

UNITED

The book of Ephesians



11 studies in Ephesians
for individuals, groups & 1:1

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Welcome to **God's plan for you, his church & the world.**

This series of twelve studies is designed to accompany the teaching series at Trinity Mount Barker during July to September 2020. What does it mean to be a Christian? What are the benefits? How do we live as a Christian in an increasingly chaotic, uncertain and post-Christian culture? How do I fit in with God's plan for his church? Why join and get involved with my local church? Does God have a mission for Trinity Church Mount Barker? What is it and how do we find our place in it? What are the things that truly matter and are worth fight for? These are just some of the questions and themes we will tackle in the coming weeks as we plumb the riches of life in and with Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour in Ephesians

The Apostle Paul's letter to this local Church in Ephesus, is a most wonderful letter for the people of God—His church. It sets out for us what it means for people to become what we are *in* Christ. It identifies the objective reality for people who have received God's undeserved favour and who have been made alive *in* Christ; and then it tells us how we might become what we are. In the same way that we are made alive and raised *in* Christ, we have every spiritual blessing *in* Him that influences how we live.

Ephesians is a book that helps us understand not only why the local church is so precious to God, but how it's at the centre of God's purposes for the world for it reveals to us God's plans for redeeming His creation through it. It challenges our consumerist and individualistic views of what it means to be 'saved' and our relationship with the people of God to which we are called and of which we are a vital part. Ephesians reveals the hope of the world in the local church *in* Christ.

Each of the studies is presented in three sections. **Open** questions and activities are intended to get people talking, sharing & praying to help people feel comfortable and ready or what's ahead. The **Read** section accounts for most of the questions and should be the main focus of each session (about 50% of your time). With these questions, Bible Study Group Leaders should encourage people to *answer from the passage* rather than from knowledge of other parts of the Bible. The **Reflect** questions may be used for group discussion to help apply God's Word to our life, relationships and local church. They are also for more private contemplation and reflection. Space is provided for you to write a short **Prayer** for yourself at the end of each study that captures one or more key things you are thankful for and / or key ways you'd like God to keep transforming and changing you to be more like his Son, Jesus Christ. You might like to pray that prayer for yourself, your group and your church family to finish the study, to begin 'prayer time' and also in the days that follow.

While working through these studies in private will be helpful, the most fruitful and enjoyable way to make the most of these studies is to join in with one of the existing mid week **Bible Study Groups**. If you are not currently part of a Bible Study group and would like to join one for this series, please email bsg.mountbarker@trinity.church.

Alternatively, you may like to invite 2-3 other people to meet up during the week to work through these studies together. If you are doing these studies **individually**, we encourage you to let someone know, and arrange a time to meet with them to tell them how God's Word is changing your life and to pray together.

At Trinity Church Mount Barker our Bible Study Groups normally explore a study in the week leading up to the sermon. Our purpose in adopting this approach is to encourage the study of Scripture that is not influenced by having already heard the sermon, and allows groups and individuals to independently '*wrestle with the Bible*' in each of the studies.

In order to get the most out of these studies, you can do three things each week before your study time:

1. **Read the passage in advance** (it really helps your understanding to read it out aloud to yourself)
2. **Pray** that God would help you to understand it more fully and how it applies to you
3. **Think about the passage**, and if you have time, take a look at the questions in the Study Guide.

This will certainly help you, but an even better principle is to think about how you can serve each other. Your preparation and attendance will help your brothers and sisters in Christ as they come together each week, so please do make it a priority.

*** FOR LEADERS – Like a tour guide, so the task of any leader is to scope out the path ahead and the time you have to ensure you and your group all arrive at the destination of the walk. Like any good walk this involves working out where you might stop off, allow diversions (discussion) and giving people time to explore what's of interest to them. However, you want to ensure everyone in the group sees what's most important - so for leading a Bible study. This may mean SKIPPING 1 or more questions if you've spent more time on another question having a fantastic discussion as a group. They can be followed up for private study later.*

*As a GUIDE plan to spend **about 5-10% OPEN** questions, **50-60% READING and EXPLORING** the passage, **30% REFLECTING and discussing APPLICATION** and **5-10% writing a PRAYER and praying** either in 2-3's or as a whole group to begin prayer time.*

For Study leaders or those of us who would like to dig deeper

Recommended Reading

- Richard Coekin – Ephesians for you [*The Good Book Company*]
- Clinton Arnold — Ephesians [*Exegetical Commentary of the NT*]
- Peter O'Brian — The Letter to the Ephesians [*Pillar NT Commentary*]
- Simon Austen — Teaching Ephesians [*Proclamation Trust Resources*]
- John Stott — The Message of Ephesians [*Bible Speaks Today*]
- Lee Gatiss — Ephesians Study Notes for Leaders [[St Helen's Bishopsgate Bible Study Resources](#)]
- christianbiblestudies.com — Ephesians—You are God's Masterpiece [*Study Through the Bible*]

Preview – Surveying God’s Grace in Ephesians

Open

(In your group, share in pairs and then open up to wider group)

What’s the best thing about being a Christian for you?

What’s something you find is hard about living as a Christian?

Ephesians is a short letter of only six chapters that takes around 30-40 minutes to read out loud. It’s sometimes very easy to get caught up in the specific details of a piece of text without really seeing the thrust of the whole — so there’s great value in reading the whole letter in one sitting in order to understand the big picture.

Read the letter of Ephesians ALOUD

Whether you are doing this study individually or as a group, we encourage you to read the whole of Ephesians out loud in your first Bible Study Group session as this will give a feel for the main ideas of what is being communicated (*this was also how the letter would have first been heard in the early Christian church*).

Reading the whole letter is like standing on top of a look out and you start to notice things. What are the things that stand out? Is there anything unusual? Does the letter raise any questions for you? What are you curious to find more about in the coming weeks?

Ephesians chapter 1 – something that stands out or a question?

Ephesians chapter 2 – something that stands out or a question?

Ephesians chapter 3 – something that stands out or a question?

Ephesians chapter 4 – something that stands out or a question?

Ephesians chapter 5 – something that stands out or a question?

Ephesians chapter 6 – something that stands out or a question?

Reflect

The key summary verse for Ephesians is 1:10

*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as **a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.** - Ephesians 1:7-10*

In what ways do you think the whole letter look back to the big point in Ephesians 1:10?

Your Prayer (something you are thankful for and/or prayer for God to change you)

To consolidate something God has taught you and turn it into prayer for yourself, your group and your Church family

Study 1 — United: God's eternal plan in Christ

Ephesians 1:1-14

Open

If you were to sum up 'Jesus' in one word for you what would it be?
For example, Jesus is 'love' or 'life' or 'grace' ...

In pairs share what your word is and spend 1 minute each explaining why you chose that word. How does this word capture something of what Jesus means to you? Finish off praying in pairs giving thanks for one another in prayer.

Read Ephesians 1:1-14

What strikes you about these opening 14 verses? *(In the original there is no punctuation. It's like Paul has taken a very big breath and spoken this one long sentence.)*

What expectation do we have as we read the opening of Ephesians (see 1:1-2 and 3:4-6)?

What does it mean that the believer *'has been blessed in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ'* (1:3; see also 1:19-22; 2:6)?

How can we be *'holy and blameless'* in his sight when we obviously still do things wrong (v4) (see v7)?

Split up into pairs to look at the spiritual blessings in this passage:

- **In the first column:** List all the spiritual blessings you see in this passage
- **In the second column:** Label each blessing according to whether it relates to the past, present or future
- **In the third column:** Decide whether the Father (God), Son (Jesus) or the Holy Spirit contributes to each blessing

What we receive	When we receive it (Past / Present / Future)	Who gives it to us

What we receive	When we receive it (Past / Present / Future)	Who gives it to us

What stands out for you personally in this list of spiritual blessings?

What do you think are the differences between spiritual blessings and other kinds of blessings?

How do we become a part of what God is doing?

How do we become aware of and receive the blessings of God?

How would you explain the difference between what (blessings) a Christian already has and what is / are yet to come?

How is the Holy Spirit our guarantee or security of things to come (v13–14)?

Reflect

What does it mean to you that God has adopted you into his family? How does this 'truth' make you feel?

What might it look like for Jesus to be '*head over everything*' (v2) and with all things '*under Christ*' (v10) for you personally and your group or Church?

If you were to choose another Word from this Study to sum up Jesus for you what would it be and why? Share in pairs and or as a whole group.

How might this passage affect our thinking and behaviour '*for the praise of his glory*' (v12)?
(For example: Ephesians — see 4:1, 17, 25-32)

How could we use this passage shape our prayers?

Your Prayer (something you're thankful for and/or prayer for God to change you)
To consolidate something God has taught you and turn it into prayer for yourself, your group and your Church family

Study 2 — United: The fullness of him who fills everything

Ephesians 1:15-23

Open

In what ways do you find prayer easy and or hard?

What do you normally pray for?

Read Ephesians 1:15-23

What does Paul pray for the Ephesians? Can you find the 6 different prayer requests?

Why do you think Paul tells them what he's praying for them (i.e. what's the point of Paul reporting the content of his quiet times)?

Paul thanks God for the love and faith of the Ephesian church. In what ways do we see the gospel realities of this passage being worked out in our own church?

How does Paul describe the church in these verses? How does this differ from people's understanding of what church is all about?

What has God done to demonstrate His power?

Where is Jesus now? Why is this important for our understanding of Ephesians?

What does it mean that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to you (v19–20)? Who is this power?

List all the things these verses tell you about Christ (v19b–23)?

What does it mean (for Jesus) to be the head of the church?

How is Jesus *'the fullness of Him who fills all in all'*?

Reflect

What does it mean to you that you are God's inheritance? How does this help us appreciate that Christian ministry is all about people and connecting people to Jesus to live for the praise of His glory?

How does this prayer impact your view of the church? What role does your local church play in your life? Are there any shifts in attitude or behaviour that could be helpful for you to make in the coming weeks?

Take 5-10mins to have a go turning this prayer into your own prayer for your own small group, local church and the Trinity Network of Churches. Spend time taking it in turns to pray your prayer.

Your Prayer (something you are thankful for and/or prayer for God to change you)

To consolidate something God has taught you and turn it into prayer for yourself, your group and your Church family

Study 3 — United: Made alive with Christ

Ephesians 2:1-10

Open

note to leaders – beginning weekly studies doing this exercise in different pairs can be a great way to help people become familiar practiced and more confident in talking about their faith. You can then invite one person to share their ‘testimony’ to begin a group each week after that. This can greatly help us to more confidently be making the most of the opportunities with our not yet Christian family and friends

Split into pairs and spend 2-3 minutes each sharing HOW you became a Christian and What becoming a Christian means to you? (If you’ve grown up always knowing Jesus as your Lord and Saviour – share how taking on ‘ownership’ of wanting to be a Christian happened and how having Jesus as your Lord and Saviour impacts your life)

Finish off praying in pairs giving thanks for each other and God’s work of grace in your life.

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

How is humanity described in 2:1-3? In what way does this description surprise or shock you?

What does Paul mean when he says they are dead? Clearly he can’t mean they are physically dead can he?

Paul says that those who are dead gratify the cravings of their flesh and follow its desires and thoughts. How do you see that play out in the lives of people who are not Christians?

From the passage who is it that is deserving of anger or wrath and who is no longer under God's wrath?

What has God done about this (name 3 things God did about our dead state through Jesus)? Why has he done it?

What is the effect for believers? What difference does it make to our lives?

Why are vv8-9 so important? And how do they help you point people away from yourself and to God?

What do you think Paul says that even their 'faith' is part of God's gift or grace in saving them? What are the implications of this in being saved by 'grace alone' and not through (any) work ours? What then do we contribute to our salvation?

In 2:10, Paul says they are created for good works... the original word means something like a 'masterpiece' or 'priceless work of art'. How does this help us understand what our chief purpose is as a 'masterpiece of God's amazing grace'. ie When you see a priceless work of art, who deserves to receive all the praise and glory?

Reflect

What do you think life would be like right now if you had not become a Christian?

Why do you think Paul wants this local church of Christian believers in Ephesus to 'remember' (and never forget) what they once were before they heard the gospel, how they were saved and who they now are as God's saved people? What place can 'remembering' well have for us, our relationships and choices? (Eg Anzac Day)

How does this 'before – 'how and 'after' movement in Ephesians 2:1-10 help us think about how to talk about our own faith to each other and people are are not yet Christian?

Split into pairs and think about how you would explain salvation to a Non-Christian.
What does it mean to you that you are a 'Masterpiece (ie like a priceless art piece) of God's grace?

Your Prayer (something you are thankful for and/or prayer for God to change you)

To consolidate something God has taught you and turn it into prayer for yourself, your group and your Church family

Study 4 — United: Brought near to Christ

Ephesians 2:11-22

Open

What examples of hostility between groups of people exist in our world today?

Is there any ways Covid 19 has exposed this even more?

Why do we often find ourselves at odds with Christians who believe or live differently than we do?

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

What is the link between Ephesians 2:1-10 and Ephesians 2:11-22?

How many different kinds of people in this passage are there, and who are they?

In what ways does Paul say that the Gentiles are excluded?

What does Paul want his Gentile readers to remember? Why?

What was the key event that brought Jews and Gentiles together into a '*new humanity*' (v15; also see v13)? How does this help us understand the purpose of Ephesians 2:1-10?

What was the purpose of the death of Jesus?

What did Jesus abolish? Why might this be of particular significance to the Gentiles who received this letter?

Summarise Paul's description of the church (vv19-22). What does it mean to be '*built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets*' (see 3:5; 4:11)?

How is the church related to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit?

How does Ephesians 2:11-22 relate back to the theme sentence of the letter as a whole (Ephesians 1:10)? In other words, how does 2:11-22 fit into God's big plan?

Why is Paul telling us all this? What does he want us to do, think, or feel as a result of reading this passage? (Does he explicitly tell us to do, think, or feel something)?

Reflect

How does this passage humble us and that in God's economy, we are all on level ground?

How does remembering what we once were and that Christ is our cornerstone help us to accept those in the church who are not like us, or who disagree with us?

What are some ways that being part of your local church community has helped you be transformed to be more like Christ? Give a specific example of when that has happened in your life.

What habits do you need to change in order to be more involved with other Christians? Are there any people you are currently avoiding? Why? Do you need to humbly repent and ask God to 'break down any walls of hostility' in your own life?

Your Prayer (something you are thankful for and/or prayer for God to change you)

To consolidate something God has taught you and turn it into prayer for yourself, your group and your Church family

Study 5 — United: The mystery revealed in Christ

Ephesians 3:1-13

Open

What was your conversion experience (i.e. when you became a Christian)?

Why would it be good to recognise that you are not an important person, but that you have an important job to do? What is the difference?

How would you define '*church*'? What features are fundamental to the people of God and which are merely cultural preference or tradition?

Read Ephesians 3:1-13

What is the link between Ephesians 2:11-22 and Ephesians 3:1-13?

Why *specifically* is Paul suffering in prison?

What are Paul's 'administration' responsibilities regarding God's grace?

What is Paul's place in God's plan to unite all things in Christ? Is he at all special and if so, how?

What is the divine '*mystery*' mentioned in vv3:3?

Who has been kept in the dark regarding this secret and why?

How was this secret revealed?

What does Paul say about his experience of the grace of God?

What two responsibilities were given to Paul in his ministry?

In contrast to keeping this mystery hidden in the past (v9), what is God's intent for the church *now*?

What is the purpose of the church, according to v10? What does that actually mean in practice?

From the letter so far, what is '*the manifold wisdom of God*' (see 1:8; 1:11-13; 2:19-22)?

What is God's eternal purpose (v11)?

According to v12, what has Christ given us?

How would Paul's experience of imprisonment (v13) be for the Ephesian's glory?
(Cf Philippians 1)

Reflect

What is your mission at this point in your life, and why? How does it align with God's mission for Paul and Christ's people in Ephesians 2 and 3?

What 'remembering well' habits might help guard you and your local church from smugness or pride? What place could regularly confessing our sins and being assured of God's forgiveness (1 John 1:8-9) as part of our quiet times, small group times and Sunday church times together have in helping to build 'unity' and real love among God's people?

What is the place of 'humility' for the Christian and for a healthy unified local Church who are 'on mission together' for Jesus and the spread of the gospel to others?

In summary, what do these verses tell us about God's church and what it means for your local church continuing to live out and express the unity we have in Christ for the sake of the spread of the gospel to the praise of God's glory?

Are there things we could be doing differently when we gather together in our small groups or as a Church as a result of studying this passage?

Your Prayer (something you are thankful for and/or prayer for God to change you)

To consolidate something God has taught you and turn it into prayer for yourself, your group and your Church family

Study 6— United: Knowing Christ's love

Ephesians 3:14-21

Open

Thinking about the content of your prayers, what do you normally pray about? How do you decide what to pray for?

What has most helped you grasp God's love for you?

Describe a powerful example of God's love in your life or God answering prayer.

Read Ephesians 3:14-21

What is the motivation for Paul's prayer (what is the reason in '*For this reason ...*')?

Who is Paul praying for?

What is the single thing that Paul prays for (v16)? What does this mean?

If you have verse 16, what will follow from that (according to vv17-19)?

In v17 Paul prays that '*Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*'. Why does Paul ask this for the Ephesians who are Christians? Doesn't Christ dwell in them already? In what ways could they start living 'by works' rather than 'by faith'?

Why does Paul use four dimensions to describe God's love (v18)? What is he trying to say?

How would you explain v19 in comparison to Ephesians 1:23?

How does v20 encourage us in light of what Paul has been praying in vv14-19?

What is different about this prayer and the one in 1:15-23? What accounts for this different emphasis?

How does God '*do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine*'?

How does God '*receive glory in the church and in Christ Jesus*'?

What words or themes in 3:20-21 are echoes from the rest of chapters 1-3? How does this benediction (blessing) tie together the main themes that have run through the first three chapters of Ephesians?

Reflect

Three times in vv14-21 Paul mentions '*love*' and '*power*'. What do we learn about power and love in these verses?

How would you currently describe your attitude toward and commitment to your local church? How is it similar or different to Paul's?

What is Paul's main concern in this prayer? How might we see it being answered in our church if we pray this prayer

How are you stimulated to change things about your own prayer life as a result of studying this prayer?

How would you sum up the big idea of chapters 1-3?

How has God impacted or changed you by studying these (three) chapters and how has it made a difference to the way you relate to God?

Your Prayer (something you are thankful for and/or prayer for God to change you)

To consolidate something God has taught you and turn it into prayer for yourself, your group and your Church family

Study 7 — United: Growing together in Christ

Ephesians 4:1-16

Open

Sometimes pride looks an awful lot like humility. There are times that our pride convinces us to put on a great show of what looks to all the world like humility so that we will be seen and acknowledged by others. We swell with pride when we hear, '*He is humble*'. Why?

Pastor and Theologian John Dickson says that humility is '*the noble choice to forgo your status, deploy your resources or use your influence for the good of others before yourself*'. What do you think about this as you reflect on your own life?

Read Ephesians 4:1-16

What does it mean to live a life worthy of the calling you have received?

What is the repeated word / idea in 4:1-6 and how is it related to the message of the book of Ephesians (see 1:10)?

What does God want for the Church according to this passage (4:1-16)?

How does Paul want local churches to '*bear with one another in love*'?

What is the '*unity of the Spirit*'?

Explain *how* each of the following elements plays a part in [our] salvation:

a. The Body

b. The Spirit

c. Our Hope

d. The Lord

e. Faith

f. Baptism

g. God

Why do you think Paul stresses the oneness of verses 4 and 5?

What does 4:7-10 tell us about Jesus and the church?

What does Jesus give the church to ensure that God's desires for the church are fulfilled?

In what ways do the leaders identified in v11 contribute to a healthy church?

How do these gifts operate in our church, and does it work / is it working to fulfil God's purposes for us?

What must God's people do to be mature (compare 4:13 with 4:3)?

What is the alternative to [Christian] maturity (4:14)?

What must we do to become mature and loving (4:15-16)?

What stops the church from growing up properly? What are the very real threats to God's Church in Ephesus? Are any of these threats to your local church? How so?

Reflect

What does Paul say a mature church will be like? How does that compare to how you would describe your local Church?

After reading the Apostle Paul's words here, what do you think will be the likely difficulties for people who try to live the Christian life without being members of a local church?

How does this practically change what we do in church and the part we play in it?

In the light of Ephesians 4:1-16, how should we pray for our church and its leaders, and other churches and their leaders?

Brain storm a list of 'possible' evangelists and or pastors and teachers' who Christ might be raising up as gifts to your local church. How could you encourage them?

Your Prayer (something you are thankful for and/or prayer for God to change you)

To consolidate something God has taught you and turn it into prayer for yourself, your group and your Church family

Study 8 — United: A new community in Christ (1)

Ephesians 4:17 – 32

Open

One writer wrote that *'Thoughts are often out of control and as natural as breathing'*. How true is this for you?

How has your language or a behaviour changed since you've become a Christian?

Read Ephesians 4:17—32

What is the structure of this long passage? How would you split it up into its component parts of bite size chunks of about 3-10 verses each?

What is the key problem with the Gentile way of life and its consequences? (V19)

What is the key difference in the Christian life?

How do you think this section relates to 4:1-16?

What is the *'truth that is in Jesus'*?

How are we *'made new in the attitude of our minds'*?

What are the characteristics of the *'new self'*?

What do all the reasons given for living differently in vv25-32 have in common? Is there a common theme or reason for us to live differently?

How could we *'give the devil an opportunity'*? Can you give an example of what this could look or sound like?

According to the passage how and why are we to work?

What is an unwholesome word and why are they so detrimental in our relation with God, God's people and unbelievers?

How could we '*grieve the Holy Spirit of God*'?

How is v32 the antidote to the issues mentioned in v31?

Reflect

Which of the commands in vv25-32 do you have the most difficulty following? Why?

Are there any things about your '*old self*' that you are having trouble 'putting off'? How could regularly praying to God about this and sharing it with one or two other trust Christians help you to 'put it off' and 'put on Christ'?

How can we change the deeply ingrained habits of our words? Give practical ideas.

If you were asked, 'What is your goal for our church?', how would this passage shape your answer?

Your **PRAYER** (something you are thankful for and/or prayer for God to change you)
To consolidate something God has taught you and turn it into prayer for yourself, your group and your Church family

Study 9 — United: A new community in Christ (2)

Ephesians 5:1 – 20

Open

Have you ever been confused, disorientated or lost in a dark room, cave or place? What was it like? What was it like when you came into the light?

When you were younger, was there someone you wanted to be just like when you grew up? What about them made you want to imitate them?

Are you known as a thankful person? Why, why not? What role does being grateful or thankful for people or things in your life have in helping you to have healthy functioning relationships? Do you have examples?

Read Ephesians 5:1 – 20

Looking at the two '*therefores*' of 4:25 and 5:1, what do they relate to and what do they tell us about Christian living?

What's the point of 5:1-2?

How are we meant to be '*imitators of God*'?

There are several reasons from this passage why we should not indulge in the sins mentioned in vv3-4. What are they, and how are they related to the rest of Ephesians?

What strikes you about the list of prohibitions in v4? Do you struggle with any of these in any relationships or situations? For example we can sometimes find our selves trying to 'fit in' when we are non Christians and in very secular situations.

What is the right alternative and antidote to these thoughts and words? Why is this so significant and take us back to Ephesians 1-2 as the 'engine room' for our thankfulness?

Why is greed called 'idolatry' (v5)?

How do you know whether you are [in] light or darkness (v8)?

What does it mean to '*find out what pleases the Lord*' given what we have already seen in 4:21-24? Does being eager to 'please the Lord' add anything to our salvation or is it in response to us already being saved and in right relationship with God?

How is this section different from 4:25-32? Why didn't Paul just include sexual immorality, impurity and greed when he addressed lying, anger, theft and bitterness in the previous section? What is different about the focus of this section?

These lists of commands in Ephesians chapters 4:17-5:13 can sound like a list of 'do's and don'ts'. How can we guard against falling into a mindset of 'keeping the rules' or 'doing things to get God's approval and acceptance'?

How does Titus 2:11-12 and 2Timothy 3:15-17 help us understand the role that God's amazing grace has in not only saving us but teaching, instructing, correcting, rebuking and training us in living the Christian life? That is, why are Ephesians chapters 1-3 *crucial* if we are to know the power and joy of 'putting off' our old self and 'putting on' our new self in Christ?

Reflect

Are there practical ways you, your small group and local Church can '*walk in the way of love*'?

A question for personal contemplation: Do you ever have sexually immoral or impure thoughts? If so, what has the Holy Spirit been saying to you during this study (5:3-7)?

Practically speaking, how are we to avoid being '*partners*' with the world without withdrawing from it? How can we live in the world loving people with the gospel while not becoming like them?

Knowing Paul's argument in this passage, how would you answer a Christian person who says their private life is completely irrelevant to their public, Christian ministry?

How would you say you are going being joyfully instructed by God's grace to live the Christian life as opposed to trying to 'keep the rules'?

How might focusing on 'every spiritual blessing you have in Christ' (Ephesians 1:3-18) and remembering / rehearsing God's grace to you each day (Ephesians 2:1-10) help you to be more thankful and 'extinguish' old habits of temptation and sin?

Your Prayer (something you are thankful for and/or prayer for God to change you)

To consolidate something God has taught you and turn it into prayer for yourself, your group and your Church family

Study 10 — United: A new community in Christ (3)

Ephesians 5:17 – 33

Open

How has God shown you that He is faithful and trustworthy?

What does the word '*submission*' make you think of?

Is there any kind of work that you really enjoy? If so, what is it?

Read Ephesians 5:17 – 33

What does it mean to '*be careful how you live*'? v15

Verses 15-18 contain several contrasts ('*not this, but that*'). What are they?

Why do you think Paul mentions drunkenness?

Given that drunkenness leading to debauchery is its opposite, what does being 'filled with the Spirit' mean?

Verses 19-21 unpack v18 and give at least four results of being filled with the Spirit. What are they?

Where are we to '*make melody*' and why is this so important? What is the relationship to being thankful always (5:4) and '*making melody*' in our hearts?

According to these verses, what would you expect to see in Spirit-filled Christians — in church, alone and in relationship with others? What is their motivation?

How do we '*submit to one another out of reverence for Christ*'? What is the role of God's grace (Ephesians 1-3) and being thankful?

What difficulties might people have when they first read vv22-33? Why might they have these difficulties given our society and culture and education?

Why should wives submit to their husbands? What example are wives to follow in this?

How much are husbands to love their wife? What example are they to follow in this?

How did Jesus Christ sanctify [make holy] and cleanse the church?

What was the great mystery?

How does the context of vv22-33 help us to understand what Paul is teaching about the unity that is to exist between wives and husbands?

According to this passage, what does it mean to be a good husband/wife?

Reflect

How can you live each day carefully and wisely (v15)? Given what we've learnt in Ephesians so far, what is the secret to doing this well. Give practical examples?

How do you know when you are filled with the Holy Spirit? How does your life reflect His presence?

How do you react to the idea of being told to humbly submit to someone? Why is this 'Christ like' and good for the unity of Christ's people in local Churches?

Husbands, are there ways you can submit yourself (v21) to God's love for you and love your wife as Christ has loved the Church? What old self habits might be helpful for you to put off and new Christ like habits of speech and behaviour you can put on?

Wives, are there ways you can submit yourself (v21) to God's love for you and your respect for your husband? Are there 'old self habits that might be helpful for you to put off and new Christ like habits of speech or behaviours to put on?

How can we see all the necessary details of our day as God's work? What makes them God's work in and through us?

Your Prayer (something you are thankful for and/or prayer for God to change you)

To consolidate something God has taught you and turn it into prayer for yourself, your group and your Church family

Study 11 — United: A new community in Christ (4)

Ephesians 6:1 – 24

Open

How would you define a spiritual battle?

Which of the following three areas is hardest for you to keep straight in your work: your mind, your will, or your emotions? How does one affect the others?

How can we know when we should seek a new job instead of staying in the one we are currently in?

Read Ephesians 6:1-24

What does it mean practically for children to obey their parents? What promise is attached to this command?

How could fathers provoke their children? Explain what it means that fathers '*bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord*'?

Being sensitive to the differences between first century slavery and modern day paid work, What might verses 6:5-8 tell us about our attitude to work?

Why should slaves work hard (6:8)? What motivation do *masters* (employers) have to treat their *slaves* (employees) properly? What do these two commands have in common? The passage starts off with '*finally be strong in the Lord and his mighty power*'; what do you think this means?

Is spiritual warfare about marching across the land to claim the ground for Jesus according to these verses? If not, what kind of battle is it and what is our objective?

In vv11-13 why do you think Paul emphasises '*standing*'?

Read Isaiah 11:4-5; 52:7; 59:17 and make a list of all the armour mentioned, then describe what is meant by each of the parts of the armour of God in our passage:

a. The Belt of Truth

b. The Breastplate of Righteousness

c. Fitting your Feet

d. The Shield of Faith

e. The Helmet of Salvation

f. The Sword of the Spirit

How are we to put these on? Why?

According to Ephesians, what are the devil's schemes (2:2; 4:27)? What does he *not* want to see in the church?

Verses 18-20 tell us that prayer needs to exist in all our spiritual warfare. What does it mean to pray in the Spirit? Why is it crucial?

What instructions are given for prayer (how should we pray and for whom should we pray)?

What does Paul ask for?

How was Paul an '*ambassador in chains*'?

Who was Tychicus? What mission did he have? How could he encourage the Ephesians?

Why should love be associated with faith?

What group of people does the grace of God rest on?

What do vv21-24 tell us about the purpose of Ephesians?

Reflect

Give an example of a spiritual battle that you know you fight daily. Look back over Ephesians, especially chapters 4-5 as all these things are part of the 'spiritual battle' we are in.

If Christ has already defeated the devil, why do we still struggle in a spiritual battle?

How do Paul's prayers compare with our own? Where do we need to change?

How would you summarise the teaching of Ephesians as a whole into one sentence. Try to get the main emphases of the letter into your sentence, without making it as long as Ephesians 1:3-14!

What is the one main thing that studying Ephesians has taught you?

How has studying Ephesians changed you? Look back over all the prayers you have written in response to each Study.

Suggestion: Spend the whole prayer time in groups of 3 praying through all the prayers you have each written in response to each study...

Your Prayer (something you are thankful for and/or prayer for God to change you)

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