



*Paul's Letter to the*  
***Ephesians***

***Living as Children of God***

**A 6-SESSION BIBLE STUDY**  
**to Help You Live What You Believe**

This booklet belongs to:

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## ROAD MAP

This has been designed as a 6-week group Bible study journey.

So, let's begin with a few rules of the road:



1. Begin and end your study with prayer.
2. Be gentle and respectful of one another. ( 1 Pet. 3:15 )
3. Keep private things private. Don't gossip or start rumors.
4. Do what God tells you to do. (John 2:5)
5. Keep in touch with members of your group.

### Some of my Group Contacts

Name	E-mail	Phone	Notes
<b>Group Leader</b>			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

Unless otherwise specified, all Scripture citations are from the New International Version (NIV) Bible.

Cover photo and edited *1<sup>st</sup> Century Ephesus* illustration from Logos Bible Software ©

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## RULES FOR BIBLE STUDY

In Scripture, God chose to use almost every available kind of literary form (genre): narrative history, genealogies, chronicles, laws of all kinds, poetry, proverbs, prophetic oracles, drama, biographical sketches, parables, letters, sermons, and apocalypses.

### Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics (from the Greek) is the practice of Bible study and interpretation.

Steps to Bible Study include:

**Pray about it:** (1 Corinthians 2:11, 13-14)

**Observe it:** What does the text actually say? (Exegesis vs. Eisegesis)

The Word of God is a report, and God is its writer. Therefore, we must take it at face value if we believe what He says.

**Interpret it:** What does the text say in its context?

The aim of proper interpretation is to get at the “plain meaning from the text.”

What was the author’s original intent and how might the original recipients understand it based on their culture and conduct.

**Historical Context:** Differs from book to book and has to do with (1) the time, location and culture of the writer and his readers (2) the occasion of the book.

**Literary Context** means (1) that words only have meaning in sentences, and (2) that biblical sentences primarily only have clear meaning in relation to preceding and succeeding sentences.

**Apply it:** What is the point? How does the text apply to me? (Jam 1:22)

What will I do? When will I do it? Where will I do it? How will I do it?

### Interpretation **Must Always Agree with the Central Core of the Bible!**

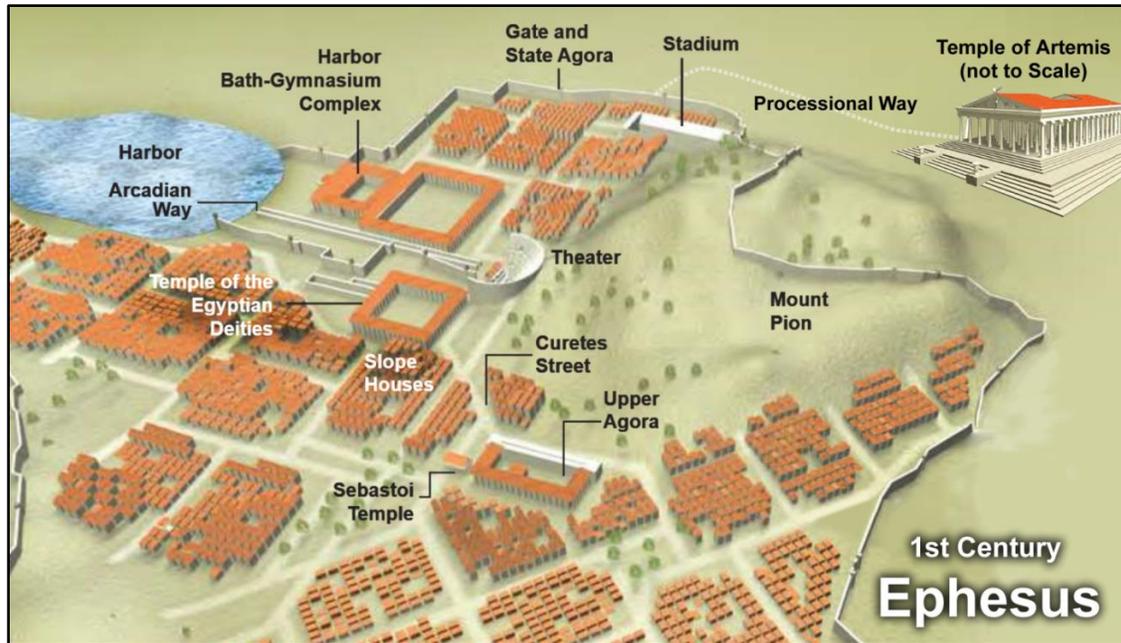
“The fallenness of all humanity, redemption from that fallenness as God’s gracious activity through Christ’s death and resurrection, and the consummation of that redemptive work by the return of Christ... are clearly part of this central core.”

*(Fee & Stuart. How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth. 2009)*

Here, we use the technique called inductive Bible study, which involves an unbiased exploration of the text (exegesis) and deriving conclusion from observable facts.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This letter twice states that Paul is author (1:1; 3:1). The letter was designed to be a circular letter, which was passed among the various house churches in the Ephesus area. Paul spent close to three years in Ephesus (Acts 19:10; cp. 19:1–20:1; 20:16–38). Later, he was imprisoned (3:1; 4:1; 6:20) in either Caesarea Maritima (in the late 50s) or in Rome (in the early 60s), which may have provided an occasion for him to write.



## THE MAIN MESSAGE

The letter's message is similar to that of Colossians, but with significant differences. Most of Paul's letters address problems within the churches; not so in the case of Ephesians. Instead, Paul reviewed God's nature and defines the reader's new relationship with Him. This aspect is evident in Ephesians 1:15–18, where Paul stressed the soundness of their faith and love, and emphasized in his prayer that they might know God personally.

The last half of the letter addresses the implications of the theology contained in the first half. It answers the question, "How should a child of God live?" First, within the church, Paul urged that there be unity (Eph. 4: 1– 16). It focused on the use of spiritual gifts, which reminds us of 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 14. Second, Paul urged the believers to pursue a holy lifestyle (Eph. 4: 17– 5: 21). This is a reminder that Christians need to be different from their ungodly culture. Their lifestyle would be characterized by the positive values of a Christ-like mindset and a resistance to evil and sin. Consequently, personal holiness is crucial to the unity of the church and engaging in spiritual warfare.

# BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

## Ephesians 1:1-23

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. (Eph. 1:3, NIV)

1. **Read verses 1-2.** How did Paul describe himself and this letter's recipients?  
What difference does it make to see one's life and work from God's point of view?
2. "In Christ" is repeated more than 10 times in verses 1-14.  
What does it mean to be "in Christ"? (See John 15:5)
3. **Read verses 3-8.** What does it mean to be blessed "in the heavenly realms" (3, 20; 2:6)?  
What are the spiritual blessings mentioned here? When and why did God choose us?  
For what did he predestine us? How does this show his love?
4. How has he "lavished" on us his grace? How costly is his grace (To him and to us)?  
What does "redemption" suggest about our former state?



# LIFE IN CHRIST

## Ephesians 2:1-22

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,  
which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph. 2:10, NIV)

### MADE ALIVE IN CHRIST (2:1-10)

1. **Read verses 2:1-3.** What is man's natural condition without Christ? Why? What is meant by "transgressions"; by "sins"? (See 1Jn 3:4; Gen 4:13-16)
2. What is meant by:
  - the ways of this world?"?
  - the ruler of the kingdom of the air? Who does he work in?
3. What does Verse 3 tell us about the nature of sin and its consequences? Who are the objects of God's wrath? (Ro 1:18; 2:8)
4. **Read verses 4-5.** What has God done for people who were dead in transgressions?
5. What is the significance of our union with Christ? (6,7)

6. What is grace? Is grace universal and all-encompassing or is it contextual? Why does Paul say that our salvation is a gift? (8) If good works have nothing to do with earning our salvation (9), why must we do good works?
  
7. **Read verse 10.** What does it mean that we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus? What was God's purpose? What does it mean to you that God prepared good works in advance for you to do?

### **ONE IN CHRIST (2:11-22)**

9. **Read verses 11-13.** What was the situation of the Gentiles before they came to Christ? What was their relationship to the Jews, God's chosen people? What blessings has God given them (us) through the blood of Christ?
  
10. **Read verses 14-18.** How did Christ bring people of such different backgrounds together? What is His purpose in doing this? What does it mean to be one in Christ?
  
11. **Read verses 19-22.** What is the foundation of the Christian Church? What is its Cornerstone? What is the building? What does it mean that God dwells in the midst of his people?

# THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

## Ephesians 3:1-21

This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 3:6, NIV)

### PAUL'S WITNESS (Eph. 3:1-13)

1. **Read verses 1-2.** Why did Paul say that he was a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of the Gentiles? Why he was in prison (1-2; Gal 2:12-14; Ac 19:21).
2. **Read verses 3-6.** How many times do you find the word “mystery” in this chapter? What was Paul’s special insight into the mystery of Christ? (3-6; Ex 19:5-6; Isa 2:3; Isa 9:6,7)
3. **Read verse 6 again.** Why is Paul’s message in this verse revolutionary? (Jn 4:9) What does it mean that the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel? (Ro 8:17) Does verse 6 support or oppose “replacement theology?”
4. **Read verses 7-13.** How does Paul apply the mystery of the gospel to himself? What mission had God given him? What is God’s intention and great purpose through the church? (10)

5. What do we gain through faith in Jesus (12)? How did Paul reassure the Ephesians (13)?

### **THE LOVE OF CHRIST (Eph. 3:14-21)**

6. How does Paul pray before God? (14) What does he affirm about God? (14-15)
7. **Read verse 16.** What is his first prayer topic for the Ephesians? How can our inner being be strengthened (Ro. 5:6-8)? Why is Paul concerned about inner strength?
8. How can Christ dwell in our hearts (17a; Col 2:6, 7)? What is the relationship between the indwelling of Christ and the strengthening of our inner being?
9. What does it mean to be rooted and established in love? (17b)  
What does Paul want them to know? (18-19)
10. **Read the benediction in verses 20-21.** What does Paul teach about God in these verses? What is hope God gives us in the church and in Christ Jesus?

## **GROWING UP TO BE CHRIST-LIKE**

### Ephesians 4:1-32

...speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. (Eph. 4:15, NIV)

#### **UNITY & MATURITY (Eph. 4:1-16)**

1. **Read verses 1-2 and 16.** What does it mean that Paul is a prisoner of the Lord? What is the calling Christians have received? Define: “live worthy of that calling.”
2. **Read verses 3-6.** What is the nature of our unity? How does unity fulfill Jesus’ prayer in John 17:20-23?
3. **Read verse 7.** The purpose for the Lord’s grace and gifts to us is so we can apply them in humble service. Think about Jesus’ example of humble service (Phil. 2:4-11).
4. **Read verses 11-12.** How can each gift of office be used to build up the whole body of Christ?
5. **Read verses 13-16.** What is the goal of our growth? What are the characteristics of spiritual infants?



## CONDUCT OF GOD'S FAMILY

### Ephesians 5:1-33

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children... (Eph. 5:1, NIV)

#### FOLLOW GOD'S EXAMPLE AS HIS CHILDREN (Eph. 5:1-21)

1. **Read verse 1.** What is Paul's first admonition in this chapter? Also read John 8:42-44, John 14:8-12, and John 17:25-26. How might children be like their parents?
2. **Read verse 2.** What does it mean to "walk (live) in the way of love"? How did Christ set the example? How can we learn and practice his love?
3. **Read verses 3-4.** What are some things that are improper for God's children? Only children within the family have a key to enter the family's house. How do people demonstrate that they do not belong to the family of God? (5-7)
4. **Read verse 8-11.** How can we practically live like children of light?
5. **Read verse 15.** What should we be careful about? (Read also James 3:13 and 17)

6. **Read verses 16-18.** Why should we make the most of every opportunity and understand the Lord's will? What (or who) should we be filled with? How can you let praise music and thanksgiving fill your mind? (19-20)

### **LOVE, RESPECT & SUBMISSION (Eph. 5:21-33)**

7. **Read verse 21.** What should be our attitude towards one another?
8. **Read verses 22-24.** What is the duty of a wife to her husband? Why?
9. **Read verse 25-27.** How did Christ demonstrate his love for his church?
10. **Read verses 28-30.** Why should husbands love their wives as their own bodies?
11. **Read verses 31-33.** What is the mystery of marriage? Why is it essential that spouses love and respect each other? How can we do so when we see all their faults and weaknesses so clearly?

## **WARRIORS IN ACTION**

### Ephesians 6:1-24

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. (Eph. 6:13, NIV)

### **DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN CHARACTER (Eph. 6:1-9)**

1. **Read verse 1.** What is the duty of children towards their parents? How did Jesus' obedience establish the pattern for children of God? (Luke 2:51-52)
  
2. **Read verses 2-3.** What blessings will children receive when they keep God's command? Read Exodus 20:12, Deut. 5:16, Proverbs 6:20 and Colossians 3:20. How do these commands help establish lifelong relationship skills? (Proverbs 22:6)
  
3. **Read verse 4.** How should parents raise their children? Why should parents inspire, reassure and encourage their children?
  
4. **Read verses 5-8.** With what ethical attitude should slaves (Grk. doulos) and employees obey their masters? Who will ultimately reward us?
  
5. **Read verse 9.** How are masters and slaves similar? What is the common truth in the relationships between parents and children and between masters and slaves? How are Christian ethics different than worldly ethics?

## **THE ARMOR OF GOD (Eph. 6:10-24)**

6. **Read verse 10-11.** Who is the source of the believer's authority and power? Read Matt. 28:18, Phil. 4:3, Eph. 1:19-20. What is the purpose of armor?
  
7. **Read verses 12-13.** Who is the real enemy whom we must fight? Why are the people not our true enemy? How can we defend ourselves when the devil attacks?
  
8. How important is the belt of truth? (14a, Matt. 22:16, John 18:37, John 8:32)  
How important is the breastplate of righteousness? (14b, Matt. 6:33, Romans 1:7)
  
9. **Read verse 15.** How important are shoes of readiness? What does it mean for a Christian's feet to be ready? (Isaiah 52:7, Rom. 10:14-15)
  
10. **Read verse 16-17.** What is the role of the shield and the helmet? What are Satan's flaming arrows? What can we use our primary offensive weapon? (2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 2:15)
  
11. **Read verses 18-22.** What is the importance of prayer in this spiritual battle?  
What should be our prayer topics?
  
12. **Read verses 23-24.** This is more than a farewell prayer; it is a call to action. Has this study strengthened your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

**A CLOSER LOOK**

**Helmet**

The iron helmet was forged from one piece of metal and lined with leather. Crests made of dyed horsehair indicated rank. Plates hung down along the cheeks and another plate protected the back of the neck and shoulders.

**Breastplate**

The iron or bronze scaled armor was built in four sections to cover each shoulder and side of the chest. The plates were sewn to a stiff leather vest, which was put on like a jacket before the front plates were tied with leather straps.

**Sword**

The sword was carried on the right side and hung from the belt or a leather strap over the shoulder.

**Belt**

The leather belt was tied around a wool tunic. Connected bronze plates hung from the belt to protect the soldier's groin area.

**Shield**

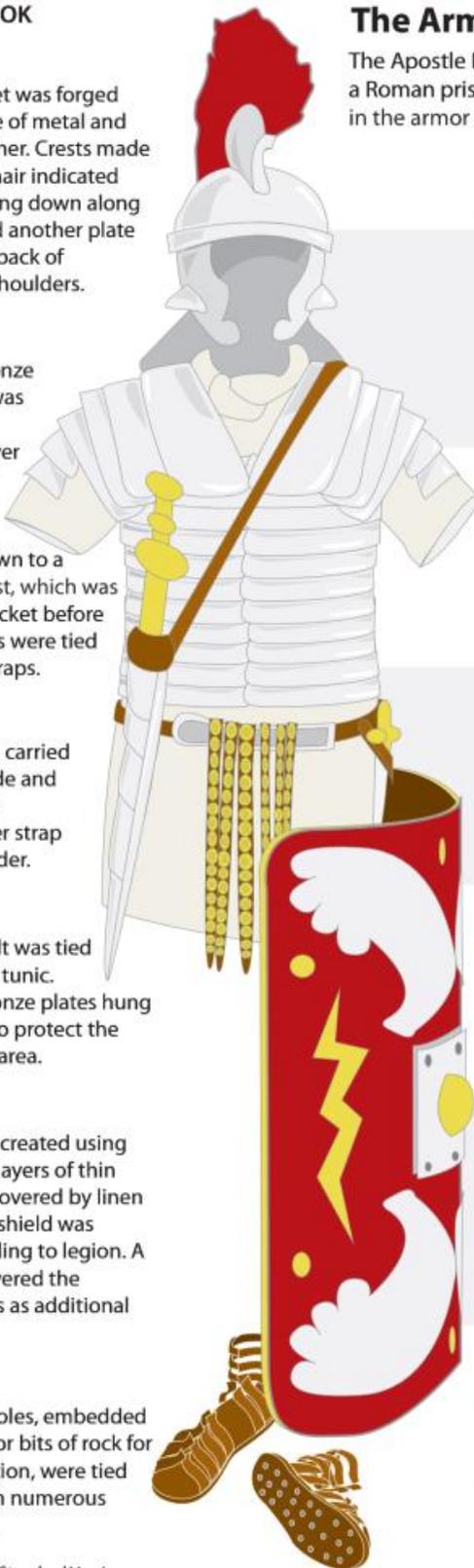
The curve was created using three bonded layers of thin wood strips. Covered by linen or leather, the shield was painted according to legion. A bronze rim covered the rounded edges as additional protection.

**Sandals**

Thick leather soles, embedded with hobnails or bits of rock for increased traction, were tied to the feet with numerous leather straps.

**The Armor of God**

The Apostle Paul, inspired by God, wrote a letter to the church of Ephesus from a Roman prison. As he wrote, Roman soldiers guarding the prison walked about in the armor of first century legionary.



**ARMOR OF LEGIONARY**

**Galea (Helmet)**  
Protected head and neck from enemy attacks

**Lorica Segmentata (Breastplate)**  
Guarded vital organs

**Gladius (Sword)**  
Powerful offensive weapon in the hand of a skilled soldier  
  
Waving it served as a word of warning to the enemy

**Cingulum (Girdle or Belt)**  
Supports sword, dagger and bronze apron  
  
Worn at all times, even without other armor pieces

**Scutum (Shield)**  
Overlapping shields allowed soldiers to advance together  
  
Shield was used to defend the entire body, including the back

**Caligae (Sandals)**  
Fit for both marching and fighting  
  
Became more comfortable with constant wear

**ARMOR OF GOD**

**Helmet of Salvation**  
"...and take on the helmet of salvation..." Ephesians 6:17a

**Breastplate of Righteousness**  
"...and having put on the breastplate of righteousness..." Ephesians 6:14b

**Sword of the Spirit, Word of God**  
"...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God..." Ephesians 6:17b

**Belt of Truth**  
"Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth..." Ephesians 6:14a

**Shield of Faith**  
"In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one..." Ephesians 6:16

**Readiness/Preparation of the Gospel of Peace**  
"...and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace." Ephesians 6:15

Scripture: English Standard Version

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