



## Appendix 1. Participant Guide Handout Sheets

You can teach Ephesians in either 7 lessons or 16 (or anything in between). For your convenience I am including two sets of participant handout sheets: one designed for groups that are studying this in 7 lessons, and another studying this in 16 lessons.

When I first wrote Ephesians: Discipleship Lessons in 2006, I included 4 to 5 discussion questions for each of 16 lessons. I have decided to retain those in the notes of those who are studying Ephesians in 7 lessons. The teacher can then select the questions desired for class discussion, and skip other questions that don't fit into the time allowed.

The questions 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.

If you'd like to print 8-1/2" x 11" sheets or A4, you can download the free Participant Guide handout sheets at no charge. [www.jesuswalk.com/ephesians/ephesians-lesson-handouts.pdf](http://www.jesuswalk.com/ephesians/ephesians-lesson-handouts.pdf)

7 Lesson Option	16 Lesson Option	
1		<b>1. Secure in Christ our Lord (Ephesians 1:1-23)</b>
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	2	1.2 God's Plan of Redemption (1:7-14)
	3	1.3. The Greatness of Our Christian Inheritance (1:15-23)
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3		<b>3. The New People of God (Ephesians 2:22-3:21)</b>
	6	3.1. Fellow Citizens with the People of God (2:11-22)
	7	3.2. The Mystery, Mission, and Ministry of the Church (3:1-13)
	8	3.3. Paul's Prayer and Doxology (3:14-21)
4		<b>4. The Unity and Gifts of the Church (Ephesians 4:1-16)</b>
	9	4.1. One Body - Unity and Diversity (4:1-10)
	10	4.2. Preparation, Ministry, and Maturity (4:11-16)
5		<b>5. A New Way of Life in Christ (Ephesians 4:17-5:20)</b>
	11	5.1. Putting on Clean Clothes (4:17-32)
	12	5.2. Children, Imitate Your Father (5:1-20)
6		<b>6. Christ's Love in All our Relationships (Ephesians 5:21-6:9)</b>
	13	6.1. Christian Husbands and Christian Wives (5:21-33)
	14	6.2. Children and Parents, Employers and Employees (6:1-9)
7		<b>7. Our Present Spiritual Warfare (Ephesians 6:10-24)</b>
	15	7.1. Wrestling with the Enemy of Our Souls (6:10-18)
	16	7.2. Prevailing through Prayer (6:18-24)

## Introduction to Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

### Authorship

There are two very good reasons to see Paul as the author of Ephesians.

1. **Tradition.** Ephesians was considered authored by Paul from the earliest days of the church.
2. **Autobiographical information** in the letter itself.

### Place and Date of Authorship

Paul founded the church at Ephesus over a period of nearly three years (Acts 19:1-20:1), from about 52 to 55 AD. He visited with the church elders on the beach at Miletus on his way to Jerusalem (Acts 20:17-38). In Jerusalem, Paul was arrested about 57 AD and imprisoned, first in Caesarea (about 57 to 59 AD) and then under house arrest in Rome about 60 to 62 AD. (Acts 28:16-31). He probably died no later than 63 to 65 AD, and probably earlier.

Paul obviously wrote Ephesians from prison (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). Most scholars date Ephesians approximately 60 to 62 AD from Rome. But some now see it likely that Paul wrote Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon from prison in Ephesus. See "Appendix 2. Were the Prison Epistles Written from Ephesus?" ([http://www.jesuswalk.com/ephesians/apx2\\_prison\\_epistles.htm](http://www.jesuswalk.com/ephesians/apx2_prison_epistles.htm)) In the end, of course, conclusions about the location from which Paul wrote Ephesians are at best speculative and matter little to our understanding and application of this wonderful letter.

### Ephesus in Paul's Day

Ephesus was founded by Ionian colonists about 1100 BC and over the next millennium ruled successively by the Persians, Greeks, Macedonians, and others. Rome ruled the city from 69 BC for the next 200 years. It prospered and became the provincial capital and leading city of the entire region. Estimates of its population in the first century begin at a quarter million inhabitants and go up from there.

It was famous for its temple to the goddess Artemis (Diana of Ephesus), a huge structure made of marble, 220 by 425 feet at its base, supported by beautiful pillars and rising to a height of 60 feet, considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Some of the important buildings, present during Paul's ministry, include a huge theater on a hillside that could seat 24,000 people, mentioned in Acts 19:29ff. Others were the town hall, the commercial market, baths and gymnasiums, a medical school, and a stadium 229 meters long and 30 meters wide built during Nero's reign (54-68 AD).

Besides the cult of Artemis, there is evidence of various mystery religions, the practice of magic (Acts 19:19), worship of Egyptian gods Sarapis and Isis, as well as devotion to large number of other



deities: Agathe Tyche, Aphrodite, Apollo, Asclepius, Athena, the Cabiri, Concord, Cybele (the Mother Goddess), Demeter, Dionysus, Enedra, Hecate, Hephaestus, Heracles, Hestia Boulaia, Kore, Nemesis, Pan, Pion (a mountain god), Pluto, Poseidon, Theos Hypsistos, Tyche Soteira, Zeus and several river deities.

A Jewish synagogue existed in Ephesus (Acts 19:8), though archeologists haven't discovered it yet. The Jewish community possessed citizenship, were exempted from military service, and granted freedom to practice their religion according to their traditions.

### Recipients of the Letter

The original letter was intended as a sort of circular letter for the Church at Ephesus as well as others in Asia Minor, to be read and then sent on.

### Purpose, Themes, and Structure

“The Letter was written to encourage Gentile Christians to appreciate the dignity of their calling, with its implication not only for their heavenly origin and destiny, but also for their present conduct on earth, as those who were heirs of God, sealed with the Holy Spirit.” (FF Bruce)

(Lesson 1 in 16-lesson series)

## 1. Secure in Christ our Lord (Ephesians 1)

### 1.1 Spiritual Blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1:1-6)

“**Apostle**,” “messenger, delegate, envoy,” denotes a person sent with a specific commission or mission

“**Saints**” means “consecrated or dedicated to God, holy,” that is, reserved for God and his service.

“**Faithful**” means “pertaining to being trusting, cherishing faith, trust.”

“Grace” – the characteristic Greek greeting – combined with “Peace” (Hebrew *shalom*), the characteristic Hebrew greeting.

Blessings in the Heavenly Realms (Ephesians 1:3)

*Eulogeō* means here “to bestow a favor, provide with benefits.”

1. They are “spiritual” blessings.
2. They are offered in the heavenly realm, not the earthly realm.

In Christ

Ephesians introduces us to a phrase that we see throughout Paul’s letters, but especially here – “in Christ.” In the first 14 verses of Ephesians, the phrase (or its equivalent) occurs 11 times:

1. “The faithful **in Christ Jesus**” (verse 1)
2. “Every spiritual blessing **in Christ**” (verse 3)
3. “Chose us **in him**” (verse 4)
4. “Freely given us **in the One he loves**” (verse 6)
5. “**In him** we have redemption” (verse 7)
6. “Which he purposed **in Christ**” (verse 9)
7. “To gather up all things **in him**” (verse 10, NRSV)
8. “**In him** we were also chosen” (verse 11)
9. “The first to hope **in Christ**” (verse 12)
10. “Included **in Christ**” (verse 13a)
11. “Marked **in him** with a seal” (verse 13b)

We are all “in Christ,” part of him and he part of us. The primary idea of Ephesians is that we are *joined with Christ* in a spiritual sense. Our whole life is “in Christ.”

Discussion Questions

Answering questions stretches us and forces us to understand and grow. Especially, if your trying to study Ephesians in 7 lessons, you’ll find more discussion questions than you can easily answer. If you’re a teacher, select the questions that will be most helpful to stimulate class discussion. Don’t feel guilty if you can’t fit in all the questions.

**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?**

### Predestination and Election (Ephesians 1:4-5)

1:1 – Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the **will** of God.”

1:4 – “For he **chose** us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”

1:5 – “In love he **predestined** us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his **pleasure** and **will** ....”

1:9 – “And he made known to us **the mystery of his will** according to **his good pleasure**, which he **purposed** in Christ....”

1:11 – In him we were also **chosen**, having been **predestined** according to the **plan** of him who works out everything in conformity with the **purpose** of his **will** ....”

“**Chose**” has the idea of “to pick out, choose,” here, especially, “select someone/something for oneself,” to make a choice in accordance with significant preference.

“**Predestined**” focuses on the *time* of the choosing, “decide upon beforehand, predetermine.”

“**Will**” means “what one wishes to happen, what is willed.”

Enough Greek for a moment. It’s pretty clear by his vocabulary that Paul is emphasizing that the Gentile Church is not some accident of history, but part of God’s carefully conceived and executed plan, begun before the ages, before the world was created, which comes to focus in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Predestination, even though we don’t really understand it, is not some sterile, arms-length process. Notice the phrase in the NIV and ESV “in love he predestined us.” He somehow saw us all that time ago and chose us out of love. Not out of how good we might turn out because of our sterling qualities. But “in love.” That’s grace!

**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?**

### Chosen for Holiness (Ephesians 1:4)

“**Holy**” (the same word as “saints” in verse 1) means that we are consecrated to God, separated to him as his possession.

“**Blameless**” means “without blemish” and was used of animals that were brought to the temple for sacrifice, perfect – not lame or diseased.

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

### Chosen to Be Adopted (Ephesians 1:5-6)

In Paul’s day, one could move from the lowest class to the highest by means of adoption. A beloved slave could be freed (manumitted) and then adopted by a Roman citizen. Upon adoption, the slave became a son, an heir, and a citizen. An adopted son now had the same rights and privileges as a naturally-born son.

**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?**

(Lesson 2 in 16-lesson series)

## 1.2 God’s Plan of Redemption (Ephesians 1:7-14)

Redemption through His Blood (Ephesians 1:7-8)

“**Redemption**” originally referred to “buying back” a slave or captive, that is “making free” by payment of a ransom. Here it means release from a captive condition, “release, redemption,” figuratively of the release from sin that comes through Christ. 1 Peter 1:18-19.

**Q5. (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?**

Grace Lavished on Us (Ephesians 1:8)

“**Grace**” is the noun *charis*, “a beneficent disposition toward someone, favor, grace, gracious care or help, goodwill” -- simply, is favor towards someone. Not an earned response from a superior, but favor bestowed simply because it pleases the Giver.

Uniting All Things in Christ (Ephesians 1:9-10)

Rare Greek word variously translated “to bring ... together under one head” (NIV), “gather together in one” (KJV), and “to gather up all things” (NRSV), “to unite all things” (ESV). It carries the ideas of “to gather up, to sum up, recapitulate.”

**Q6. (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?**

Predestined for Praise (Ephesians 1:11-12)

**Q7. (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?**

Sealed by the Spirit as a Guarantee (Ephesians 1:13-14)

The phrase “marked with a seal” (NIV, NRSV) or “sealed” (ESV, KJV) is a verb meaning, “to mark with a seal as a means of identification, mark, seal.” See Ephesians 4:30.

Two-fold analogy for the Holy Spirit: (1) as a seal and (2) as a deposit. The phrase “deposit guaranteeing” (NIV), “guarantee” (ESV), “earnest” (KJV), and “pledge” (NRSV) is a legal and commercial technical term meaning payment of a part of a purchase price in advance, “first installment, deposit, down payment, pledge,” which secures a legal claim to the article in question, or validates a contract.

You as God’s Possession (Ephesians 1:14)

“God’s possession” (NIV), “purchased possession” (KJV), and “God’s own people” (NRSV) -- as in 1 Peter 2:9 and Malachi 3:17 translates a noun: “that which is acquired, possessing, possession, property.” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

**Q8. (Ephesians 1:13-14) These verses contain two analogies: (1) seal and (2) down payment, 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?**

(Lesson 3 in 16-lesson series)

## 1.3. The Greatness of Our Christian Inheritance (Eph 1:15-23)

A Great Vision (Ephesians 1:17-19a)

### 1. Hope to Which He Has Called You (Ephesians 1:18b)

“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know **the hope to which he has called you....**” (Ephesians 1:18)

“**Hope,**” “the looking forward to something with some reason for confidence respecting fulfillment, hope, expectation.” (Colossians 1:27b; Titus 2:13; Jeremiah 29:11; 2 Peter 3:12).

**Q9. (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?**

### 2. His Glorious Inheritance in the Saints (Ephesians 1:18c)

“**Inheritance**” -- the carefully accumulated possessions of another, set aside and preserved to pass on to one’s heirs.

“**Riches**” here refers to “wealth, abundance, plentiful supply.”

**Q10. (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?**

### 3. His Incomparably Great Power (Ephesians 1:19a)

“Power” -- “might, strength, force, capability.” (John 14:6-7; Acts 1:8a; John 14:12; 1 Cor 2:9-10)

**Q11. (Ephesians 1:19) 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?**

A Great Christ (Ephesians 1:19b-23)

1. God raised him from the dead (verse 20a),
2. Christ has been seated at God’s right hand (verse 20b),
3. This “realm” (NIV) of the “heavenlies” (KJV) is a place of spiritual authority over every created being (verse 21; also Eph 1:3; 2:6: 6:12). It refers to the unseen spiritual realm in which dwell God, angels, and various members of a kind of evil demonic hierarchy: “rule, authority, power, and dominion” (vs. 21; Ephesians 6:12) .
4. God has placed all things under Christ’s feet (verse 22a), a military expression in which the victor in battle demonstrates his superiority over his defeated foes.
5. Christ has been appointed head of the church, which functions as his body (verse 22b-23).

Christ as Head (Ephesians 1:22)

**1:10** – “... When the times will have reached their fulfillment – to **bring** all things in heaven and on earth **together under one head**, even Christ.”

**1:22-23** – “And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be **head** over everything for the church, which is his **body**...”

**4:15-16** – “... We will in all things grow up into him who is the **head**, that is, Christ. From him the whole **body** ... grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

**5:23** – “For the husband is the **head** of the wife as Christ is the **head** of the church, his **body**, of which he is the Savior.”

The Greek word for “head” is the noun *kephalē*. It means first the physical head, and then extends to a figurative use as “being of high status, head.” With living beings, *kephalē* can also refer to superior rank.

**Q12. (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?**

#### A Great Church (Ephesians 1:22-23)

“And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything *for the church*, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.” (Ephesians 1:22-23)

The word “church” is Greek *ekklēsia*, from *ek*, “out” + *kaleō*, “to call,” with the root idea of “the called-out ones.” Classical Greek used the word to refer to a “regularly summoned legislative body, assembly.”

- 1. The church is the recipient of Christ’s conquering and headship over all things.**
- 2. The church is his Body.**
- 3. We, the church, are the fullness of Christ, who fills and fulfills everything.**

**Q13. (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?**



(Lesson 4 in 16-lesson series)

## 2. Salvation Full and Free (Ephesians 2:1-10)

### 2.1 Dead in Transgressions and Sin (Ephesians 2:1)

Paul declares that people without Christ are spiritually “dead”

“**Transgressions**” (NIV) or “trespasses” (NRSV, KJV) refers to “a violation of moral standards, offense, wrongdoing, sin.” Paul assumes a divine law as the standard.

“**Sins**” (*harmatia*) the most commonly used word for sin in the New Testament, literally “a missing of the mark,” here, “a departure from either human or divine standards of uprightness.”

**Q14. (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?**

### Following Satan (Ephesians 2:2-3)

“Air” is a transliteration of Greek *aēr*. The Greeks saw heaven as the abode of the gods, earth the abode of humans, and the air as the abode of the demons.

“Flesh” referring to the “cravings of **our sinful nature**” (NIV), the “passions of our **flesh**” (ESV, NRSV), or the “lusts of our **flesh**” (KJV). The Greek word *sarx* is used in several senses in the New Testament: (1) literally, of the skin and muscles covering our bones; (2) then the body itself; (3) the human or mortal nature, then mankind, the “world” as it stands opposed to God; and (4) especially in Paul’s letters, “sinful, fallen human nature.”

### Sinners by Nature (Ephesians 2:3)

**Q15. (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?**

### Grace and Mercy (Ephesians 2:4-5)

“**Mercy**” refers to “kindness or concern expressed for someone in need, compassion, mercy, pity, clemency.”

“**Grace**” means literally “favor ... a beneficent disposition toward someone, grace, gracious help, good will.” It describes one’s attitude toward another which is unilateral, that is, one-sided, not depending upon what another does. “Grace” is not about merit or deserving, but about an unexplained love and generosity and giving on the part of the giver. Perhaps the best short definition of “grace” is “unmerited favor.” See Ex 34:6-7; Num 14:18; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 86:15; Psalm 103:8; Psalm 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; and Nahum 1:3; Romans 5:6-8; 1 Peter 3:18a)

**Q16. (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?**

### Seated with Christ in Heavenly Realms (Ephesians 2:6)

**Q17. (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?**

(Lesson 5 in 16-lesson series)

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

The Need for a Rescue Operation (Ephesians 2:1-3)

Save = rescue. Our situation is:

1. **Spiritual deadness** (Ephesians 2:1) is caused by transgressions and sin.
2. **Followers of our corrupt culture**, followers of “the ways of this world” (Ephesians 2:2a).
3. **Followers of Satan**, “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Ephesians 2:2b) as dupes.
4. **Self-indulgent** (Ephesians 2:3a).
5. **Under Divine judgment and righteous anger** (Ephesians 2:3b).

Results of Rescue (Ephesians 2:4-6)

1. His great **love** for us (Ephesians 2:4a).
2. His richness of **mercy** (Ephesians 2:4b).
3. A miracle of **new birth** (“alive together with Christ”; Ephesians 2:5).
4. Elevation to a spiritual authority and **position** “in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 2:6).
5. Eternal **kindness** shown us forever and ever (Ephesians 2:7).

“Grace” Is More than a Girl’s Name

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith....” (Ephesians 2:8a)

The word “grace” was not at first a theological word. Greek *charis* means simply “favor.” To show grace is to bestow favor. It has nothing to do with reward for “good behavior.” The benefactor doesn’t show favor because we have earned it, but simply because he wants to. He is under no obligation to love because we have somehow driven him to it. The impetus for the favor is entirely the prerogative of the giver.

**Q18. (Ephesians 2:8-9) 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.**

“Saved” is the Greek verb *sōzō*, while “salvation is the noun *sōteria*. In classical Greek “both the verb and the noun denote rescue and deliverance in the sense of averting some danger threatening life. This can happen in war or at sea. But that which one is delivered from may also be an illness. Where no immediate danger is mentioned, they can mean to keep or preserve.” When speaking to non-Christians try substituting the word “rescued” for “saved,” since that word is processed by the hearer in its normal rather than Christian-jargon sense.

**Q19. (Ephesians 2:8-9) “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?**

## Working Our Way into the Good Graces of God (Ephesians 2:9)

### A Self-Serving Righteousness

#### The Just Shall Live by Their Faith

Paul announces, “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17), quoting from Habakkuk 2:4. It wasn’t Abraham’s worthiness that saved him, but God’s favor that made him worthy and brought out the very best in him (Genesis 15:6).

**“Faith”** -- In classical Greek, *pistis* means “the trust that a man may place in men or the gods, credibility, credit in business, guarantee, proof, or something entrusted.” The basic concept of Christian faith or belief is “trust,” having enough confidence in God to be willing to rely on Him.

#### If You’re Good Enough You Can Go to Heaven

#### Working Out our Destiny (Ephesians 2:10)

The word translated “prepared in advance” (NIV), “prepared beforehand” (ESV, NRSV), “before ordained” (KJV) in verse 10 means “to get ready, hold in readiness.”

**Q20. (Ephesians 2:10) 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?**

#### This Not of Yourselves

**Q21. (Ephesians 2:8-9) 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.**

(Lesson 6 in the 16-lesson series)

### 3. The New People of God (Ephesians 2:22-3:21)

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

Separated from Christ (Ephesians 2:11-12)

- **Uncircumcised**, lacking that ancient mark of being part of the Covenant Family of God;
- **Separate from Christ**, utterly cut off from the Messiah;
- **Excluded from citizenship** among the people of God, aliens;
- **Foreigners to the covenants** made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, which tied the people to God with responsibilities and gave them wonderful promises;
- **Without hope** or certainty or promise for the present, or for the future; and
- **Without God** in the world.

**Q22. (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?**

Brought Near through His Blood (Ephesians 2:13)

“Brought near through the blood of Christ,” means that Christ the Messiah has become the sacrifice for our sins, and because of his death on our behalf, we can approach God with our sins forgiven.

Completing the Law’s Requirements (Ephesians 2:14-15)

In Hebrew the word *shālōm* can mean “completion and fulfillment – of entering into a state of wholeness and unity, a restored relationship.” It carries the ideas of peace, wholeness, wholesomeness, reconciliation, blessing, restoration.

Paul uses two powerful verbs in these verses to describe the division between Jews and Gentiles.

- **Destroyed.** The Greek verb translated “destroyed” (NIV), “broken down” (ESV, NRSV, KJV) here means “to reduce something by violence into its components, destroy.”
- **Abolished.** The Greek word translated “abolishing, abolished” carries the idea of “to cause something to lose its power or effectiveness, invalidate, make powerless,” then “to cause something to come to an end or to be no longer in existence, abolish, wipe out, set aside something ... nullify.” (Matthew 5:17-18)

Moral, Ceremonial, and Civil Law

1. **The moral law**, the enduring principles of righteousness which are timeless, such as the Ten Commandments.
2. **The ceremonial law**, pertaining to the tabernacle, temple, priests, and sacrifices.
3. **The civil law**, rules concerning property, crime, and punishment.

**Q23. (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?**

### Jew and Gentile as the “New Israel”

Matthew 21:43; 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). The Gentiles and Jews together became “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16).

### Access to the Father (Ephesians 2:18)

The next verse contains a wonderful promise:

“For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.” (2:18)

**Q24. (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?**

### Made One in Christ (Ephesians 2:18-22)

Wonderful blessings:

- **Access** to the Father by the Spirit through Christ (a Trinitarian concept)
- **Citizenship** with God’s people
- **Family membership** in God’s household

### A Dwelling Place for God in the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22)

Both in Greek and in English, the word “house” can mean both “dwelling place” as well as “household.” In verse 19, Paul uses the word first with the idea of “household,” “fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household,” but then consciously shifts over in verses 20-22 to a related word, “dwelling place.” God’s “house” is also a “holy temple in the Lord” (Ephesians 2:21; 1 Peter 2:4-5; Ephesians 2:22a).

### The Church as a Temple (Ephesians 2:21-22)

In 1 Corinthians 6:19 Paul speaks of the individual Christian as a temple. But in each of the other instances, the reference to the “temple” is to the church body collectively (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16-17 ; 1 Peter 2:4-5).

**Q25. (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?**

### Spiritual Masonry

- **“Joined together”** (NIV, ESV, NRSV) and **“fitly framed together”** (KJV) speaks of laying one piece upon another.
- **“Grows into”** (NRSV, ESV, KJV), **“rises to become”** (NIV) speaks of the building gradually rising, becoming greater and greater as it is formed.”
- **“Built together”** suggests **“build up (together) or construct various parts.”**

(Lesson 7 in the 16-lesson series)

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

Revelation of the Mystery to Paul and the Apostles (Ephesians 3:2-5)

“Mystery” (*mystērion*) in Ephesians 1:9; 3:3-4, 9; 5:32; and 6:19. “Mystery” in Paul’s writings is not a puzzle to be solved by detectives studying the clues, but “the unmanifested or private counsel of God, (God’s) secret,” which are hidden from human reason and ingenuity, and can only be known by revelation.

“Administration” (NIV), “dispensation” (KJV), “stewardship, plan” (NRSV), “commission, plan” (NASB) is *oikonomia* (from which we get our word “economy”) -- “responsibility of management, management of a household, work of an estate manager,” then more generally, “direction, office.”

Revelation to Apostles and Prophets (Ephesians 2:5)

The *means* of this revelation is “by the Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:9-16). The direct *recipients* of this revelation are God’s “holy apostles and prophets” (Ephesians 3:5; 2 Timothy 3:16-17),

**Q26. (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?**

What Is the Mystery? (Ephesians 3:6)

The Gentiles are described in relationship to Israel with three compound words, starting with the preposition *syn-*, “together with.”

1. **“Heirs together”** (*sygklēronomos*), “inheriting together with, co-heir.”
2. **“Members together of one body”** (*syssōmos*), “belonging to the same body.”
3. **“Sharers together”** (*symmetoxos*), “having a share with another in some possession or relationship, sharing with.”

**Q27. (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?**

The Apostolic Servant of This Gospel (Ephesians 3:7-9)

Paul describes his ministry, his apostleship:

- **“Servant”** (*diakanos*, from which we get our English word “deacon”), “agent, courier, one who serves as an intermediary in a transaction.”
- **“Gift”** -- “gift, bounty, that which is given or transferred freely by one person to another,” carrying the idea of “without payment, gratis.”
- **“Less than the least”** pertains to “being the lowest in status, least” (1 Corinthians 15:9; 1 Timothy 1:13, 15).
- **“Preach”** here means literally, “to bring good news, announce good news,” here probably, “proclaim the divine message of salvation, proclaim the gospel, preach.”

**Q28. (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?**

The Unsearchable Riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8)

“**Unsearchable**” (NIV, KJV) or “boundless” (NRSV) means “inscrutable, incomprehensible, fathomless” (as in Romans 11:33).

“**Riches**” here has the basic meaning, “abundance of many earthly goods, wealth.” Applied to Christ it means “a wealth, abundance.”

The Church Is to Make It Known (Ephesians 3:10-11)

Approaching God through Faith (Ephesians 3:12-13)

1. “**Access**” (ESV, NRSV, KJV), “approach” (NIV) is means “a way of approach, access to someone.”
2. “**Boldness**” (ESV, NRSV, KJV) or “confidence” (NIV) refers to “a state of boldness and confidence, courage, confidence, boldness, fearlessness, especially in the presence of persons of high rank.”
3. “**Confidence**” describes “a state of certainty about something to the extent of placing reliance on, trust, confidence” (Hebrews 4:15-16).

**Q29. What does Ephesians 3:12 teach us about the manner of approaching God? What happens if we try to pray without these qualities?**

(Lesson 8 in the 16-lesson series)

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

#### Outline of the Prayer

The prayer seems to ask God for two major outcomes:

- (a) For inner strengthening by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:16)
- (b) **that is**, Christ dwells in your hearts through faith (Ephesians 3:17a)
- (c) **that is**, you have been rooted and grounded in love (Ephesians 3:17b)

#### so that

1. you might comprehend fully the extent of God's mind-blowing love and
2. you might be filled with the fullness of God.

#### Strengthening the Inner Being (Ephesians 3:16b-17a)

The verb "strengthen," meaning "become strong," is used right next to the noun *dynamis* (from which we get English "dynamite"), "power, might, strength, force, capability." Together, the words have the effect of accentuating the degree of God's strength and power, "become mightily empowered."

- The *means* by which this spiritual empowerment comes about is "through his Spirit."
- The *location* of this strengthening is the "inner being" (NIV, NRSV, ESV) or "inner man" (KJV).

Heart (*kardia*, from which we get our word "cardiac") is commonly used in the New Testament to refer to the "center and source of the whole inner life, with its thinking, feeling, and volition." The word "dwell," means to "live, dwell, reside, settle (down)," referring to "permanent habitation as opposed to sojourning, pitching a tent or an occasional visit."

**Q30. (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?**

#### The Process of Sanctification

##### Spirit-filled Christians

"Spirit-filled" can be a deceptive and somewhat prideful jargon phrase. By definition all Christians *have* the Spirit (Romans 8:9b). Remaining *filled* with the Spirit requires a day-by-day surrender to God, a dealing with and giving up of sins that the Spirit reveals, and being stretched by God to open more and to receive more of his infinite Being.

##### Rooted and Grounded in Love (Ephesians 3:17b)

"Grounded" (ESV, NIV, KJV), "established" (NRSV), means "to provide a base for some material object or structure, lay a foundation," then figuratively, "to provide a secure basis for the inner life and its resources, establish, strengthen."



**Outcome 1: To Comprehend the Love that Surpasses Knowledge (Ephesians 3:18-19a)**

He prays for them “power to grasp,” a phrase with two verbs. The first verb means, “to be fully capable of doing or experiencing something, be strong enough.” The second verb involves the imagery of chasing someone and seizing him, then used figuratively, to “understand, grasp, learn about something through the process of inquiry.”

“Surpasses” (NIV, ESV, NRSV), “passeth” (KJV) translate a verb that means, “to attain a degree that extraordinarily exceeds a point on a scale of extent, go beyond, surpass, outdo.”

**Q31. (Ephesians 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?**

**Outcome 2: Filled with God (Ephesians 3:19b)**

“Fullness” that we saw in Ephesians 1:23 suggests “sum total, fullness, even (super)abundance.”

Dr. Sam Shoemaker: “Give all you know of yourself to all you know of God.”

**Q32. (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)?**

**Doxology: God’s Ability to Answer Abundantly (Ephesians 3:20)**

“Doxologies are short, spontaneous ascriptions of praise to God,” usually having three parts: (1) the One to whom glory is given, (2) the ascription of “glory,” and, in Paul’s doxologies, (3) the expression “forever and ever.”

“**Far more**” (ESV, NRSV), “more” (NIV), and “above” (KJV) translate the first abundance word, *hyper*, “over and above, beyond, more than ... a marker of a degree beyond that of a compared scale of extent, in the sense of excelling, surpassing.”

“**Exceeding abundantly**” (KJV), “abundantly” (ESV, NRSV) and “immeasurably” (NIV) means, “quite beyond all measure,” the highest form of comparison imaginable. Barth translates the phrase, “to outdo superabundantly.”

**Doxology: Glory in the Church (Ephesians 3:21)**

In this doxology there are two sources of glory accruing to God:

1. from the Church and
2. from Christ Jesus.

**Q33. (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?**

(Lesson 9 in the 16-lesson series)

## 4. The Unity and Gifts of the Church (Ephesians 4:1-16)

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

- One Purpose
- Three Commands
- Seven Bonds
- Millions of Unique Giftings

One Purpose: Unity

Three Commands (Ephesians 4:1-3)

#### 1. “Live a life worthy of the calling which you have received” (Ephesians 4:1)

“Calling” with which we have been “called.” We get our English word “vocation” from Latin *vocatio*, “summons.” The Greek noun in our passage means, “call, calling, invitation to experience of special privilege and responsibility.” The way we “walk” (KJV, ESV), “live a life” (NIV), “lead a life” (NRSV) must be “worthy” of the One who has called us to follow him.

**Q34. (Ephesians 4:1) According to verse 1, what is the standard of our behavior? What is the “calling” to which God has called us?**

#### 2. “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” (Ephesians 4:2)

Matthew 11:28-29; Luke 22:24-26; John 13:4-5.

The King James translation of “patient” is “long suffering,” and that is often what patience entails: suffering long. The verb “bearing” (ESV, NIV, NRSV), “forbearing” (KJV) means “to regard with tolerance, endure, bear with, put up with.”

**Q35. (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”?**

#### 3. “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3)

“**Make every effort**” (NIV), “endeavoring” (KJV), “eager” (ESV), “being diligent” (NASB) means to “hasten, hurry,” then “be zealous or eager, take pains, make every effort, be conscientious” (2 Tim 2:15).

“**Maintain**” (NRSV, ESV), “keep” (KJV, NIV) “preserve” (NASB), a military term: “keep watch over, guard; keep, hold, reserve, preserve.”

The idea of “**bond**” here denotes some kind of fastener, something that keeps together a house, a garment, or different members of the physical body: the wooden beams, the fastenings, or the ligaments. (See also verse 16; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

**Q36. (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?**

### Seven Bonds (Ephesians 4:4-5)

1. One body
2. One Spirit
3. One hope
4. One Lord
5. One faith
6. One baptism
7. One God and Father

NT Divisions: 1 Corinthians 3:4; Galatians 3:1-3; Philippians 1:17; Acts 15:37-40; Philippians 4:2.

“For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

Baptism. 1 Corinthians 12:13.

### Millions of Unique Giftings (Ephesians 4:7)

God has made human beings wonderfully diverse.

- Factor 1: physical
- Factor 2: temperament
- Factor 3: family environment
- Factor 4: birth order
- Factor 5: artistic ability
- Factor 6: intellectual ability
- Factor 7: language ability
- Factor 8: emotional sensitivity
- Factor 9: spiritual aptitude
- Factor 10: affluence
- Factor 11: opportunities for development
- Factor 12: talents

But spiritual gifts are “spiritual”. Talents are “natural.” Says who?

The Victor Dispensing Gifts (Ephesians 4:8-10, quoting Psalm 68:18)

**Q37. (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?**

(Lesson 10 in the 16-lesson series)

## 4.2. Equipping, Ministry, and Maturity (Ephesians 4:11-16)

Defining an Apostle (Ephesians 4:11a)

“Apostle” (Greek *apostolos*) designates one who has been sent with a commission and can mean a “delegate, envoy, messenger.” In the NT it is used as a technical term to refer to Christ-designated messengers given authority to speak for him and to establish his church (Luke 6:13). These first apostles were eyewitnesses of the resurrection, as was Matthias, selected to take Judas’ place (Acts 1:22-26).

The apostles were the first teachers (Acts 2:42) and administrators (Acts 6:1-6) of the church, performed miraculous signs (Acts 2:43; 2 Corinthians 12:12), conveyed the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands (Acts 8:17-18), and generally established the church,

Do apostles exist today? If they do exist, they differ some from the eyewitness original apostles (Acts 1:22).

**Q38. (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)**

Defining Prophets (Ephesians 4:11b)

Prophets in the Old Testament seemed to be lone spokesmen for God such as Elijah, Moses, Samuel, and Malachi. Jesus and John the Baptist both functioned as prophets. In the early church, however, the prophets seem to be spread among some of the other leadership roles. New Testament prophets prophesied of future events (Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-11), gathered in Antioch to seek God’s guidance (Acts 13:1-3; 15:1-2; 21:8-9; 1 Corinthians 14:5).

Defining Evangelists (Ephesians 4:11c)

Evangelists have to do with proclaiming the Good News (*euangelizo*, “to proclaim good news”). The noun is used twice (Acts 21:8; 2 Timothy 4:5).

**Q39. (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?**

Defining Pastors (Ephesians 4:11d)

Because of the Greek syntax of verse 11, some scholars see pastors and teachers to be combined into one ministry of pastor-teacher. More likely they are overlapping roles. Our word “pastor” (with the related word “pasture”) means, literally, “shepherd.” In the Ancient Near East, the term Shepherd was applied to kings and other leaders. The pastor is the leader of the flock (Acts 20:28-29; 1 Peter 5:2-3). The larger the church is, the more pastors are needed. In fact, in the largest churches, the “senior pastor” may well need additional gifts of faith, leadership, teaching, or administration. In the NT church, the words “elder” (*presbyteros*), pastor (*poimēn*), and bishop or overseer (*episcopos*) are used synonymously (1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; and Titus 1:5-9).

### Defining Teachers (Ephesians 4:11e)

The teacher (*didaskalos*) has a role closely related to the pastoral function, but somewhat specialized. The pastor is more a leader of and carer for people, while the teacher grounds people in truth and helps them to understand the implications of truth as it pertains to their everyday lives.

**Q40. (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?**

### Purpose of the Ministry (Ephesians 4:12)

The word translated “perfecting” (KJV), “prepare” (NIV, ESV), “equipment” (RSV), and “equipping” (NASB) translate a verb that meant “to put in order, restore, furnish, prepare, equip.” To clarify the structure here: Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers

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

*For* works of service (12b)

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

*To the end that* we may reach unity in the faith (13a)

*and* grow into the full maturity of Christ (13b - 16),

They equip, prepare, and train the believers so they can learn to function in their own ministries.

**Q41. (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?**

### The Nature of a Mature Church (Ephesians 4:13-16)

- Unity in the faith and in the knowledge of Jesus (13a);
- Attaining to the fullness of Christ (13b);
- Speaking the truth in love (15a);
- Growing up into Christ, the Head of the Body (15b);
- An infrastructure of joined and supporting bones, ligaments, and muscles, which can then support (16a);
- Sustained bodily growth (16b);
- Sustained development of increased strength and new infrastructure as needed (16c); with
- Each part of the body doing its work (16d)

The purpose of all this is found in two places:

**verse 13b** -- “attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

and

**verse 15b** -- “we shall in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”

Pastors and teachers must concentrate on their primary role of equipping, and to cease doing everyone else’s work. Members must discover their own ministries and begin to practice them effectively (“so that the body of Christ may be built up”) and diligently (“as each part does its work”).

(Lesson 11 in the 16-lesson series)

## 5. A New Way of Life in Christ (Ephesians 4:17-5:20)

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

What follows in Ephesians 4:17 through 6:9 is a call to righteousness in all areas of life:

- Speech (Ephesians 5:25-32),
- Sexual mores (Ephesians 5:3-7),
- Use of intoxicants (Ephesians 5:18),
- Family relationships (Ephesians 5:21-6:4), and
- Employer-employee relationships (Ephesians 6:9).

#### Darkness of the Secular Mind (Ephesians 4:17-19)

**Futile in their minds.** “Futility” (NIV, NRSV, ESV), “vanity” (KJV) refers to a “state of being without use or value, emptiness, futility, purposelessness, transitoriness.”

**Darkened in their understanding.**

**Separated from God’s life.** “Separated” (NIV) or “alienated” (ESV, NRSV, KJV) translate a verb meaning to “estrangle, alienate.”

**Hardened in their hearts,** a “state or condition of complete lack of understanding, dullness, insensibility, obstinacy.”

**Given to sexual immorality.** The Greek word is variously translated “sensuality” (NIV, ESV, NASB), “licentiousness” (RSV), and “lasciviousness” (KJV). It refers to “lack of self-constraint which involves one in conduct that violates all bounds of what is socially acceptable, self-abandonment.”

**Q42. (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?**

#### Our New, Holy Self (Ephesians 4:20-24)

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; the old has gone, the new has come!”  
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

“Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a **new creation.**”  
(Galatians 6:15)

Jesus calls it being “born again” (John 3:1-8). That “old self” has been “corrupted by its deceitful desires” (Ephesians 4:22; James 1:14).

#### Truth, Anger, and Theft (Ephesians 4:25-28)

##### Speaking Truthfully (Ephesians 4:25)

##### Controlling Anger (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Anger can have many deceitful roots.

1. **Selfishness.** Anger can spring from selfishness as well as injustice.
2. **Control.** Anger impels us to overflow our inhibitions and take action.
3. **Bitterness.** Anger can turn into a deep-seated bitterness if we don’t deal with it.
4. **Foothold for Satan.** (Proverbs 29:11; 25:28). God is “slow to anger” (Exodus 34:6).

**Q43. (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?**

Theft (Ephesians 4:28)

(1) Stealing defrauds others, (2) avoids work, and (3) is about taking rather than giving.

Blithering, Blathering, Bitterness, and Brawling (Ephesians 4:29-32)

(James 3:1-12; 1:26) The adjective translated “unwholesome” (NIV, NASB), “evil” (NRSV), “corrupting” (ESV), “corrupt” (KJV) has the basic meaning of “spoiled, rotten,” used literally of spoiled fish, decayed trees, rotten fruits, and stones that are unsound or crumbling. Figuratively, it means “bad, evil, unwholesome to the extent of being harmful.”

1. **Is it helpful for building others up?**
2. **Is it according to the hearer’s needs?**
3. **Is it beneficial to the hearer?**

**Q44. (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?**

Grieving the Holy Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30)

“Grieve” -- “to cause severe mental or emotional distress, vex, irritate, offend, insult” (Isaiah 63:10).

Kind, Compassionate, Forgiving (Ephesians 4:32)

See “Don’t Pay the Price of Counterfeit Forgiveness,” [www.joyfulheart.com/maturity/forgive.htm](http://www.joyfulheart.com/maturity/forgive.htm)

**Q45. (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?**

(Lesson 12 in the 16-lesson series)

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

Imitators of God (Ephesians 5:1-2)

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...” (Philippians 2:5)

“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.” (1 Peter 2:21)

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 John 4:19)

Sexual Purity (Ephesians 5:3-7)

Avoiding Sexual Immorality (Ephesians 5:3)

“Sexual immorality” here is Greek *porneia*, “unlawful sexual intercourse, prostitution, unchastity, fornication.” A *pornē* was a prostitute or harlot, from which we get our word “pornography.” The KJV tends to translate *porneia* as “fornication,” but this is too narrow. “Fornication” is defined in English as “consensual sexual intercourse between two persons not married to each other.” *Porneia*, on the other hand, includes not only fornication, but adultery, homosexuality, and any other sexual perversion. See 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8.

Any Kind of Impurity (Ephesians 5:3-4)

“Any kind of impurity or, of greed” is prohibited to Christians. The sexual “impurity” mentioned here would include pornography. Verse 4: “obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking.”

Robbing Us of Our Kingdom Inheritance (Ephesians 5:5-6)

Ephesians 5:5-6a = 1 Cor 6:9-11.

**Q46. (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?**

Greed for Money (Ephesians 5:5)

“Greedy person” -- “such a man is an idolater,” one who worships a false god.

From Darkness to Light (Ephesians 5:8-14)

Make the Most of Every Opportunity (Ephesians 5:15-16)

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Other translations talk about “making the best use of the time” (ESV). The underlying Greek verb had commercial connotations of “buy, buy up something” and “redeem, buy back.” Figuratively it means “to gain something, especially advantage or opportunity, make the most of.” This is joined with the noun *kairos*, “time.” Greek has two main words for the concept of time: *chronos*, which is used in reference to the stream of time, and *kairos*, which is used of individual periods, points, or moments of time.

**Q47. (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?**

Avoid Drunkenness (Ephesians 5:17-18a)

Paul drinks wine (1 Tim 5:23), but prohibits drunkenness. Intoxication from alcohol or drugs:

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1. **Leads to “debauchery”** (NIV, RSV), “dissipation” (NASB).
2. **Prevents our light from shining** (vss. 8-14).
3. **Dulls our ability to “be careful”** (vs 15) to “make the most of every opportunity (vs 16).

**Q48. (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?**

**Be Filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)**

See Acts 2:4; 13-15.

**Singing to One Another and to God (Ephesians 5:19-20)**

Spirit-intoxication involves worship and mutual spiritual upbuilding.

- **Psalms** were singing the Psalter, the book of Psalms, which was written to be sung, and was sung by the Jews in Paul’s day.
- **Hymns** “probably had a religious and cultic significance ... as a technical term for festive psalms of praise, and for liturgical calls and recitations” (1 Corinthians 14:16).
- **Spiritual songs** may have been more spontaneous, perhaps like Paul’s “singing in the Spirit” (1 Corinthians 14:15), though the lines between psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are not firmly drawn.

**Q49. (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?**

Paul exhorts us to:

- Imitate our Father as beloved children (Ephesians 5:1)
- Live as children of light (Ephesians 5:8)
- Learn what pleases the Lord and then do it (Ephesians 5:10)
- Make music in our hearts to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19b)
- Thank God continually in everything (Ephesians 5:20).

(Lesson 13 in the 16-lesson series)

## 6. Christ's Love in All our Relationships (Ephesians 5:21-6:9)

- Wives to husbands (5:2-25)
- Husbands to wives (5:26-33)
- Children to parents (6:1-3)
- Fathers to children (6:4)
- Servants to masters (6:5-8)
- Masters to servants (6:9)

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

#### Submit Yourselves (Ephesians 5:21)

Paul begins with a generic statement on submission, then, over the course of the next passages, breaks down what that means in various kinds of relationships. The reason for our submission is out of reverence for Christ. "Reverence" (NIV, NRSV, ESV), "fear" carries here the idea not of slavish fear, but of "reverence, respect."

The Greek verb *hypotassomai* used in the theme verse 21 is used in a reflexive sense, "subject oneself, be subjected or subordinated, obey." Paul is saying, "subject yourself." Rather than teaching rote obedience in action and word, Paul is teaching a voluntary placement of oneself under another "out of reverence for Christ" (verse 21b). While this often involves obedience, it is not quite the same as obedience. Obedience is in Eph 6:1, 5-6).

#### Headship (Ephesians 5:22-24)

Those who teach "chain of command" from headship, equate "head" with "boss." But Paul uses the Greek noun *kephalē*, "head," in a number of ways, some of which overlap.

1. **Origin** (Colossians 1:15, 17, 18; 1 Corinthians 11:3).
2. **Source, Creator** (Colossians 1:16). We derive our idea of "headwaters" from this concept.
3. **Sustainer** (Ephesians 4:16; 1:23; Colossians 1:17; 2:19).
4. **Source of Growth** (Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 2:19)
5. **First in Rank** (Colossians 1:18)
6. **Ruler** (Ephesians 1:20-22; Colossians 1:10). Our "headmaster" carries this idea.

#### Submission "As to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22b)

To submit to a husband "as to the Lord" means that *the Lord* is the supreme head, and that his commands take precedence over those of a husband when they are in conflict.

**Q50. (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?**

#### Husbands, Give Yourself Up for Your Wives (Ephesians 5:25-30)

Jesus practiced love in the form of service, not being a dictator (Luke 22:24-27; Mark 10:45)

### Serving the Imperfect Wife (Ephesians 5:26-27)

**Q51. (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?**

### One Flesh (Ephesians 5:28-32)

“He who loves his wife loves himself” (Ephesians 5:28b, 31; Genesis 2:24). Jesus also used this ancient verse to teach on marriage:

**Q52. (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?**

### The Marriage of Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:32)

### Pulling It All Together (Ephesians 5:33)

The Greek noun *phobos*, “fear,” carries here the connotation of “reverence, respect.”

### Moving Toward the Ideal

**Q53. (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?**

(Lesson 14 of 16-lesson series)

## 6.2. Children & Parents, Employers & Employees (Eph 6:1-9)

### Children Obey Your Parents (Ephesians 6:1-3)

The verb translated “obey” combine the concept of *listening* with *harkening to* or *responding to a command*, “to obey.” This is “in the Lord.” Obedience to parents is part of our obedience to the Lord.

### Honor Your Father and Mother

Deuteronomy 5:16. The verb translated “honor” comes from the idea of “to value, to deem worthy,” then “to honor.”

### Promises to the Obedient

1. **“That it may go well with you ...”** is self-evident.
2. **“... that you may enjoy long life on the earth”** -- increase our lifespan.

**Q54. (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?**

### Fathers (Ephesians 6:4)

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children” (verse 4a, NIV) or “provoke” them (KJV, ESV, NRSV). The underlying verb means, “make angry,” “to rouse to wrath, to provoke, exasperate, anger.” Similar is: “Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged” (Colossians 3:21, NIV).

### Training and Instruction (Ephesians 6:4b)

“Training” (NIV), “discipline” (ESV, NRSV), “nurture” (KJV) translate the Greek noun *paideia* (from which we get our words “pedagogy” and “pediatrics”). The word denotes “upbringing, training, instruction,” chiefly attained by “discipline, correction.” “Instruction” (NIV, NRSV, ESV), “admonition” (KJV) refers to “counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct, admonition, instruction, warning.” Both of these words can include punishment, but that is not their thrust.. We are told to “bring them up” in the Lord.” The verb means first, “to provide food, nourish,” then “to bring up from childhood, rear.”

**Q55. (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?**

### Slaves (Employees) (Ephesians 6:5-8)

In the Mediterranean world of Paul’s day there were citizens, freedmen, and slaves. It is profitable in our day to substitute the word “employee” for “slave,” and “employer” for “master,” though they aren’t fully equivalent.

#### **Obedience.**

**Respect.** We are not to despise them in our hearts; we are not to hate the boss.

**Sincerity of Heart** (NIV, cf. ESV), literally “singleness of heart” (NRSV, cf. KJV) translate a Greek noun used of personal integrity : “simplicity, sincerity, uprightness, frankness.”

**As we serve Christ.** Conscientious work is part of our service to Christ.

**Not merely pretending.** Modern translations have rendered this in colloquial language to help us understand the sentiment.

“Not only to win their favor when their eye is on you.” (NIV)

“Not only while being watched, and in order to please them.” (NRSV)

“Not by way of eyeservice, as people-pleasers.” (ESV, cf. KJV)

Our Christian work ethic is based on integrity, not impressing the right people.

**As Servants of Christ.** We are Christ’s representatives. We do our work as Christ’s servants.

**Doing the Will of God from the Heart.** Here is heart attitude again.

**As If You Were Serving the Lord, Not Men.** Attitude.

**Knowing that the Lord Will Reward.** Verb “receive as recompense,” contrasting man’s wages with God’s eternal reward.

**Q56. (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?**

Masters, Employers (Ephesians 6:9)

**1. You have a Master in heaven who will hold you to account.** You cannot be an absolute tyrant.

**2. God shows no favoritism in his judgment.** “Respect of persons” (KJV), “partiality” (NRSV, ESV), “favoritism” (NIV) render a noun that means, “partiality, the fault of one who when called on to requite or to give judgment has respect to the outward circumstances of men and not to their intrinsic merits, and so prefers, as the more worthy, one who is rich, high-born, or powerful, to another who is destitute of such gifts.”

The Bible has much to say about God’s requirements for employers, such as:

- Considerateness (Leviticus 25:42).
- Justice and fair pay for poor and immigrant workers (Deut 24:14; Prov 22:16; Mal3:5).
- Prompt and full payment of wages (Deut 24:15; Lev 19:13; Rom 4:4; James 5:4).
- Payment of decent and fair wages (Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7; 1 Timothy 5:18).
- Days off for rest (Deuteronomy 5:14).

**Q57. (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?**

(Lesson 15 in the 16-lesson series)

## 7. Our Present Spiritual Warfare (Ephesians 6:10-24)

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

Relying on God's Strength (Ephesians 6:10-11a)

Reliance on God. 2 Cor 12:7-10; Romans 8:28; 2 Cor 11:23-33; 4:8-9; Phil 4:12-13)

The Diabolical Nature of the Struggle (Ephesians 6:11b-12)

**“Devil”** translates Greek *diabolos* (from which we get words such as “diabolical”): 1. *adj.* “slandorous”, 2. *noun*, “one who engages in slander,” in the New Testament the title of the principal transcendent evil being “the adversary, the devil.” The proper name Satan (which is not used here) is a transliteration of the Hebrew word *satan* meaning “adversary,” and in the Bible, in a very special sense, the enemy of God, simply “Satan, the Enemy.” The word *diabolos* is used synonymously with *satan* in Revelation 2:9-10 and 20:2.

**“Rulers”** (NIV, NRSV, ESV) and “principalities” (KJV) translate Greek *archē* (from which we get words such as “archbishop”) which means “ruler, authority, official” Fallen angels: Rev 12; Daniel 10:12-13, 20.

**“Authorities”** (NIV, NRSV, ESV) and “powers” (KJV) translate the plural of Greek *exousia*, a generic word meaning “the right to control or command, authority, absolute authority, warrant,” both good and bad. When the words *archē* and *exousia* (“principalities and powers”) are used together in the New Testament, they always refer to the evil spiritual powers.

**“Powers of this ... world”** (NIV), “cosmic powers” (NRSV, ESV) or “rulers ... of this world” (KJV) is Greek *kosmokratōr* which means “world-ruler.” But the world here is described as “darkness,” in other words, Paul is describing here the “rulers of this sinful world.”

**“Spiritual forces (of evil)”** (NIV, NRSV, ESV) or “spiritual (wickedness in high places)” (KJV) is Greek *pneumatikos*, “pertaining to the spirit, spiritual,” here pertaining to evil spirits. Notice the words to which “spiritual” is appended: “evil” and “heavenly realms” (*epouranos*, “heavenly”). Evil social structures of the day? institutionalized evil? This doesn’t really fit the context here. “Heavenly realms” (*epouranos*) used a number of times in Ephesians, always concerning spiritual realities.

**Q58. (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?**

Stand Your Ground (Ephesians 6:13)

That is victory: hold our ground, stand our ground, not to give in, not to give up, to remain standing at the end of the conflict (John 16:33)

**Q59. (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?**

### The Nature of the Armament (Ephesians 6:14-17)

#### Belt of Truth (Ephesians 6:14a)

Think of the wide belt that the weight lifter wears to protect and strengthen him. A Roman soldier would wear a strong belt. John 8:31-32. Truth protects against the “father of lies.”

#### Breastplate of Righteousness (Ephesians 6:14b)

A Roman soldier would wear a breastplate made of steel, leather, or coat of mail (*thorax*) to protect his torso in the thick of battle. Our protection is righteousness. This is two-fold: (1) we have been *made* righteous by Christ’s death on our behalf (imputed righteousness). (2) We are “holy,” “set apart,” we are “saints,” we belong to God *now*. We are also protected by living holy lives, by obedience, by walking in God’s ways righteously, depriving the devil of a “foothold” (Ephesians 4:27).

**Q60. (Ephesians 6:14) Why are such simple things as truth and personal holiness such powerful armament? Are they defensive or offensive weapons?**

#### Footgear for Battle (Ephesians 6:15; Isaiah 52:7)

**Q61. (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?**

#### The Shield of Faith (Ephesians 6:16)

Often before battle, soldiers would soak their leather shields in the local creeks. This made them much heavier, but impervious to the flaming arrows shot by the enemy. A shield is both a defensive weapon to hide behind as well as an offensive weapon that enables you to strike with your sword hand while protecting your body with the shield held in the other. With a shield you can attack.

#### The Helmet of Salvation (Ephesians 6:17a)

Our salvation from God protects us against self-doubt and fear that God won’t forgive us.

#### The Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17b)

The sword is both offensive and defensive. We parry our enemy’s blows with our sword, as well as thrust home when we see a weakness in his defense (Luke 4:1-13).

**Q62. (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?**

#### Pray in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18)

#### Offensive or Defensive Weapons?

Ephesians 6:11, 13; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:7-8.

(Lesson 16 of the 16-lesson series)

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

### Spiritual Warfare and Struggle

The word “struggle” (NIV, NRSV) and “wrestle” (KJV, ESV) in verse 12 is Greek noun that from Homer on down referred to “wrestling,” a contest between two in which each endeavors to throw the other and hold him down with a hand on the neck. The word is particularly used of prayer in the New Testament (Colossians 1:28-2:1; 4:12; Romans 15:30).

### Pray in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18)

Some argue from 1 Corinthians 14:14-16 that praying “in the spirit” means praying in tongues, but this verse seems to mean something different -- “Pray guided by or inspired by or empowered by the Spirit.” “Pray with all prayers and petitions.” The first word uses the generic word for prayer to God. The second word, “requests” (NIV), or “supplications” (KJV, NRSV, ESV) is: “urgent request to meet a need, exclusively addressed to God -- seeking, asking, entreating, entreaty.”

**Q63. (Ephesians 6:18) Why is prayer vital to spiritual warfare? What does it mean to “pray in the Spirit”?**

### Alertness in Prayer for All the Saints (Ephesians 6:18b)

1. **“Be alert”** -- “to be vigilant in awareness of threatening peril, be on the alert, keep watch over something, be on guard,” then “the state of being alertly concerned, care.”
2. **“Persevere”** -- “firm persistence in an undertaking or circumstance, perseverance, patience.”

**Q64. (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?**

### Paul Requests Prayer for Himself (Ephesians 6:19-20)

Specifically, he asks them to pray for him for “fearlessness” (NIV), “boldness” (ESV, KJV, NRSV) - - “a state of boldness and confidence, courage, confidence, boldness, frankness, especially in the presence of persons of high rank” (Acts 4:13, 28; 1 Timothy 6:12).

**Q65. (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?**

### An Ambassador in Chains (Ephesians 6:20a)

The Greek noun here is *presbeuō*, “be an ambassador or envoy, travel or work as an ambassador.” It refers to one who acts as an emissary, transmitting messages or negotiations, used of envoys, imperial legates, and business agents (see 2 Corinthians 5:20; Matthew 10:40).

**Q66. (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?**