underline *grace was given, to equip, apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers.*

Remember the context of this passage is still ***the unity of the Spirit*** — harmony and order in God’s Kingdom. It is God who helps us maintain the ***unity of the Spirit*** or ***unity of the faith*** as it says in **v.13**. We have underlined in green *what God has done* and *who He has given to help*.

- From **v.7**, what has been given to each of us?

Today’s verses could be boiled down to
grace was given ... to equip ... so that we may no longer be children!

Timing of God’s Grace— The working of God’s grace came through His Holy Spirit, and God did not give His Spirit as a gift to us until a certain point in time.

- Where did Jesus ascend according to **v.8** and **v.10**?
- Before He ascended, he also descended to where? (**v.9**)

Read **Ephesians 2:1** and **Galatians 3:23**.

- How do these verses help us understand the **captivity** that people experienced before Christ ascended?

Equipping the Saints— Praise God that He planned to give Spiritual gifts to His children. The gifts listed here are not a complete list of all possible gifts. Read these additional Scriptures and note other types of gifts that God has given:

Romans 12:6-8

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

1 Corinthians 12:28

- The gifts listed in this passage *do* serve a specific purpose. From **v.12**, what are the two purposes of these particular gifts?
 -
 -
- From **v.13**, what is the goal to be achieved through the working of these gifts?

From Children to Adults— Everything organic grows — seedlings to trees, kittens to cats, babies to grown adults. This is the goal of our spiritual lives as well. How dreadful would it be if God’s children didn’t mature in their faith.

- What are the characteristics of spiritual *children* listed in **v.14**?
- How can the ministry of the gifts listed in **v.11** bring about the spiritual maturity that would bring stability?

Day 3:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 4:15-19 in your journal.

- ☐ With a pink pencil, underline *speaking the truth in love*, and all other words or phrases that you think indicate what our behavior should be.

All Grown Up— Nature dictates that children will physically grow to adulthood. The same is not necessarily true for Christians, not everyone who becomes born again will mature spiritually. That's why Paul said, "*grace was given ... to equip ... so that we may no longer be children*" (from yesterday's lesson).

One characteristic of maturity was given in v.2 "***bearing with one another in love***"

- What is another characteristics in v.15?

- From v.15, into whom are we to grow?

Growing in Christ is the goal! As we grow, we mature, and maturity offers us many benefits both individually and collectively.

- What is the third characteristic of maturity related to love that is found in v.16?

Read **1 Corinthians 13**. What are some of the insights into *love* from that chapter that help us see it's association with spiritual maturity?

Only let your manner of life be
worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1:27

Don't act like the Lost— What Paul actually said was, '*we must no longer walk as the Gentiles do*'. By saying this, he was contrasting his previous statement '*walk in a manner worthy of the calling*' (v.1).

In this context, the label *Gentiles* means the *unsaved* or those who are still walking in darkness. The main point of difference seems to be centered around their thinking!

- In fact, from **v.17**, how is the mind of the unsaved described?
- What are some other words or phrases from **v.18-19** that further describe the spiritual, emotional, or physical state of people who are without Christ?
- There seems to be a cause given at the end of **v.18**. What is it?
- What do you think is a remedy for a hard heart?

Day 4:

✎ READ and WRITE Ephesians 4:20-28 in your journal.

- With a green pencil, underline *in him, in Jesus*
- With a pink pencil, underline words or phrases that you think indicate what our behavior should be.

Having Learned Christ— These verses begin by reminding us of the contrast between those who have darkened thinking because they are outside of Christ, and those who have been *taught in Him*. The whole difference lies in position — *in Him* or *outside of Him*.

In your journal, look through the first 13 verses of chapter one. Count how many times you underlined *in Christ*, or *in him* _____. That was the *believing* portion of Paul's letter — this is the *behaving* portion.

Do you see the impact that being *taught in him* has on a person's life? When we're taught the *truth that is in Jesus* we have a new purpose for our life and that is to reflect HIM.

Off with the Old and On with the New— Those who have *learned Christ* don't have the luxury of just sitting back, letting the world go by and hoping that maturity will show up as surely as grey hair! We are to be actively involved in growing up in Christ by putting off the old and putting on the new!

- How is our *old self* described in v.22?

- According to v.23, where is it that we become renewed?

Read these passages and note additional insights:

Romans 8:5-7

Romans 12:2

1 Peter 1:13

Decluttering our Lives— Many Christians carry around needless emotional baggage. Our minds become cluttered with all types of useless and damaging habits.

- What is listed first in **v.25** that is to be eliminated from a believer's behavior?

This means more than *stop lying!* Falsehood covers a broad spectrum of deceit that usually boils down to wanting other people to view us differently than we actually are.

- Give another example of what could be falsehood, beyond simply telling a lie.

True unity means that we're okay with being known by who we really are, *for we are members one of another.*

The next target of decluttering our mind relates to **anger**. We are to deal with our emotions of anger within the same day.

- How can refusing to *put off* anger give the devil an *opportunity*?

The final decluttering of our mind (in today's verses) is to put off **stealing**.

- Explain what a believer is to *put on* in place of this:

- What additional benefit is found in working? (**v.28**)

Day 4:

📖 READ and WRITE Ephesians 4:29-32 in your journal.

- With a pink pencil, underline words or phrases that you think indicate what our *behavior* should be.

As we wrap up this week's study we continue the theme of *putting off the old and putting on the new*. Yesterday's decluttering session targeted *falsehood, anger, and theft*. Today we note *our words, our emotions, and our kindness level*.

Gracious Words— *Corrupting talk* is a pretty broad category. Don't you think that many of our trivial conversations could really be classified as *corrupting*? How do we know if they are or aren't? Well, there are three guidelines given in **v.29** to determine whether our words are corrupt or helpful. What are they:

-
-
-

Do you also wonder if the statement ***do not grieve the Holy Spirit***, was strategically placed?

- What do you think *corrupt talk* and *grieving the Spirit* could have in common?

Abounding in Kindness— Our purpose is to reflect God's character, His **kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness**. The things listed in **v.31** are at odds with that purpose. Has the Lord shown you something in that verse to be cut out from your life? Are you actively chasing it out of your life? Those things don't give up easily, they love to creep back in! But God is the One who gives us the victory!

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Read **Colossians 1:10** and **1 Thessalonians 2:12**. *Walking worthy* is a phrase the Apostle used frequently. It's an action verb that indicates a choice on our part. Share one aspect of *walking worthy* that the Lord ministered to you as you studied this passage.
2. Read the list of gifts that God gave to the church mentioned in **v.11**. How do these gifts help the church become spiritually mature? Share how one of these gifts has helped *you* become spiritually mature.
3. There are harmful and destructive actions and attitudes listed among the things that we are to *put off*. Discuss some practical ways to effectively wage war against those old habits?
4. *Putting off* is only half of our focus, we must also *put on*. **V.23** says we are ***to be renewed in the spirit of our minds***. First, what *is* the *spirit of our mind*; secondly, discuss how we can renew it.
5. Walking worthy is something that all true believers are trying to do — with varying results! Read **v.2** again and discuss how attention to this one verse may be the key to unity among believers.

Week Six — Ephesians 5:1-21

You've probably watched a toddler slip her chubby little feet into her momma's heels and traipse proudly across the living room while trying her hardest to appear very grown-up! Kids naturally imitate the adults in their life. Sometimes their imitation reveals that they've been paying very close attention, like when my two-year-old wrinkled up her face, shook the high heels off her feet and declared, '*shoes are killin me!*' I wonder who she got that from!

But the point is, we are created to imitate. The key phrase of this whole chapter is found in the first five words that you'll write in your journal today.

Day 1:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 5:1-2 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline *beloved children*
- With a pink pencil, underline *walk in love*

A True Imitation— Our purpose is **to imitate** our Heavenly Father. In the next 17 verses we will discover three aspects of God's character that we are to copy:

- We're to **Walk in love** (v.2)
- We're to **Walk as children of light** (v.3-14)
- We're to **Walk in wisdom** (v.15-17)

The context of today's verses is *love*. It's difficult to imitate something you've never seen or experienced — but God has taken care of that because He has modeled *love* for us.

- What is the example of *love* described in v.2?

Knowing the Word is the same as learning to know the heart of God. Once you know God's heart you find yourself more able to discern the things that grieve Him.

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier²

Ah, a sacrificial love — giving of one's self for the sake of another! That might seem like a very difficult thing to do, but let's walk through some Scriptures that teach us how loving others is actually more possible than we might think.

Read these passages and complete the sentences.

1 John 4:16 We learn about God's nature: "**God is _____**"

2 Peter 1:4 We find that through God's great promises, we are able to "**become _____ of the divine nature**"

John 15:12 We learn that God has commanded us to " _____ **one another.**"

This is the essence of being imitators of God and walking in love. Now, let's think of how we can actually imitate God through love. Consider each of these phrases from chapter 4 and jot down an example of imitating God while showing love to another.

Ephesians 4:2 — *bearing with one another in love*

Ephesians 4:15 — *speaking the truth in love*

Ephesians 4:16 — *building up in love*

Day 2:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 5:3-5 in your journal.

- ☐ With a pink pencil, underline *thanksgiving*

Today we begin the next section in a believer's walk — to **walk as children of light**. Those exact words won't be used until tomorrow's passage — the negative is presented first before the positive.

Keeping our Distance— In our *walk with Christ*, there are always many choices to be made and many paths that we could potentially follow. These verses specifically name those things that we need to distance ourselves from.

- List the three sins that you find warned against in v.3.
 -
 -
 -
- What does 'must not even be named among you' mean? Provide an example.

Here is a brief definition for each of the sins mentioned above:

Sexual immorality— any sexual relationship or act outside of the bond of marriage. (Some Bibles translate this *fornication*.)

Impurity— corrupting influences allowed in our lives that might not fall within the technical boundaries of *sexual immorality*. In this context, of a sexual nature that may promote sexual immorality or lust.

Covetousness— a passionate desire for something belonging to another person. In this context usually considered lust.

- The list from **v.3** fits into a certain category — what would you label this category?

- Now, List the three sins that you find warned against in **v.4**.
 -
 -
 -

- What would you label this category?

- What is the proper use for our speech as offered in **v.4**?

These behaviors are all considered *deeds of darkness*. They are commonly found among those who are still *walking in darkness*, but they should not be practiced by those who are *walking in the light*.

One challenge for new Christians is old habits. We want to honor God with our lives, we want to walk in the light, but sometimes deep ruts have been formed in our minds. When our minds have developed a habit of thinking along the lines of *impurity*, then our humor can lean toward *crudeness*.

- Considering the advice given in **Ephesians 4:23**, explain an effective strategy for changing deeply rooted habits.

Day 3:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 5:6-10 in your journal.

- With a pink pencil, underline *walk as children of light*
- With a pen bracket the contrasting words: *deceive* & *discern*, *darkness* & *light*

Walking in Agreement— Do we inventory our associations as often as we should? With what do we aligned ourselves? Who have we become partners with? (And I'm not talking just marriage partners.) What elements of impurity and darkness are we allowing into our homes and minds? Before we know it, we find ourselves walking in agreement with darkness simply because we don't take the initiative to cast those things out of our lives.

You circled the contrasting words *discern* and *deceive*. The world is constantly trying to *deceive* us, convince us that darkness isn't really dark. We're instructed here to *discern what is pleasing to the Lord* — to *walk as children of light*.

- From **v.6** what does the culture around us use to deceive us?

- Can you give an example of this?

- The truth is that the consequences of darkness and disobedience brings what? (**v.6**)

That's not something the culture ever mentions!

- Who will experience God's wrath? (**v.6**)

That's not someone you should be partners with!

Day 4:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 5:11-14 in your journal.

- With a pink pencil, underline *expose, exposed*
- With a pen bracket the contrasting words: *darkness & light*,

Double Exposure— Yesterday we considered *discerning what pleases the Lord and not walking in agreement with the deeds of darkness*. I noticed that Paul didn't just leave it there — we are also encouraged to **expose** those works of darkness by means of *the light*. This requires action on our part!

- Read **John 3:20-21**. What reaction should we anticipate when we do expose the *unfruitful works of darkness*?

- How can a believer continue to *walk in the light* and *expose the deeds of darkness* when we stand up against resistance like this?

Rise and Shine— **V.14** seems like it could be a modern rendition of **Isaiah 60:1** (below). I like the idea of waking in the morning to both the light of the sun and the light of the Lord. All things are new and fresh in the morning with another opportunity to imitate our heavenly Father. Read these passages and note any additional insights.

Romans 13:11-13

1 Thessalonians 5:1-10

Arise, Shine, for your light has come
And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
Isaiah 60:1

Day 5:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 5:15-21 in your journal.

- ☐ With a pink pencil, underline *look carefully, filled with the Spirit*
- ☐ With a pen bracket the contrasting words: *unwise & wise, foolish & understand*

Here is our third aspect of God's character that we are encouraged, in this week's passage, to imitate — **walking in wisdom**. Now, those exact words aren't used, but they are in every way implied.

Note the contrasting words that you bracketed — *wise* and *unwise*; *foolish* and *understanding*. Clearly we have choices in life. The path of least resistance always veers toward foolishness, which is a lack of wisdom. If you have raised children, you know that foolishness shows up naturally.

But the Lord wants us to *walk in wisdom* which is the same as *walking in the truth*. We have learned to *walk in love*, and *walk in the light*, now we add this additional characteristic of God.

- According to **v.16**, what is one very practical way to walk wisely?

- List a few practical adjustments to your time management that you think the Lord would have you put in place to eliminate *foolish* use of your time.

Teach us to
number our
days
that we may
gain a heart of
wisdom.
Psalm 90:12

With What are you Filled?— There is another more subtle contrast in **v.18** that you can bracket if you want to — *wine* and *Spirit*. You might wonder how those are contrasts. Well, the answer lies in Paul’s clever way of bringing to our attention something that those walking in darkness often *fill up on* — wine; compared to something those walking in wisdom *fill up on* — the Holy Spirit!

- In **v.18**, how is drunkenness described? Check another translation or a dictionary to get a better understanding.

The following verses delineate the kind of praise that could be expected from someone *filled with the spirit*.

- From **v.19**, list the three ways that believers are encouraged to speak to one another:
 -
 -
 -
- Why do you think that it pleases the Lord when we *make melody* to Him? (**v.19**)
- Why do you think that it pleases the Lord when we *give thanks always and for everything*? (**v.20**)

The final verse, “*submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ*” sets up our study for next week when we will consider the importance of submission in the Body of Christ.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Among the three godly characteristics given in this chapter that we are to imitate — *walking in love, light, wisdom* — which one do you find the most difficult? Why do you think that is?
2. There are six sins named in **v.3-4** that should not be found among believers. Have you come across ways that Christians have tried to re-define any of these in order to not handle them so harshly?
3. Sometimes preparation is key. How would you prepare your teen to handle an off-color joke being told in a group?
4. In just a few sentences, use **Ephesians 5:8** as a metaphor for your own experience with the Lord.
5. We are encouraged to *walk in wisdom*. Biblically, how is wisdom gained?
6. It could be comical to think of *spirit-controlled* believers greeting each other with hymns and spiritual songs. What do you think is a good practical everyday application of **v.19**?

Week Seven — Ephesians 5:22-6:9

Day 1: _____

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 5:22-24 in your journal.

- ☐ With a pink pencil, underline *submit* (3x).

A Heart of Submission— We often use the phrase *a soft heart toward* God, or something similar. The final verse of the previous lesson left us with the idea that being *filled with the Holy Spirit* should lead us to *submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ (5:21)*. The ‘*one another*’ part leads us to believe there is more to understand about Biblical submission than the phrase ‘*wives, submit to your husbands*’.

We’ll begin with this ‘*one another*’ idea first and then move on to the specifics of marriage. Read these verses and note other relationships that call for submission, rather than marriage alone.

Romans 13:1

1 Corinthians 16:16

Ephesians 5:24

1 Peter 2:18

1 Peter 5:5

Now that we’ve been reminded that God has a plan for order in all things, let’s identify what the word **submission** means. It’s actually a military word that means ‘*to rank under*’ or ‘*to arrange under rank*’. It’s an organizational word.

- List some every-day, observable relationships that require *rank*. (*i.e., pilot/flight attendant*)

Harmony in the Home— Now let's turn our attention specifically to marriage.

- In **v.22**, who is intended to submit to whom?

- Also from **v.22**, with what attitude are they to submit?

- Also, from **v.22**, do you find a directive for *all women* to submit to *all men*?
 - What is the limitation given?

Even born-again Christians can come to this passage with differing concepts of what the word *submit* means. The spectrum goes from *obey his every command, no matter how stupid or dangerous* — to *consider his ideas an option to be considered (if convenient)*. The key to properly understanding verses 22-33 lies in understanding what marriage is intended to represent.

- From **v.23**, what two relationships are being compared:

The husband is to _____,

As Christ is to _____

- The order of rank given in **v.24**

As the church submits to _____

Wives should submit to _____.

That is a simplified opening statement and we will gain much more clarification in the coming verses.

Day 2:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 5:25-29 in your journal.

- ☐ With a pink pencil, underline the words *love, loved, loves* (5x)

A Heart of Love— Now we turn our attention to the role of the husband. Remember, in the previous part of this chapter, we were given the exhortation to ***be filled with the Spirit!*** In the Bible *to be filled with* is almost synonymous with *to be controlled by*.

We sometimes think that the empowering of the spirit is useful for evangelism — and it is — but as we study how the Christian home is structured, we quickly realize that both husbands and wives need the power of the Spirit to not only live in harmony, but to demonstrate God's order.

- From **v.25**, what is the command given to the husband?
 - Who is the role model for husbands?
- From **v.25-27**, note everything you find that Christ did for the church.

Isn't it interesting that Paul gave twice as much instruction to the husbands as he did to the wives? He gave the instruction, he showed a role model, and then he explained how they were to walk that out in their own lives.

- From **v.28-29**, how should the husband apply what he learns about Christ's love for the church to his own relationship with his wife?

- What word did you underline three times in yesterday's passage that was a directive to wives?

- What word did you underline five times in today's passage that is directive to the husbands.

Read **Philippians 2:5-8** and write one sentence that explains how Jesus was an example for both wives and husbands.

In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.

1 Peter 3:7 (NLT)

Day 3:

- ✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 5:30-33 in your journal.
 - With a red pencil, circle *mystery*
 - With a pink pencil, underline the phrases *love his wife*, *respect her husband*.

The Profound Mystery— The first word that you circled today was *mystery* because that is the overall theme of these verses — how the relationships between a husband and wife demonstrate the *mystery* of Christ and the church!

I asked you to circle *mystery* in red because that's the color we've been using to indicate **God's purposes!** Marriage reveals something about God's ultimate relationship with His creation.

- From v.32, put this *mystery* into your own words.

- From v.31, what is required in order for a marriage relationship to flourish?

At our wedding, the Pastor gave a cleaver (but good) message about the necessity for both husband and wife to *leave, cleave, and weave*. It may sound corny, but it was an excellent description of the process of a man and woman becoming one-flesh.

- List two areas (from your observations in life) that you believe are necessary for newly-marrieds to *leave* behind their former family ideals, traditions, or comforts.

In addition to demonstrating the spiritual *mystery* of Christ and the Church, there are practical and emotional needs that marriage is also intended to fulfill. Read these passages and note what needs are filled.

Genesis 1:28

Genesis 2:18

1 Corinthians 7:1-4

Love and Respect— Entire books are written from the premise that women require love and men require respect. Clearly we're all on different points of that spectrum, I tend to be a woman with a need for respect along with love, and you may be married to a man who has a fairly sizable *love tank* that needs to be filled.

In general however, (and maybe that's why Paul used the word *however* at the beginning of **v.33**), marriages flourish best under the following conditions:

When the husband _____ his wife

And when the wife _____ her husband.

- List two areas (from your observations in life) where you would counsel a newly-married wife to purposefully show respect to her husband.

Day 4:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 6:1-4 in your journal.

- With a pink pencil, underline the word *obey*.

A Home of Peace— Christians are not only intended to be *Spirit-filled*, or *Spirit-controlled* in marriage, but also in home relationships (v.1-4) and workplace relationships (v.5-9). All of these spheres of human interaction are intended to reflect God's order, by God's people.

- There are two things children are commanded to do in v.1-2, what are they?
 -
 -
- There are two reasons given for these commands in v.1-2, what are they?
 -
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Obviously, this wasn't the first commandment spoken, but rather the first commandment that held a promise. (Note **Exodus 20:12** and **Deuteronomy 5:16**.)

It's been said that obedience requires action, while honor requires attitude. In other words, one can technically obey commands with a bad attitude that shows zero honor.

- What do you think is required in order for God to bestow the promise attached to this command?

Nurture and Guidance— I tend to imagine letters like this being read in the assembly. During these verses the reader is making eye-contact with young people who were allowed into the group. Then, perhaps sensing the, “*yeah, Paul, you tell those kids what’s what*” attitude rise up in the parents, the reader makes eye contact with the fathers and gives them a very important caveat.

- From **v.4**, what negative effect are parents to avoid?
- Read **Colossians 3:21** and note the potential result of constantly criticizing and never affirming.
- From **v.4** in what positive ways are parents to nurture their children?

If asked for one positive way to instruct a child in the Lord — what would you say?

Day 5: _____

 **READ** and **WRITE Ephesians 6:5-9** in your journal.

- With a pink pencil, underline the word *obey*

A Heart to Serve— To be clear, the word *bondservant* was clearly a term indicating of some level of indentured service. But we will apply it to any aspect of serving, whether it be employment, volunteering, a sports team, etc. All of these relationships require Christians to be *spirit-controlled* and to walk in a sense of order.

- First, what is the command given to a servant in **v.5**?
 - What is the preferred heart attitude described in **v.5**?

We've often mentioned that the word **hypocrite** means *an actor* — one who plays a part. It is a person who is concealing something real in order to portray something unreal.

- *by way of eye-service* — means playing the part when the boss is watching
- *as people-pleasers* — means playing the part that pleases the people who are watching

Neither of these stem from **a sincere heart**.

- How do **v.6-7** describe the actions of a *sincere-hearted* servant?
- From **v.8** what can be expected by a *sincere-hearted* servant?

Leading with a Sincere Heart— Serving with a sincere heart requires us to be controlled by the Spirit, but so does leading with a sincere heart!

- From **v.9**, summarize the commands given to those who lead.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. This week's verses were all prefaced by the idea that Christians need to be *controlled by the Spirit*. Discuss what that means and how **Galatians 5:22-23** can be an indication of success.
2. To what degree should a wife submit herself (or be subject to) her own husband? Discuss Biblical limitations (using Scripture).
3. Discuss the potential benefit in the home, the church, and society in general if husbands and wives were to walk in obedience to God's design for marriage.
4. Discuss ways that wives can make the husband's role in leading a pleasure. Discuss ways that husbands can make it easy to submit to their leadership.
5. Do you think the responsibility for *discipline and instruction* mentioned in chapter 6 is specifically directed toward fathers, or is this equally intended for both parents (and care-givers as well)?
6. What was the most personal take-away from the section about servants and masters both having a sincere heart?

Week Eight — Ephesians 6:10-24

Day 1:

✎ READ and WRITE Ephesians 6:10-12 in your journal.

- ☐ With a pink pencil, underline *be strong, put on, stand against*

We're in a War— The **Armor of God** is a popular section of Scripture, one that resonates particularly well with boys as they can imagine the costumes, swords, battles, and victories that might result.

But the concepts in this week's lesson aren't allegory or illusion. Our battles against the devil and his schemes are *real*. Because we belong to God, we find ourselves in *real* spiritual battles that require *real* action — it's just *spiritual fighting* rather than *sword fighting*.

We need Strength— The first phrase you underlined in pink was *be strong*. That's appealing — strong is the new skinny! If we want to be physically strong, we lift weights and consume more protein. If we want to be mentally strong, we challenge our mind. But none of those strategies will do a thing to help us fulfill this command to *be strong*. We can't possibly be physically, emotionally, or intellectually strong enough to stand against our ancient foe — he's just far too imposing.

- From v.1-2 whose strength is our only hope against our enemy?

The next command you underlined was *put on*. Since God is the one who will strengthen us through His might, we need to simply apply what He has already provided for us, through prayer and discipline. This might sound mysterious, but I think we'll find that it's more simple than we think.

Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour.

1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

Knowing our Enemy— We often think our enemy is our husband, or child, or boss, or neighbor, or governor. But **v.12** corrects our thinking by reminding us that ***we don't wrestle against flesh and blood.***

- Bullet point how our battle foes are described in **v.12**.

Everything you listed from **v.12** is under the command of **the devil (v.11)**. So let's investigate what we actually learn about Satan from these passages. Look up these references, note labels given to Satan, actions on his part, warnings we are given, etc.

Matthew 4:3 —

John 8:44 —

2 Corinthians 4:4 —

2 Corinthians 11:13-14 —

1 Peter 5:8 —

1 John 3:7-10 —

Revelation 12:7-12 —

Day 2:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 6:13-15 in your journal.

- With a pink pencil, underline *take up, withstand, stand firm*

Putting on your Armor— Now we get to investigate every single piece of the armor of God that is available to us.

- From v.13 what will God’s armor enable us to do?

Many of our battles in life begin with temptations. Temptations are thoughts, suggestions, and ideas that Satan dangles in front of us while attempting to convince us that acting on the temptation will solve our problems.

Our task, when tempted, is to **stand firm**. James 4:7 says **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you**. That is the goal of our battle and the reason we need the **whole armor of God** — to resist the devil.

So let’s look at each piece which represents an important strategy in our war with the devil.

The Belt of Truth— For a Roman soldier, the belt’s importance lay in holding the entire uniform in place.

- When you looked at **John 8:44** yesterday, what did you discover about Satan and his relationship to the truth? What name was he given in that passage?

- With that idea in mind, why do you think truth is something that holds all else together in our lives, like a belt on a soldier?

Day 3:

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 6:16-17 in your journal.

The Shield of Faith— We may not be able to picture an equivalent of a *shield* on a modern soldier, but ancient soldiers actually carried around a large (about 2' by 4') wooden shield. Their shields usually had a feature on the edge enabling attachment to the next soldier in order to make a *protective wall* to advance on the enemy.

- According to **v.16**, what practical purpose did the shield serve in a physical battle.
- Explain what this represents in your spiritual life.
- How do we *pick up* faith? Name some practical suggestions.

The Helmet of Salvation— The battlefield of our minds is Satan's first target, that's how he enticed Eve to *think differently* about God than what she had been told. It's how he tempts *us* to embrace dangerous beliefs. If the mind can be won, everything else will topple from there.

Read these Scriptures and comment on the importance of our minds, our thinking and our understanding.

Psalm 119:130

Romans 8:5-6

Romans 12:2

The Sword of the Spirit— This final piece of equipment is different than the other battle gear we've studied in that it's an offensive weapon. The other pieces were meant to protect, but this is meant to both transform us and triumph over our enemy.

- Read **Hebrews 4:12** and explain how the **Word of God** is similar to a sword and has a transforming effect on our life.

- Read **Luke 4:1-13** and explain how the Word of God enabled Jesus to triumph over the temptations of the enemy.

Read these passages and note how they inspire you to use the Word of God as an effective sword.

Psalm 119:11

Romans 10:8-10

1 Peter 1:25

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but
have divine power to destroy strongholds.
We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion
raised against the knowledge of God, and take every
thought captive to obey Christ.
2 Corinthians 10:4-6

- What might be the difference Paul had in mind between the two distinctions: *prayers* and *supplications*?

- From **v.18**, with what sorts of attitudes are we to pray?

Persevering in prayer requires an active faith in God. Faith means believing. We won't continue to do something that we really don't believe will help.

- Name two ways to encourage your faith — which will in turn help you persevere in prayer.

Remember, Paul's purpose in life was to ***proclaim the mystery of the gospel*** — especially to the Gentiles. He asked that his brothers would pray for him that he would speak boldly.

- Besides yourself, who are you praying for that they would be faithful in the purpose for which God has called them?

Day 5: _____

✞ READ and WRITE Ephesians 6:21-24 in your journal.

We are an Army— The title of this study has been *Finding Purpose*. We've considered God's purpose in and through the church, God's purpose for the Apostle Paul and God's purpose for each of our lives.

We might be tempted to live independent, isolated lives, but we actually flourish best in our purpose when we form an entire army that is advancing the Kingdom of God and resisting the evil one.

Paul didn't work independently or keep his purpose hidden. He linked arms with the churches by giving them updates.

- Who delivered this letter and gave an update on Paul's welfare and ministry? (v.21)
- Additionally, what other purpose was assigned to him by Paul? (v.22)
- How might you *encourage* another Christian's heart this week?

I hope this Bible Study has *encouraged your heart*, and I hope you treasure your journal where you wrote the entire book of Ephesians. I hope the Lord has equipped you in some way to be more prepared to fulfill the purpose for which He has created you.

With Love and Blessings,

Sue

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. If someone asked you, '*what is the real war going on in the world*' how would you answer?
2. What do some people mistakenly think they are struggling against (i.e., a *political agenda*)? What have you mistakenly believed your enemy to be? How has your thinking changed?
3. The battles we wage are against evil powers, but our enemy doesn't often *appear* evil. Satan is more subtle than we think. In what ways does Satan work deceptively to entice Christians into sin, weakening their faith, or compromising on God's Word?
4. We use the phrase *full armor of God*. Discuss the consequences of picking and choosing which pieces you want to use and ignoring the rest.
5. Why do you think the command to ***be alert*** was given right on the heels of the discussion of the armor of God? What do we need to be alert about?
6. Name one area that you have been encouraged to be more persistent in prayer.

REFERENCES

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The following WOW Bible Studies written by Sue LeBoutillier are available through the **Calvary Chapel Ontario bookstore**, and through our online store at **www.ccontario.com**.

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- **Philippians** — Finding Joy in a Disjointed World
- **Colossians** — Finding Stability in a Changing World
- **Titus** — While We Wait
- **James** — Real Faith for Daily Life
- **1 & 2 Peter** — Hope, Holiness and Humility in a Hostile World
- **1,2,3 John** — Light, Love and Logic, Lessons from the Apostle John