

Ephesians: Discipleship Lessons, by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson
JesusWalk Bible Study Series

Participant Guide Handout Sheets

If you're working with a class or small group, feel free to duplicate the following handouts in this appendix at no additional charge. If you'd like to print 8-1/2" x 11" sheets, you can download the free Participant Guide handout sheets at:

www.jesuswalk.com/ephesians/ephesians-lesson-handouts.pdf

Discussion Questions

You'll find 4-5 questions for each lesson. Each question may include several sub-questions. These are designed to get group members engaged in discussion of the key points of the passage. If you're running short of time, feel free to skip questions or portions of questions.

1. Spiritual Blessings in Christ (1:1-6)
2. God's Gracious Plan of Redemption (1:7-14)
3. The Greatness of Our Christian Inheritance (1:15-23)
4. From Deadness in Sin to Coming Alive in Christ (2:1-7)
5. Salvation by Grace through Faith (2:8-10)
6. Fellow Citizens with the People of God (2:11-22)
7. The Mystery, Mission, and Ministry of the Church (3:1-13)
8. Paul's Prayer and Doxology (3:14-21)
9. One Body -- Unity and Diversity (4:1-10)
10. Preparation, Ministry, and Maturity (4:11-16)
11. Putting on Clean Clothes (4:17-32)
12. Imitate Your Father, Children (5:1-20)
13. Christian Husbands and Christian Wives (5:21-33)
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15. Wrestling with the Enemy of Our Souls (6:10-18)
16. Prevailing through Prayer (6:18-24)

1. Spiritual Blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1:1-6)

Q1. (Ephesians 1:3) What does it mean to you to be “in Christ” – incorporated into Christ? What are the implications of this for your life?

Q2. (Ephesians 1:4-5) What is scary about predestination? What is comforting? Why does Paul bring up predestination? Why do you think he is praising God for it in the “hearing” of the Ephesians?



Q3. (Ephesians 1:4) What does it mean to be “holy”? In what sense can you stand “blameless” before God?

Q4. (Ephesians 1:5-6) Why is adoption a particularly apt illustration of God’s relationship with us? Why is the concept of adoption encouraging to us?

2. God's Plan of Redemption (Ephesians 1:7-14)

Q1. (Ephesians 1:7) In what sense have you been "redeemed" from slavery? What do you think your life up to now would have been like, if you hadn't been redeemed? What would your future be like without redemption, do you think?

Q2. (Ephesians 1:9-10) What is the significance that all things will be brought under one head – Christ himself? How does this relate to the Creator? What does it say about unity? *Extra Credit:* How does this verse relate to 1 Corinthians 15:24-28?

Q3. (Ephesians 1:11-12) According to verses 11 and 12, what is God's purpose for our lives? What do we need to do to fulfill this purpose? How does this purpose relate to Matthew 5:13-16?

Q4. (Ephesians 1:13-14) These verses contain two analogies: (1) seal and (2) downpayment, with the balance to be paid in a lump sum at the end of the term. When does the "end of the term" occur? How do these analogies help explain how the Holy Spirit functions in our lives?

3. The Greatness of Our Christian Inheritance (Ephesians 1:15-23)

Q1. (Ephesians 1:18b) What do we Christians have to look forward to? How should this hope be a major motivation in our present-day lives? How should this hope affect our decisions and our lifestyle? How does our great hope differ from the hope of the average non-believer?

Q2. (Ephesians 1:18c) If you knew that in a few years you would inherit \$10 million, would it affect your life now? How should our expectation of an inheritance in God's presence temper our present-day concerns? Since this inheritance will be shared with "the saints" – our Christian family – how should that affect our fellowship with them?

Q3. (Ephesians 1:18d) Why are we powerless sometimes? Is it an inadequacy with the source or with our faith? Why do some congregations and movements produce disciples with miracle-believing faith and others produce disciples with wimpy faith? How can this be changed?

Q4. (Ephesians 1:20-22) Why do we so often take a "pass" when it comes to spiritual warfare? Why is Christ's exaltation, demonstration of complete victory, and superior rank over all spiritual powers important enough for Paul to mention it to his readers? Why do we tend to feel powerless in the face of spiritual enemies? What was Paul assuring the Ephesians of? What does this encourage us to do?

Q5. (Ephesians 1:22-23) When we neglect to be an active part of a local congregation, what particular blessings do we miss out on according to Paul in this verse? How do we, by our absence, withhold this blessing from others?

4. From Deadness in Sin to Coming Alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:1-7)

Q1. (Ephesians 2:1-3) In what sense are our non-believing friends, neighbors, and relatives “dead”? What’s the difference between us and them? If we really believed that they were “dead” and subject to God’s “wrath,” what would we do?

Q2. (Ephesians 2:1-3) Few people would knowingly follow Satan. How can people unwittingly follow Satan? In what sense are we responsible for unwitting rebellion against God? How can God, in all fairness, blame us?

Q3. (Ephesians 1:4-5) In verses 4 and 5, which words describe God’s motivation and character? Which verbs describe what has happened to us in Christ?

Q4. (Ephesians 2:6) What does it mean that we are seated with Christ in “the heavenly realms”? What does this say about God’s grace? What does this say about our spiritual authority? How should this knowledge affect our prayers and our boldness?

5. Salvation By Grace Through Faith (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Q1. Why is it so hard for us to understand grace? What commonly held life principle does it demolish? Translate the word “grace” into language a 10-year-old child would understand.

Q2. “Saved” has become Christian jargon. How can you “translate” this word into modern speech so people can understand what it really means and why they need it?

Q3. According to Ephesians 2:10, what were we created to do? Why? (Matthew 5:16) What is the difference between these works and the works Paul discredits in verse 9?

Q4. What exactly is faith? Can we take credit for having it? Can we be condemned for lacking it? Define “faith” in terms a 10-year-old could understand.

6. Fellow Citizens with the People of God (Ephesians 2:11-22)

Q1. (Ephesians 2:11-12) Why does being out of touch with what it means to be “lost” impede our willingness to witness? In your own words, what is the spiritual condition of a friend or co-worker who doesn’t know Christ?

Q2. (Ephesians 2:14-15) In what sense did Jesus as Messiah “fulfill” the Mosaic Law? What is the significance of that for Jewish people? For us Gentiles?

Q3. (Ephesians 2:17) What does it mean to have “access to the Father”? In what way does the Holy Spirit facilitate this access? In what way does Jesus enable this access?

Q4. (Ephesians 2:22) What is the significance that your congregation was made to be “a dwelling place for God in the Spirit”? What hinders that from being fully experienced? What can you do to help that become more fully experienced and appreciated?

7. The Mystery, Mission, and Ministry of the Church (Ephesians 3:1-13)

Q1. (Ephesians 3:2-5) Why is God's revelation to "his holy apostles and prophets" our authority for faith and practice? What is the danger of minimizing or straying from that revelation? What is the danger of superseding that revelation? What is the danger of denying that God reveals himself to us and to his church today?

Q2. (Ephesians 3:6) Just what is the "mystery" that Paul is talking about? Why was it important to the Gentile Christians in Paul's day?

Q3. (Ephesians 3:7-9) Why is Paul so careful to be humble about his call and apostleship? How can his example help us remain as humble servants?

Q4. What does Ephesians 3:12 teach us about the manner of approaching God? What happens if we try to pray without these qualities?

8. Paul's Prayer and Doxology (Ephesians 3:14-21)

Q1. (Ephesians 3:16-17) Do the concepts of (a) strengthened by the Spirit in the inner person, and (b) Christ dwelling in our hearts say the same thing, or are they separate and distinct ideas? What do you think?

Q2. (3:18-19) What kinds of things prevent us from comprehending the far reaches of Christ's love? What happens in the way we live when we do comprehend, know, and experience this love? What would be different about your life if you could grasp this?

Q3. (Ephesians 3:16, 19) What does it mean to be "filled with the Spirit" (verse 16)? Is this a one-time experience or a continual reality? What can we do to be filled with the Spirit? Is it different or the same as being "filled with all the fullness of God" (verse 19)?

Q4. (Ephesians 3:21) What might be different in your own congregation if bringing glory to God were considered the very most important function of the church? What would be different in your life if bringing God glory was your most important job, bar none?

9. One Body – Unity and Diversity (Ephesians 4:1-10)

Q1. (Ephesians 4:1) According to verse 1, what is the standard of our behavior? What is the “calling” to which God has called us?

Q2. (Ephesians 4:2) Why are patience and humility so important to preserving unity? What happens to the reputation of Jesus Christ when we have right doctrine along with a sense of arrogance towards those who disagree with us? How are we to be both “gentle” and to “fight the good fight of faith”?

Q3. (Ephesians 4:3) How much energy must we expend on Christian unity? What is “the bond of peace”? How do we strike at peace when we are intent on argument and dissension?

Q4. (Ephesians 4:7-10) Who gives spiritual gifts? Can our “natural” talents be related to our “spiritual” gifts? How? What is the difference between a natural God-given talent and a spiritual gift?

10. Preparation, Ministry, and Maturity (Ephesians 4:11-16)

Q1. (Ephesians 4:11) If there were apostles today, why kind of function might they have? What needs do our congregations and regional groupings of churches have that an apostle might meet? How might we detect false apostles? (2 Corinthians 11:13; Revelation 2:2)

Q2. (Ephesians 4:11) How can we stir up the gift of evangelism among members of our congregations? What might be the earmarks of a person with this gift? How can we encourage and stimulate the Spirit-gifted evangelists in our midst?

Q3. (Ephesians 4:11) How could a person have the spiritual gift of pastor or teacher without having an official position in a church? What must a church do if its “senior pastor” doesn’t have the spiritual gift of pastor? Who gives these gifts?

Q4. (Ephesians 4:12) What’s wrong with the old model of the minister or pastor being the main worker in the Church? How does it hinder people in the congregation? How does it hurt the community? What is the purpose of pastors and teachers?

Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers

In order to (*pros*) prepare and equip God’s people (12a)

For (*eis*) works of service (*diakonia*), (12b)

and for (*eis*) building up the body of Christ (12c)

So that we may reach unity in the faith (13a) *and* grow into the full maturity of Christ
(Ephesians 4:13b - 16)

11. Putting on Clean Clothes (Ephesians 4:17-32)

Q1. (Ephesians 4:17-19) Using Ephesians 4:17-19 as a basis, how would you describe (in your own words), the secular, non-Christian mindset of our age? Why are we tempted to conform to its values?

Q2. (Ephesians 4:26-27). Why did God give us the emotion of anger, do you think? How can anger be dangerous? How can we keep from sinning when we are angry? Is anger itself sin?

Q3. (Ephesians 4:29-32) What kind of “unwholesome talk” is common among us Christians? What three guidelines does Paul give us to measure the value of what we say? What is slander? How common is it among Christians? How can we prevent it?

Q4. (Ephesians 4:32) Why is it so difficult to forgive those who hurt us? According to Ephesians 4:32, who is our example of forgiveness? What heart attitudes toward people are evidence of a forgiving spirit, according to verse 32a?

12. Imitate Your Father, Children (Ephesians 5:1-20)

Q1. (Ephesians 5:2-3) Why does Paul warn so strongly against sexual sin? Is sexuality part of our spiritual life or can it be (should it be) partitioned from our spiritual life?

Q2. (Ephesians 5:15-16) Why does Paul exhort us to make the most of every opportunity? Why do we resist that? What must happen in our lives so we can be ready for the opportunity?

Q3. (Ephesians 5:17-18) What is the primary temptation involved with drugs and alcohol? How can drug or alcohol use substitute for the “high” of the Spirit? How can being filled with the Spirit help us fend off the temptations of drugs and alcohol?

Q4. (Ephesians 5:19-20) What kind of attitude should underlie our corporate singing? How is corporate singing designed to help us singers? How is it designed to worship God? How does singing in your own daily life help you worship?

13. Christian Husbands and Christian Wives (Ephesians 5:21-33)

Q1. (Ephesians 5:22-24) Why should a wife submit to her husband? According to these verses, to what degree is a wife required to submit to a husband who is not a Christian or who is a carnal Christian? Does submission mean a wife doesn't verbally disagree? What if there's a conflict with the wife's conscience?

Q2. (Ephesians 5:25-30) Does being head of the wife involve being "boss"? Why or why not? What does being "head" require of a husband? What is the example husbands are to follow in headship?

Q3. (Ephesians 5:28) In what sense is a husband's care for his wife's needs just common sense in taking care of his own needs? What is the principle from Genesis 2:24 that underlies this?

Q4. (Ephesians 5:32) In what sense is Christ our Husband as individuals? As a church? What are the implications of this for our lives? What does this say about Christ's responsibilities towards us?

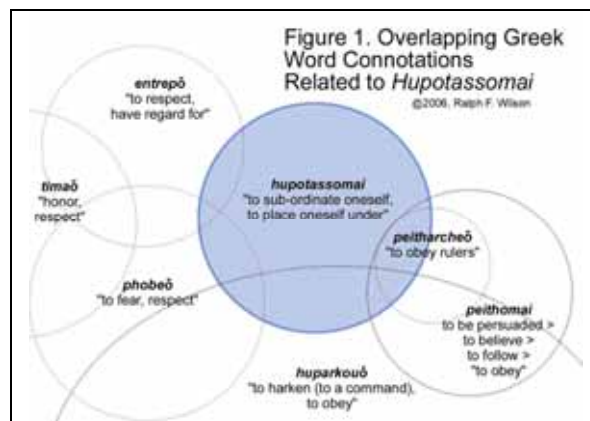


Fig. 1. Overlapping Greek Word Connotations Related to *Hypotassomai*.

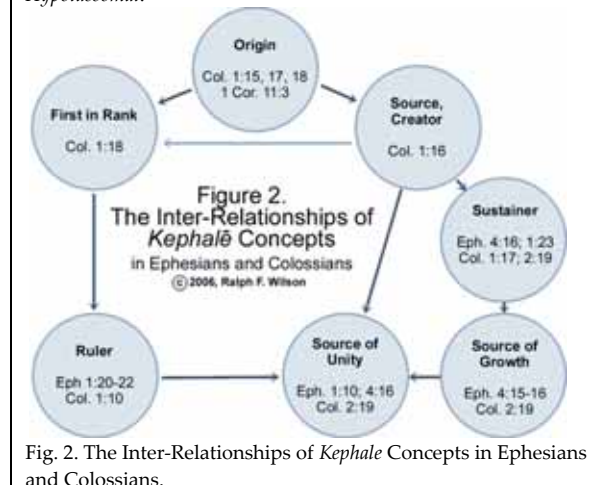


Fig. 2. The Inter-Relationships of *Kephale* Concepts in Ephesians and Colossians.

14. Children and Parents, Employers and Employees (Ephesians 6:1-9)

Q1. (Ephesians 6:1-3) What kind of obedience and honor is appropriate for adult children to show towards their parents? What might be the exceptions? How do respect and forgiveness figure in this relationship?

Q2. (Ephesians 6:4) What kind of behavior by fathers (or mothers, for that matter) can embitter or cause a child to lose heart? What do you think the “training and instruction of the Lord” involves?

Q3. (Ephesians 6:5-8) What are the characteristics called for in a truly Christian employee, according to Ephesians 6:5-8? How can these attitudes help us in difficult work situations?

Q4. (Ephesians 6:9) How should Christian employers conduct themselves towards their employees? How should church boards conduct themselves towards church employees? How do you determine a just wage – not merely the one you think you can afford?

15. Wrestling with the Enemy of Our Souls (Ephesians 6:10-18)

Q1. (Ephesians 6:11-13) Why is it difficult to believe in the devil and demons in our day? How does their existence help explain the struggle humans face on earth? With all their power, how do we stand a chance? Did “the devil make me do it”? What kinds of things *can't* we blame on the demonic?

Q2. (Ephesians 6:13) What is difficult about standing our ground in today's world? In what way can standing our ground be considered victory? Why are the saints in Revelation 12:11 considered victorious over the devil? How did they stand their ground?

Q3. (Ephesians 6:14) Why are such simple things as truth and personal holiness such powerful armament? Are they defensive or offensive weapons?

Q4. (Ephesians 6:15) What would be the characteristic of a person who *didn't* have his feet ready to run with the Gospel? How does heart preparation make you more ready to share the Good News with those around you? How does this help defeat the dominion of darkness?

Q5. (Ephesians 6:15-17) Why is it important to have your “shield” up each day? In what way does the “helmet of salvation” protect you? Is the “sword of the Spirit” an offensive or defensive weapon? How do you keep it sharp and ready for the battle?

16. Prevailing through Prayer (Ephesians 6:18-24)

Q1. (Ephesians 6:18) Why is prayer vital to spiritual warfare? What does it mean to “pray in the Spirit”?

Q2. (Ephesians 6:18b) Why is alertness in prayer vital to success in spiritual warfare? How is perseverance in prayer important to success? Why do we need this exhortation?

Q3. (Ephesians 6:19) Why would Paul request prayer for boldness? Why is boldness necessary in war? What is the opposite of boldness? What happens if this is our accustomed life-posture?

Q4. (Ephesians 6:20) Developing this analogy of an ambassador in a foreign land... What nation has sovereignty over the embassy and its property? Who does the ambassador represent? What responsibilities does he or she have? How do these relate to being an ambassador of Christ?