

EPHESIANS
STUDY GUIDE

By Emily McEntyre

Have you ever relocated somewhere (even for a brief time) and really gotten to know the people?

Maybe you spent a summer as a camp counselor and poured into the lives of young people for a couple of months. Maybe you invested some years as a classroom teacher and shepherded (or just herded) a group of impressionable minds through a school year. Maybe you've raised a family of your own, living with, caring for, and loving children through the good and the bad.

Paul did this in Ephesus. On his first trek into Asia, he was probably just passing through, but his next trip (his third missionary journey), he stayed for about two and a half years.

Picture Paul's ship coming into harbor. He hikes up his robes (just a little) and grabs his few belongings, disembarking and walking about a mile along the coast into the city. The city is loud and colorful, with a Mediterranean mix of cultures colliding – food from Asia, religion from the Middle East, clothing from Africa. As Simpson and Bruce say in their commentary, Ephesus "teemed with wealth and luxury."

Paul finds a synagogue, preaches there a bit, and then moves to a local amphitheater where he finds non-Jewish philosophers. He starts talking about a God who loves people of all ethnicities and a community centered around this God, in which people share all things and sacrificially love each other.

In a dog-eat-dog, my-religion-is-better-than-yours city, this
God bombshell explodes.

As the group of believers in Ephesus grows and becomes a
church

Background

Background, Day 1

Acts 7:44-8:1

Stephen, a follower of Christ, is speaking here to assembled religious leaders:

“Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as he who spoke to Moses commanded him to make it according to the pattern that he had seen; ⁴⁵ which also our fathers, in their turn, brought in with Joshua when they entered into the possession of the nations, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, to the days of David, ⁴⁶ who found favor in the sight of God, and asked to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷ But Solomon built him a house.

However, the Most High doesn't dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says,

⁴⁹ 'heaven is my throne,

and the earth a footstool for my feet.

What kind of house will you build me?' says the Lord.

'Or what is the place of my rest?

⁵⁰ Didn't my hand make all these things?' [✠](#)

“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit! As your fathers did, so you do.

⁵² Which of the prophets didn't your fathers persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, of

whom you have now become betrayers and murderers. ⁵³ You received the law as it was ordained by angels, and didn't keep it!"

⁵⁴ Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. ⁵⁵ But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, ⁵⁶ and said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

⁵⁷ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, then rushed at him with one accord. ⁵⁸ They threw him out of the city and stoned him. The witnesses placed their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ They stoned Stephen as he called out, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" ⁶⁰ He knelt down, and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, don't hold this sin against them!" When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Saul was consenting to his death.

8 A great persecution arose against the assembly which was in Jerusalem in that day. They were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except for the apostles.

² Devout men buried Stephen and lamented greatly over him.

³ But Saul ravaged the assembly, entering into every house and dragged both men and women off to prison. ⁴ Therefore those who were scattered abroad went around preaching the word.

1. What part did Saul (later known as Paul) play in Stephen's death?

2. What role did he play in the early church, according to verses 8:1-4?

3. What do you think were Saul's motivations?

4. If you know the rest of the story, does this give you hope for someone in your life (or in the public arena) who seems to be an enemy of the faith?

Background, Day 2

Acts 9:1-17

But Saul, still breathing threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked for letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³ As he traveled, he got close to Damascus, and suddenly a light from the sky shone around him. ⁴ He fell on the earth, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

⁵ He said, "Who are you, Lord?"

The Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.† ⁶ But rise up and enter into the city, then you will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the sound, but seeing no one. ⁸ Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no one. They led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ He was without sight for three days, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

He said, "Behold, it's me, Lord."

¹¹ The Lord said to him, "Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judah† for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus. For behold, he is praying, ¹² and in a vision

he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight.”

¹³ But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he did to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴ Here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.”

¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go your way, for he is my chosen vessel to bear my name before the nations and kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name’s sake.”

¹⁷ Ananias departed and entered into the house. Laying his hands on him, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord, who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

¹⁸ Immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he received his sight. He arose and was baptized. ¹⁹ He took food and was strengthened. Saul stayed several days with the disciples who were at Damascus. ²⁰ Immediately in the synagogues he proclaimed the Christ, that he is the Son of God. ²¹ All who heard him were amazed, and said, “Isn’t this he who in Jerusalem made havoc of those who called on this name? And he had come here intending to bring them bound before the chief priests!”

1. How do you think Ananias felt about the Lord's instruction to go heal a murderer? How might you have felt? What did Ananias do?

2. God called Saul his "chosen vessel." The word "chosen" here is used elsewhere in the Bible to mean "I had this in mind from the beginning of time." How does this make you feel?

3. Do you ever think of yourself as a "chosen vessel" of the Lord? If so, in what ways? If not, try the title on right now and see how it feels.

Background, Day 3

Acts 9:19-31

¹⁹ He took food and was strengthened. Saul stayed several days with the disciples who were at Damascus. ²⁰ Immediately in the synagogues he proclaimed the Christ, that he is the Son of God. ²¹ All who heard him were amazed, and said, "Isn't this he who in Jerusalem made havoc of those who called on this name? And he had come here intending to bring them bound before the chief priests!"

²² But Saul increased more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ. ²³ When many days were fulfilled, the Jews conspired together to kill him, ²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They watched the gates both day and night that they might kill him, ²⁵ but his disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

²⁶ When Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join himself to the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles, and declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.

²⁸ He was with them entering into Jerusalem, ²⁹ preaching boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. He spoke and disputed against the Hellenists, but they were seeking to kill him.

³⁰ When the brothers knew it, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him off to Tarsus. ³¹ So the assemblies throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace, and were built up. They were multiplied, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

1. Paul was back in the synagogues. According to verses 20 and 22, how has his message changed?

2. What was the reaction of the Jews in v. 24? The disciples in v. 26? The Hellenists in v. 29?

3. Barnabas is known for his encouragement. What additional characteristic does he display in v. 27?

4. Circumstances seem a bit chaotic here, from a human perspective. According to v. 31, what was a result of this course of events?

Background, Day 4

Acts 19: 1-10

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper country, came to Ephesus and found certain disciples.

² He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They said to him, "No, we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

³ He said, "Into what then were you baptized?"

They said, "Into John's baptism."

⁴ Paul said, "John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus."

⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke with other languages and prophesied. ⁷ They were about twelve men in all. ⁸ He entered into the synagogue and spoke boldly for a period of three months, reasoning and persuading about the things concerning God's Kingdom.

⁹ But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This continued for two years, so that all those who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

1. What different kinds of ministry does Paul do here?

2. About how long did Paul spend in Ephesus?

Background, Day 5

Acts 20:13-38

But we, going ahead to the ship, set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there; for he had so arranged, intending himself to go by land.

¹⁴ When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard, and came to Mitylene. ¹⁵ Sailing from there, we came the following day opposite Chios. The next day we touched at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium, and the day after we came to Miletus.

¹⁶ For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

¹⁷ From Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to himself the elders of the assembly. ¹⁸ When they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you all the time, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears, and with trials which happened to me by the plots of the Jews; ²⁰ how I didn't shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, teaching you publicly and from house to house, ²¹ testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus.†

²² Now, behold, I go bound by the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there; ²³ except that the Holy

Spirit testifies in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions wait for me. ²⁴ But these things don't count; nor do I hold my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to fully testify to the Good News of the grace of God.

²⁵ "Now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I went about preaching God's Kingdom, will see my face no more. ²⁶ Therefore I testify to you today that I am clean from the blood of all men, ²⁷ for I didn't shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

²⁸ Take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the assembly of the Lord and † God which he purchased with his own blood. ²⁹ For I know that after my departure, vicious wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Men will arise from among your own selves, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore watch, remembering that for a period of three years I didn't cease to admonish everyone night and day with tears.

³² Now, brothers,† entrust you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build up, and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³ I coveted no one's silver, gold, or clothing. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands served my necessities, and those who were with me. ³⁵ In all things I

gave you an example, that so laboring you ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

³⁶ When he had spoken these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷ They all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, ³⁸ sorrowing most of all because of the word which he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

1. What stands out to you about Paul's testimony about himself in v. 18-27 and 32-35?

2. What strikes you about his instructions to the Ephesians in v. 28-31?

3. Have you ever been close to spiritual brother or sister or spiritual mentor or mentee? If not, how could you cultivate that in your life?

Bonus Notes

Saul/Paul – A well-trained and devout Jew, originally named Saul. Saul terrorized and killed Christians because, as an orthodox Jew, he felt the new cult of Christ followers was an imminent threat to Judaism. God met Saul on the road to Damascus, displayed His Holiness and the fact that He *was* Christ, and gave Saul a new name. Paul became a devoted follower of Christ, an ardent evangelist, and eventually a martyr. Thirteen (out of 27) of the New Testament letters/books are written by Paul, and the book of Acts outlines some of his missionary journeys.



EPHESIANS
WEEK ONE

Week 1

Ephesians 1:1-10

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ 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;

⁴ He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without blemish before him in love.

He did this, already having predestined us for adoption as children through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his desire.

And He did this to the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he freely bestowed favor on us in the Beloved (Christ), ⁷ in whom we have our redemption through his blood -- the forgiveness of our trespasses -- according to the riches of his grace.

He made this grace abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he intended to sum up in Christ, when the time was full -- the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, fulfilled in him.

¹¹ in whom also we were assigned an inheritance, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his will; ¹² to the end that we should be to the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ:

in whom 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 Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is a pledge of our inheritance, to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of his glory. ¹⁵

For 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, ¹⁶ don't cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that 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;

¹⁸ having 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, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might ²⁰ which he worked in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places.

He is far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. ²² He put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things for the assembly, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Week 1, Day 1

Ephesians 1:1-3

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ 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;

1. In verse one, how does Paul identify himself? Why do you think this is significant?

2. In what ways could you use some more "grace and peace" in your life this week?

3. Paul refers to the Christians at Ephesus – the regular folks in the church – as saints. In what ways might you think or act differently if someone reminded you often that you are a saint? In what ways might you think or act differently toward the Christians in your church or your family if you remembered they were saints?

4. How does it make you feel to know you have been "blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places?" What do you think those blessings are?

Week One, Day Two

Ephesians 1: 4-7

4 He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without blemish before him in love.

5 He did this, already having predestined us for legal adoption as children through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his desire.

6 And He did this to the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he freely bestowed favor on us in the Beloved (Christ), ⁷ in whom we have our redemption through his blood -- the forgiveness of our trespasses -- according to the riches of his grace.

1. What characteristics and powers must God possess in order for the process described in this part of Paul's letter to be possible?

2. This passage describes Christians as being known, loved, and adopted before the beginning of the world. How does the significance of this relationship affect you?

In what ways might you look to other things in the world for significance?

Week One, Day Three

Ephesians 1:8-15

He made this grace abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he intended to sum up in Christ, when the time was full -- the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, fulfilled in him.

¹¹ In Christ also we were assigned an inheritance, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who works out all things by his plan and his will; ¹² to the end that we, who had before hoped in Christ, should be to the praise of his glory: ¹³ It was in Christ whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the Good News of your salvation,— having believed, were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is a pledge of our inheritance, to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of his glory. ¹⁵

1. How do verses nine and ten give us a glimpse into God's timing and plans? How do you feel about His "prudence?"

2. What do you think it means to be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise?

3. Imagine yourself as an average Ephesian. You are a weaver because your father was a weaver. You work from sunrise to sunset just to provide for your family. Or maybe you are a merchant. You trick people a little here, skim a little off the top there, all in hopes of achieving a better life. Perhaps you are religious. You visit the temples faithfully and offer sacrifices, praying the gods will give your family a good life.

Now you hear that the God of the universe has given you an inheritance. How does this change things?

4. What does Paul imply is the purpose of our redemption?

Week 1, Day 4

Ephesians 1:15-20

For 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, ¹⁶ don't cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that 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;

¹⁸ having 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, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might ²⁰ which he worked in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places.

Let's start with the end of this passage.

1. Paul talks about the "greatness of [God's] power toward us who believe. What does he say this power is the same as?

2. In what ways does it change your perspective to remember that God's power "toward us who believe" is the same as his power toward Christ "when he raised him from the dead"?

3. How would you feel if you knew someone was praying like this for you?

4. What action points might you take away from this passage?

Week 1, Day 5

Ephesians 1:21-23

He is far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. ²² He put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things for the assembly, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

1. This is a great passage for meditation. Try it as a prayer to God:

God, You are is are above all rule.

You are above all authority.

You are above all power.

You are above all dominion.

You are above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. ²²

You put all things in subjection under your feet,

You gave Christ to be head over all things for us, the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Bonus Notes for Week One

Apostle – This is perhaps less of a big deal in our world today, but “who sent you” was very important in the ancient world, where there were no college transcripts, electronic resumes, or state-issued drivers licenses. Paul was directly commissioned by Jesus Christ. He wants to make this clear*. Paul is an official ambassador.

Saints – Some churches have traditionally bestowed the title of “sainthood” on Christians who displayed unusual selfless or Christian character. However, in the New Testament, “saints” simply refers to other Christians. If we’re in Christ, we’ve all achieved sainthood!

Ephesus was a cosmopolitan port city located in what is now Turkey. It was famous for the Temple of Artemis – one of the seven wonders of the world and a center for idol worship. The church in Ephesus is referenced in both Acts and Revelation.

EPHESIANS
WEEK TWO

You were made alive when you were dead in transgressions and sins, ² in 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. We 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.

But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus; ⁸ for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, that no one would boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them.

Therefore 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), ¹² that 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. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off are made near in the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he is our peace, who made both one, and broke down the middle wall of separation, having 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, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, having killed the hostility through it.

He came and preached peace to you who were far off and to those who were near. For through him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom the whole building, fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

Week 2, Day 1

Ephesians 2: 1-3

You were made alive when you were dead in transgressions and sins, ² in 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. We 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.

1. The phrases "dead in transgressions" or "by nature children of wrath" may seem very abstract to us. The Message puts our sinful condition this way: *"We all did it, all of us doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it, all of us in the same boat."*

In what way do you identify with being/having been "dead in transgressions"?

2. Which "lusts of the flesh" are obvious in our world today? Which are more subtle or considered acceptable in our society (even Christian society)?

Week 2, Day 2

Ephesians 2:5-10

5 But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶ and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,⁷ that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus;⁸ for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,⁹ not of works, that no one would boast.¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them.

1. Take a moment to look over yesterday's lesson. What was our condition without God?

2. In light of this, how does verse five strike you?

3. How does the phrase "saved by faith," which people sometimes say, differ from verse eight? Why is this important?

4. Who in your life right now (maybe yourself) needs to hear the truth of verse 10?

Week 2, Day 3

Ephesians 2:11-12

Therefore 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), ¹² that 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.

1. Think about a time when you were separated from everyone else – different, unwelcomed. What feelings does this evoke? How did it feel (or how would it have felt) for someone to come along and bring you into the group?

2. Although the Israelites were allowed into the temple while the Gentiles were excluded (see bonus notes), in what way were the Israelites themselves still separated from God?

Week 2, Day 4

Ephesians 2:13-16

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off are made near in the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he is our peace, who made both one, and broke down the middle wall of separation, having 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, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, having killed the hostility through it.

1. Imagine yourself earning life and good standing with a king or government by completing dozens of tasks every day and obeying hundreds of laws. Now imagine gaining right standing because the king loves you. Describe the difference.

2. Who in your life might need to know about or be reminding about God's reconciliation with us through Christ? (We can pray for this person, if you would like to share with the group.)

Strangers The American concept of "strangers" is not as strong as the ancient middle eastern concept of strangers. To be a stranger or alien in a place 2,000 years ago was to be alone, mistrusted, without a name and without a future. Being a stranger could have been a hopeless situation.

Temple Separation: Gentiles were not permitted in the temple. In fact, Paul writes this letter to the Ephesians from prison because he was falsely accused of taking a Gentile into the temple. This was an offense punishable by death. Jews were the chosen and favored people of God, not Gentiles.

Circumcision: To be circumcised was to be grafted into the community of Israel, to become part of God's covenant people (IVP Bible Background Commentary). To be circumcised meant you had God, and you had hope.

EPHESIANS
WEEK THREE

3 For this cause I, Paul, am the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles.

2 You have heard of the administration of that grace of God which was given me toward you, ³ how that by revelation the mystery was made known to me (as I wrote before in few words), by which you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ.

In other generations this mystery was not made known to the children of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit: that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of his promise in Christ Jesus through the Good News, ⁷

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. ⁸

To me, the very least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and 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, ¹⁰ to 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, ¹¹ according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our

Lord. ¹² In him we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him.

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

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

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, ²¹ to him be the glory in the assembly and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Week Three, Day One

Ephesians 3:1-6

For this cause I, Paul, am the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles.

You have heard of the administration of that grace of God which was given me toward you, ³ how that by revelation the mystery was made known to me (as I wrote before in few words), by which you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ.

In other generations this mystery was not made known to the children of men, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit: that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of his promise in Christ Jesus through the Good News

1. Why do you think Paul introduces himself again, giving his "credentials"? Why do you think he calls himself a "prisoner of Christ" instead of a "prisoner of Rome"?

2. Paul is talking a lot about the mystery. It's difficult to overstate what a huge deal this would have been. (See Bonus

Notes) Read verse 3:6, substituting the word "surprise" for the word "mystery."

3. What if your neighbor received a huge inheritance – say, 10 million dollars – and then you found out you were also an heir, and you were going to share in the inheritance. How would you feel? How might your neighbor feel?

4. Applying that scenario to the Gospel, how do you think the god-fearing, Christian Ephesians felt about this assurance that they are co-heirs? How do you think the Jews felt?

Week Three, Day Two

Ephesians 3:7-9

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. ⁸

To me, the very least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and 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.

1. What kind of servant has God "made" you? (A business person, a teacher, a parent, a healthcare provider, a neighbor, etc.) Take a moment to thank Him for his calling and to ask for His power in these roles.

2. Why do you think Paul would have been so thankful for his servanthood and the grace given to him? (See Acts 9:1-4 in bonus notes.)

Week Three, Day Three

Ephesians 3:10-12

God's intent was that now, through the assembly of believers, His manifold wisdom might be made known to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places, ¹¹ according to the eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him. ¹³ Therefore I ask that you may not lose heart at my troubles for you, which are your glory.

1. Knowing the one true God – Yaweh – had been the exclusive birth rite of the Jews for thousands of years. With that in mind, what do you think is happening in verses 10 and 11? Why do you think Paul sounds so excited?

2. The word "manifold" here literally means many or abundant. How do you feel knowing that the God of the Bible has "abundant" wisdom? Is there an area in your life right now in which you particularly need to trust that wisdom?

3. Paul, in prison, is telling people outside of prison not to be discouraged. Why do you think he has so much hope and joy? How might that encourage you today? How might you encourage someone else today?

Week Three, Day Four

Ephesians 3:14-19

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

1. Picture a person or group of people who might feel excluded. How do you think the Ephesians – Gentiles who had never been formally welcomed into God's family before – felt when they heard these words (especially v. 15)?

2. How does it make you feel to remember that, if you are a believer, you are "filled with all the fullness of God"?

In what ways do you need to better grasp the "width and length and height and depth of Christ's love"?

How might we help each other do that?

Week Three, Day Five

Ephesians 3:20-21

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,
²¹ to him be the glory in the assembly and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

1. Do you ever struggle with arranging your life for your own glory instead of God's? How do you think we can help each other with this?

2. Try reading this passage as a personalized prayer:

To You, God, who are able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all I ask or think, according to the power that works in me, to You, be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Bonus Notes, Week Three

“the least of all saints”

Paul’s Imprisonment – Paul wa

Pre-Mystery For thousands of years at this point, the Israelites have operated as a separate group, the Lord’s chosen people. Although there are instances of people from other nations and religions coming into the fold (Rahab in Joshua 6:25, for example), the Israelites maintained exclusivity. The culture and religions of other nations were a threat, and God had not revealed his plan yet.

Mystery – Paul mentions “mystery” several times in this passage. Commentators and scholars agree that Paul is referring to the mystery the Old Testament prophets spoke about – one that was difficult to understand and impossible to predict until Christ came, died, and rose, and until He gave the Spirit at Pentecost. At Pentecost, God’s full plan for the church became clear, and the apostles understood the “mystery” which was the complete joining together of all God’s people into one body, the church universal.

Acts 9:1-4: Saul (Paul) was consenting to his [Stephen's] death.

A great persecution arose against the assembly which was in Jerusalem in that day. They were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except for the apostles.

² Devout men buried Stephen and lamented greatly over him.

³ But Saul ravaged the assembly, entering into every house and dragged both men and women off to prison.)

EPHESIANS
WEEK FOUR

I 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.⁴ There 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; ¹⁵ but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ, ¹⁶ from 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.

Week Four, Day 1

Ephesians 4:1-6

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, ² with all lowliness and humility, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ being eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, even as you also were called in one hope of your calling, ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all, and in us all.

1. In what situations do you find it most difficult to “bear with one another in love” or “keep the unity of the Spirit”?
2. How does this passage encourage you in these areas?
3. How can we help each other?

Week Four, Day Two

Ephesians 4:7-10

But to each one of us, the grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. ⁸ Therefore he says, "When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to people."⁹

⁹ Now this, "He ascended", what is it but that he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

1. In ancient times, after a victory in battle, kings ascended mountains. They had captives and gave gifts to their soldiers/people. Why do you think Paul emphasizes that King Jesus not only ascended, but also descended?

2. What hope does it give you that Jesus's purpose is to "fill all things"?

Week Four, Day Three

Ephesians 4:11-13

¹¹ Christ gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, shepherds* and teachers; ¹² for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ, ¹³ until 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...

1. This is not an exhaustive list of "spiritual gifts," but do you feel like God has equipped you for one of these roles? If so, which one(s)? If not, in what other ways do you feel like God has gifted you?

2. According to verses 12 and 13, why did God equip his people with gifts?

3. Do you feel like you could use more spiritual shepherding or equipping in your life? If so, in what way? Is there someone in your church you could ask to shepherd you?

Week Four, Day Four

Ephesians 4:14-16

...so 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; ¹⁵ but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ, ¹⁶ from 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.

1. Do you ever feel tossed back and forth in regard to sorting out sound teaching? According to yesterday's passage, what helps us avoid this?
2. What are some other fruits of equipping?
3. Do you ever struggle to "speak the truth in love"? Do you struggle more with the "truth" part or the "love" part? How can we help each other in this?

4. What does Paul imply the goal of "speaking truth in love" is?

Week Four, Day Five

Ephesians 4:1-16

¹¹ He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, shepherds* and teachers; ¹² for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ, ¹³ until 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, ¹⁴ that 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; ¹⁵ but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ, ¹⁶ from 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.

1. Pray this for your church body today.

Week Four, Bonus Notes

Imprisonment

Old Testament Quote

Spiritual Gifts

EPHESIANS
WEEK FIVE

¹⁷ This 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, ¹⁸ being 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. ¹⁹ They, having become callous, gave themselves up to lust, to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰ But you didn't learn Christ that way, ²¹ if indeed you heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus:²² that you put away, as concerning your former way of life, the old man that grows corrupt after the lusts of deceit, ²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and put on the new man, who in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

²⁵ Therefore 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, ²⁷ and don't give place[†] to the devil. ²⁸ Let 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. ²⁹ Let 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. ³⁰ Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, outcry, and slander be put away from you, with all malice. ³² And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God also in Christ forgave you.

Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children. ² 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.

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

⁵ Know 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.

⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words. For because of these things, the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore don't be partakers with them. ⁸ For you were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, ⁹ for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, ¹⁰ proving what is well pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Have no fellowship with the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather even reprove them. ¹² For it is a shame even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. ¹³ But all things, when they are reprov'd, are revealed by the light, for everything that reveals is light. ¹⁴ Therefore he says, "Awake, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Week Five, Day One

Ephesians 4:17-24

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

1. What separation does Paul make in v. 17?

2. One of the pastimes of the people in Ephesus and Greek culture was to sit around and talk about different philosophies of life. What does Paul seem to think of the "understanding" of the people of that day? In what way might that culture be similar to our own?

3. Why might someone who has discussed and thought about different life philosophies eventually just “give themselves up to lust”?

4. In light of this, what can Christians offer non-Christian culture today?

Week 5, Day 2

Ephesians 4:25-28

Therefore putting away falsehood, speak truth each one with his neighbor. For we are members of one another. ²⁶ "Be angry, and don't sin." ²⁷ Don't let the sun go down on your wrath, and don't give place to the devil. ²⁸ Let 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.

1. Imagine a heathen culture in which fabrications and falsehoods are the norm. Why do you think Paul tells the Ephesians not only, "don't lie," but to "speak truth"? In what ways could you speak more truth in your life? How might this help you or others?

2. What do you think verse 26 means? Are you currently letting the sun set on your anger in regard to a certain person or issue?

3. In mentioning stealing, Paul is likely referencing the non-Christian practices that would have been rampant in the culture: skimming off the top, pilfering, falsely advertising, and the like.

What culturally acceptable, yet sinful, practices might we be tempted to fall back into today?

Why is it important for us to "steal no longer"?

Week 5, Day 3

Ephesians 4:29-5:1

Let 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. ³⁰ Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, outcry, and slander be put away from you, with all malice. ³² And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God also in Christ forgave you.

Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children.

1. Verse 29 is stringent and specific. Why do you think Paul gives this instruction? How would it benefit our churches and Christian communities if we embraced this?
2. How exactly do you "put away" bitterness, wrath, anger, outcry and slander? How can we help each other?
3. How does our status as "beloved children" help us "be imitators of God"?

Week Five, Day Four

Ephesians 5:2

² 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.

1. How can you make this a prayer of praise today.

Week Five, Day Five

Ephesians 5:3-14

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

⁵ Know 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.

⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words. For because of these things, the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore don't be partakers with them. ⁸ For you were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, ⁹ for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, ¹⁰ proving what is well pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Have no fellowship with the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather even reprove them. ¹² For it is a shame even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. ¹³ But all things, when they are reproved, are revealed by the light, for everything that reveals is light. ¹⁴ Therefore he says, "Awake, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

1. In verse eight, what reason does Paul give for not being "partakers" of the thoughts and behaviors in verses three through five?

2. For a people historically excluded from the worship of the one true God, how do you think verse eight strikes them?

3. All of these admonitions toward moral purity could seem overwhelming. What gives us power or help to "walk as children of the light?"

Week Five, Bonus Notes

Ephesians 4:25-31: Vice lists were a common literary form in the writings of ancient moralists; sometimes all the vices listed pertained to a particular topic, as here (anger).

Anger: “While believers may at times be legitimately angry (with righteous **anger** against sin; cf. John 2:13–16), they are **not** to **sin**. The way to prevent such sin is to “keep short accounts,” dealing with the anger before **the sun** goes **down**. The reason is that **the devil** would like to intensify a Christian’s righteous anger against sin, causing it to become sin itself.” Bible Knowledge Commentary

Wake Up, O Sleeper: While this is not a direct quote from any old testament passage, Paul is probably quoting or alluding to something familiar – an old testament story (but not directly from scripture) or a song.

E P H E S I A N S
W E E K S I X

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

²² Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the assembly, being himself the savior of the body. ²⁴ But as the assembly is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their own husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly, and gave himself up for it; ²⁶ that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that 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. ²⁸ Even so husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord also does the assembly; ³⁰ because 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."³² This mystery is great, but I speak concerning Christ and of the assembly.³³ Nevertheless each of you must also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

¹ Children, 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." ⁴

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

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

⁹ You 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.

Week 6, Day 1

Ephesians 5:15-20

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

1. In light of the Ephesians living in the midst of an ungodly culture, what do you think it meant for them to "walk as wise"? What does that mean for you in our culture today?

2. What do you think the will of God is to which Paul is referring?

3. How do you think we could best apply verses 19 and 20 in our churches and Christian communities?

Week Six, Day 2

Ephesians 5:21

²¹ subjecting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.

1. How difficult or easy do you find it to “subject yourself” or “submit” to your fellow Christians? Why do you think Paul asks the Ephesians to do this?
2. What circumstances might make this particularly difficult?
3. How can we help each other?

Week 6, Day 3

Ephesians 5:21-33

²¹ Subject yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.

²² Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the assembly, being himself the savior of the body. ²⁴ But as the assembly is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their own husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly, and gave himself up for it; ²⁶ that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that 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. ²⁸ Even so husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord also does the assembly; ³⁰ because 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."[✠] ³² This mystery is great, but I speak concerning Christ and of the assembly. ³³ Nevertheless each of you must also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Week 6, Day 4

Ephesians 6:1-4

Children, 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." [✧](#)

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

1. How do verses 6:1 and 6:2 play out for adult children?

2. Why do you think Paul treats "don't provoke your children" and "nurture them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" as opposite actions?

3. In what ways do you need help honoring your parents and/or nurturing your children? How can we help each other?

Week 6, Day 5

Ephesians 6:5-9

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

⁹ You 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.

1. Do you think Paul was for or against slavery? Why do you think he gives these instructions in vs.5-8?

2. How do you apply that instruction to your life today?

3. How might verse nine apply to an aspect of your life in which you have authority over someone else?

Week 6, Bonus Notes

Do not get drunk (Eph. 5:18): Many people in the ancient world believed that drunkenness could produce a sort of inspiration or possession by Dionysus, god of wine.¹ In light of this, some early believers may have been under the impression that getting drunk could help them experience a more “inspirational” time of worship and fellowship.

Submit to Each Other (Eph. 5:21): This is an important verse. You can read it in several English translations. The Greek is below:

ὑποτασσόμενοι	ἀλλήλοις	ἐν	φόβῳ	Χριστοῦ
Upotassomenoi	angelois	en	phobo	Christou
Subordinate	mutually	with	fear	of Christ

“Subordinate yourselves mutually with fear of Christ.”

Parents and Children: “children were often taught through beating, which was standard in child rearing and education; fathers were considered responsible for their education. Paul is among the minority of ancient writers who seem to disapprove of excessive discipline.” IVP Bible Background Commentary

EPHESIANS
WEEK SEVEN

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For 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. ¹³ Therefore put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having the utility belt of truth buckled around your waist, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having fitted your feet with the preparation of the Good News of peace, ¹⁶ above all, taking up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word* of God; ¹⁸ with 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: ¹⁹ on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the Good News, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

²¹ But 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. ²² I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know our state and that he may comfort your hearts.

²³ Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love. Amen.

Week Seven, Day One

Ephesians 6:10-12

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For 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.

1. Whose strength does Paul reference in v. 10, and whose armor does Paul reference in v. 11?

2. Have there been times in your life when you have tried to stand in your own strength or fashion your own spiritual armor?

3. How can we help each other remember the power of God?

4. Is it easy or difficult for you to remember the truth of verse 12? What do you feel like you wrestle against in your life?

Week Seven, Day Two

Ephesians 6:13

¹³ Therefore put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

1. What does it feel like to imagine yourself standing alone against evil?

2. Now imagine yourself standing, in armor, with God's power, lined up shoulder to shoulder with dozens or hundreds or thousands of other believers. How is that better?

3. What are some ways we can move from "standing" in our own power, alone, to collectively "standing" in God's power?

Week Seven, Day Three

Ephesians 6:14-17

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having the utility belt of truth buckled around your waist, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having fitted your feet with the preparation of the Good News of peace, ¹⁶ above all, taking up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word* of God;

1. The Greek word "stand" here denotes urgency. What in our lives can make us forget that our spiritual battle is urgent?

2. Roman soldiers needed tall footwear so they could advance without worrying about where they were stepping. Is there an area of your life in which you are worried about "where to step" in regard to your faith? What could give you more confidence?

3. Roman shields were made of leather and linen and soaked in water so they could extinguish fiery darts of the enemy. How can we similarly help each other prepare for Satan's schemes?

Week Seven, Day Five

Ephesians 6:21-24

²¹ But 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. ²² I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know our state and that he may comfort your hearts.

²³ Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love. Amen.

1. Tychicus, appearing here as a messenger, was an important co-worker in Paul's ministry. Do you have a faithful co-working relationship with anyone(s)? Is there an opportunity to offer yourself as a faithful co-worker?

2. Is there someone in your life now whose heart needs to be comforted in the good news of Christ?

3. Make Paul's prayer a prayer for you or others today:

"Peace be to _____ and love with faith to _____ , from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with _____, who loves our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love. Amen.

Week Seven, Bonus Notes

Truth – The Greek word for truth here is Alethia. This probably refers to personal honesty and not the Truth (as in, the gospel).

Ambassadors were to be received with all the respect due the ones who sent them; as heralds, they were to be immune from hostility even if they represented an enemy kingdom² (IVP)

Power The English word power comes from the Greek, *kratei*, “**power** that overcomes resistance³” The same word was used to describe the miracles of Jesus.

Armor It is likely that Paul was tied to a Roman soldier during his imprisonment, at the time he wrote this letter to the Ephesians. He would have had ample opportunity to observe the soldier’s armor.

Stand In the day of battle, Roman soldiers were to stand their ground, not retreat. As long as they stood together on a flat, open field and did not break ranks, their legions were considered virtually invincible.

² Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Eph 6:20). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

³ Hoehner, H. W. (1985). Ephesians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 642). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.