

# A Study of Ephesians

This study of Ephesians was written by Kathie Wendland, a dedicated Bible student with significant experience writing and leading women's Bible studies. It has been reviewed by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Professor-emeritus David Valleskey. Professor Valleskey says "This should prove to be an interesting and edifying, though challenging Bible study."

Valleskey says it is imperative that the leader work with a commentary and suggests Prof. Panning's People's Bible commentary on Ephesians. It would be good for everyone in the study to purchase a copy of this commentary.

The material would require about seven 60-90 minute sessions to complete. Since there is no leader's guide, an inexperienced leader may find it difficult.

# God's Grace To and Through the Church: the Body of Christ

## Getting Started

The format of this study will be to have study notes interspersed with the discussion questions. The primary resource is the Bible. It's recommended that you read this epistle at least once a day from beginning to end to get used to the rhythm of the book. It's a short letter so take 15 or 20 minutes to sit down and spend a little time with your friend Paul. Other helpful commentaries used to prepare these notes include the *Concordia Study Bible*, Professor Panning's *Galatians/Ephesians People's Bible*, and Professor Habeck's commentary entitled simply, *Ephesians*.

## Introduction to Paul's Letter to the Congregation at Ephesus

### TO WHOM THE LETTER IS WRITTEN

While there should be little debate after reading verse 1, apparently a couple of early manuscripts omit the phrase, "*in Ephesus*." Both Professors Panning and Habeck point out that this is most likely a matter of the letter being recopied for circulation to other congregations as the vast majority of manuscripts include the phrase. The congregation at Ephesus was established on Paul's second missionary journey and revisited a number of times after that. Paul spent three years here, the longest recorded stay by the apostle as he was establishing congregations among the Gentiles.

1. Where in Acts will we look for the record of Paul's visits?

2. How many times did Paul visit and what did he do on each visit?

What was Paul's "*modus operandi*" when establishing congregations?

3. What do we know about the city of Ephesus?

Where is it?

What was the city like?

What was its major religion?

4. What do we know about the early days of the congregation in Ephesus?

5. What do we know about the relationship between Paul and the congregation at Ephesus?

6. Where else do we find reference to the congregation at Ephesus and what does that tell us about the congregation?

7. Because of what we know about the context of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, what application will there be for us and for our congregations?

THE AUTHOR and DATE OF WRITING

Read verses 1:1, 3:1, and also refer to 3:7, 13; 4:1; 6:19-20.

8. Who is the author inspired by God to write the letter to the Ephesians?
9. When did he likely write and what was Paul's situation at the time of writing?
10. Will this help us any in understanding the content and application of the letter for us? Explain.

#### PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

There doesn't seem to be a big doctrinal dispute in Ephesus. We know from Acts that Paul was very close to that congregation and many of the members. We also know from Acts that this was a mixed Jew and Gentile congregation, but was probably predominately Gentile.

11. What problems occurred in these early churches as Jews and Gentiles began to worship the LORD together, united in Jesus Christ?

Why did these problems almost invariably arise?

12. Would there be application for us today in our congregations? Explain.
13. What would you expect to see Paul addressing in this letter to this beloved congregation?

# Ephesians

## God's Eternal Plan of Salvation

### A PLAN DEvised BY THE TRIUNE GOD FROM ETERNITY (CHAPTER 1)

**vv 1–2** In the opening greeting of this letter, Paul follows the custom of the day. He identifies himself, addresses the recipients of the letter and greets the readers. Paul, however, adds some powerful information and encouragement in this opening address.

1. What is significant about the way Paul identifies himself?
2. What is a saint? (Refer also to verse 4 where the same idea comes up again)
3. What is encouraging about the greeting and what does it tell us about the writer and the recipients?

Professor Panning writes that some refer to this first chapter of Ephesians as, “the divine side of church history.” He further explains that while the “triune” God is never referred to as such, in this chapter, all three persons “are clearly in evidence.” Verses 3–6 are about the Father’s gracious plan, verses 7–12 illustrate how the Son carried out that plan, and verses 13–14 “seal” the Father’s plan in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. The entire section of verses 1–14 is referred to as a doxology or a “song of praise.” Additionally, in the original Greek all 200 words make up one sentence. This must have been quite a challenge for the translators!

**vv 3-6** The Father's Gracious Purpose

4. Explain verse 4. Why is this verse such a comfort to us?

When would be a good time to refer to this verse when talking to a Christian friend?

5. Explain the doctrinal richness of verses 5-6.

In love . . .

predestined . . .

adopted as sons . . .

through Jesus Christ . . .

in accordance with his pleasure and will— . . .

to the praise of his glorious grace . . .

6. So, for whom is the teaching of predestination or election intended?

Why is it a comfort for us?

What conclusions can we draw about those who have not been elected to salvation?

Why is it important to keep this in mind?

**vv 7-12**      The Father's plan accomplished by the Son's work

7. According to verse 7, how was our election secured? (Note especially the concepts of redemption and forgiveness.)

Why was it secured?

8. According to verse 9, how and why do we know about our salvation?

9. According to verse 10, what was the purpose of God's plan from eternity?

And who/what is included in "*all things?*"

10. How does verse 11 bring the application closer to us and our lives?

11. Who is verse 12 referring to?

What does it mean to be the "*first to hope in Christ?*"

What does the phrase, “*for the praise of his glory,*” mean? (Keep in mind that as we learned from Old Testament study a Scriptural concept associated with the word “glory” includes the one being glorified is in some way being made visible or tangible. cf. Exodus)

**vv 13–14** The Father’s Plan Sealed by the Holy Spirit

12. Who is now included in the original plan of salvation from eternity?
13. What made that inclusion and how was it sealed in you?

What application does this have for our lives specifically the purpose of our earthly lives? (See verse 14 especially.)

**vv. 15–23** Thanksgiving and Prayer

The final verses of this chapter are Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians and for us to see God’s gracious power. Paul comments on the *faith* and *love* of the Ephesian congregation. Professor Panning reminds us that *love* is *faith* in action.

14. What were the Ephesians being commended for?

Remember the condemnation in the letters to the churches in Revelation 2? What had apparently occurred in the Ephesian congregation within 30 years of the writing of this letter?

How does this apply in our lives and congregations?



15. List everything that Paul is praying for this congregation.
  
16. How will this occur? (There are at least 3 major components to the answer here.)
  
17. WHY do we want to remain within the LORD's church?  
  
How will that be possible?
  
18. For whom is this section of Scripture intended and with whom and when will we be likely to discuss it?
  
19. The last verse of this chapter again points out the purpose of God's plan and its implementation on earth. What would that be?

# Ephesians

## God's Eternal Plan of Salvation

A PLAN DEVISED BY THE TRIUNE GOD FROM ETERNITY (CHAPTER 1)

**ENACTED IN TIME (CHAPTER 2)**

Professor Panning reminds us at the beginning of this section of the makeup of the congregation to whom Paul is writing as well as the makeup of the congregations Paul established and nurtured. Paul's *modus operandi* on his missionary journeys was to first find the local synagogue, if there was one. Here he met with the Jewish leaders of the community and explained to them that Jesus Christ had fulfilled all of the Old Testament prophecies with his life, suffering, death, and resurrection. He was therefore their Redeemer and Messiah. Some believed but sooner or later most would reject Jesus as their Messiah and throw Paul out. Paul then turned his attention to the Gentiles with the help of those Jewish leaders who had been brought to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. These men were very learned in the Old Testament teachings and prophecies and made very good leaders of the forming congregations. However, most of the members of the congregation were Gentiles.

There was a very new dynamic in the Kingdom of God as compared with God's Old Testament church to say the least. Two groups of people who had formerly not only avoided one another, thereby failing to understand the other, but disdained each other, were now to be working together to proclaim the message of Christ. It was going to take an act of God to change the attitude of the two groups toward each other. That's what Paul now begins to address in this section of his letter to the congregation at Ephesus.

Paul had been speaking to the congregation as a whole when he reassured them of God's plan of salvation for them before time began. Now he illustrates for them how the LORD put that plan into action in their lives. It wasn't exactly the same for the Jews and Gentiles, but Paul points out that it wasn't all that different either. After concluding his prayer directing the attention of the

reader to the church as a whole and so close as to be acting as a single body, the Body of Christ no less, Paul now addresses the two formerly individual groups to show them how they now have become one group with a single purpose in Christ.

**vv 1-2** Paul begins with the Gentiles.

1. How does Paul describe the Gentiles?

How does this description apply to us?

How does keeping this in mind aid us as we reach out to people around us who don't know Christ?

**v3** Paul now expands his audience to include the Jews.

2. How does he do that?

What does he add to illustrate how the two groups were actually the same all along?

3. How does this passage address the issue of whether or not someone will go to hell if they've never heard of Jesus? After all, isn't God a God of love?

Where and how does Scripture address the consequence of not knowing Jesus for those who have never heard of him?

So who's supposed to do something about this awful state of affairs for those who don't know Jesus?

**vv 4-7** Paul explains mercy, grace, kindness and how they are interrelated in God's plan of salvation as He enacts it in the lives of human beings throughout the ages.

4. What is mercy?
5. What is grace?
6. What is kindness?
7. What is love (*agape*)?
8. What difference do all four of these make in my life and in the life of every Christian?

**vv 8-10** The summary of the first two sections of Paul's letter to the Ephesians:

9. What are verses 8-9 summarizing?
10. What is verse 10 referring us back to?

11. How do and why do verses 8–10 go together?
12. How can we in our lives demonstrate that we understand Ephesians 8–10?
13. Are the good deeds we do, “our” good deeds? Explain.

**vv 11–13** Prof. Panning explains, “Accepting circumcision was the sign and seal by which a Jewish male indicated his willingness to live under God’s covenant.”

14. How does that help us to understand verses 11–12?
15. List what being outside of God’s covenant meant for the Gentiles. There are four “problems” listed in these passages.
16. So what happened, and why?
17. Why is this a special passage for the Gentiles of Paul’s day and for us?

**vv 14–18** Paul goes on to explain how this transition in Christ took place. There was a huge shift from the Old Testament church in outward appearance to the New Testament church. Paul answers the following 3 questions in these verses:

18. How did God accomplish the change from the Old Testament to the New Testament?

19. Why did God do it?
20. What are the results of God's work in Christ?
21. What application would this section have for us personally?
22. What about in conversations with friends and acquaintances?

**vv19–22** Therefore, some tremendous changes have taken place in your life and in your relationship with God and with others in God's Kingdom.

23. What do we now have?
24. What is the foundation of the LORD's New Testament church?
25. What keeps us together?
26. What is our purpose?

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A PLAN DEvised BY THE TRIUNE GOD FROM ETERNITY (CHAPTER 1)

ENACTED IN TIME (CHAPTER 2)

**PREACHED TO THE GENTILES BY PAUL (CHAPTER 3)**

The beginning of this section of Paul's letter can be confusing to say the least. Paul begins, "*For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles . . .*," only to break his thought here and finish it in verse 14. The break explains how the LORD made it clear to Paul that he was to minister primarily to the Gentiles. The break also explains exactly what Paul was to proclaim to the Gentiles.

**v 1**     *"For this reason . . ."*

1.     What reason? Why was Paul a "prisoner" or another translation says, "captive" of Jesus Christ?

Is this referring only to Paul's current status of being under house arrest in Rome? (Think about it and explain your answer. See Philippians 1:1 where the word servant actually means, "bondsmen" or "slave.")

**vv. 2–6** The emphasis of verse 2, according to Prof. Panning is that Paul's administration of God's grace was "*for you.*" Paul's commission by Jesus on the road to Damascus was specifically to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 26:15–18). The Lord made it even clearer in Jerusalem while in a trance shortly after his conversion (Acts 22:17–22). The mystery that Paul is speaking of is that Gentile and Jew will now be heirs together of eternal life through Jesus Christ. The Jews are no longer the primary people through whom the

Lord will work. Prof. Panning explains that “*mystery*” isn’t being used in the sense of something murky or mysterious, simply as something which needs to be explained.

2. Why is this such a mystery?
  
3. How is the situation of the Gentile in the eyes of the LORD as compared to the Jew at this time in church history?

Why would this be so hard for both Jew and Gentile to comprehend?

4. How can Paul be so sure that he’s right about something which is so new and contrary to the way both Jew and Gentile operated for centuries?

**vv 7–9** Paul, acutely aware of his unworthiness to proclaim Jesus’ message, points out that he, “*became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace through the working of his power.*”

5. Why does Paul refer to himself as, “*less than the least of all God’s people . . . ?*”

How is his very name a reminder of his unworthiness?

6. How does Paul feel about his proclamation of the grace of God, which is the Word of God?

How do we feel about our ability to tell others of the wonders of the LORD and all that Jesus has done for us?

What can we learn from Paul in this regard?



**v 9** “. . . *the unsearchable riches of Christ* . . .” Professor Habec, in his commentary, translates this section as the “untraceable riches of Christ.” He comments that the original word has the sense of tracking an animal only to find there are so many footprints that it’s impossible to sort out which way the animal has gone.

7. How would that help us understand what Paul is explaining to the readers of this letter?

8. Again, what mystery was Paul explaining to his readers?

9. What possible application could this have in our congregations and synod?

**vv 10–13** Paul here explains in the clearest of terms what the purpose of the church is. The word “church” from the Greek word *ecclesia* simply means those “called out” or “summoned to a meeting.” It’s obvious from this meaning that it’s not a building which is being referred to, rather the redeemed souls called to be part of that church. He also explains what is to be proclaimed, to whom, and why and how it came to be. He concludes by encouraging the readers to approach the LORD with freedom (boldness is another way to translate that word) and confidence.

10. Paul writes, “*now, through the church* . . .” When and how was the New Testament church established? (Read through Acts. There’s quite a bit of space so look at the major steps as listed in Acts.)

11. How does the word “church” and its original Greek meaning underscore a number of major points Paul is making in this epistle?

12. What is to be proclaimed by the church?

To whom?

Why?

And how is it possible?

13. Looking at verse 12: What is now possible for Jew, Gentile, and each of us?  
(See Romans 5:8–10)

Do we appreciate and take advantage of this marvelous blessing as much as we could?  
What will help us all appreciate more fully the wonderful blessing this is for the church  
(remember the meaning of church!) and for us as individuals?

14. What does verse 13 mean?

**vv 14–19** Paul again prays in earnest for the church at Ephesus. This prayer could be referred to as a summary of grace which calls us to faith and grace which sustains and strengthens us. The New Testament church is now multiple peoples and languages united in one family, God's family. "*Out of his glorious riches . . .*" may also be translated "*according to the riches of his glory.*" From that source Paul is praying that each member may be strengthened with power through the Spirit, indwelt by Christ himself, rooted in love, established or founded on love, with power to grasp the *width, length, height, and depth of the love of Christ*. This is a tall order! Paul concludes this prayer with a request for knowledge, full knowledge. This is the word for knowing fully and intimately, the same sense as Adam "knowing" Eve and conceiving a son.

15. How does “*according the riches of his glory*” help us understand what this prayer is all about and what is to be going on?
16. The prayer is for strength and knowledge, by God’s grace. What’s the purpose of that strength and knowledge?

**vv 20–21** These couple of verses are actually a transition to the rest of the book. Paul clearly explains whose power is at work and the purpose of that power. He also makes it clear that the result is more than any mere mortal is able to do on his own. The prayer is closed with the phrase, “*to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.*” The rest of the letter is instruction to the church as to how the LORD will be glorified in the church and Christ Jesus.

17. Why is it so comforting to know who gives the power to do what the LORD made his church for?
18. How is this applicable in our own congregations?

#### FOR NEXT TIME

***Read and study Chapters 4–6. These chapters in the context of the end of Chapter 3 are most instructive on what is to be going on among God’s people to effectively glorify him.***

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ENACTED IN TIME (CHAPTER 2)

PREACHED TO THE GENTILES BY PAUL (CHAPTER 3)

**THE BLESSED EFFECTS OF GOD'S SAVING GRACE – A LIFE OF HOLINESS TO:  
SHOW ITSELF IN UNITY AMONG BELIEVERS (CHAPTER 4:1-16)**

**vv 1–3** Remembering that to “glorify” means to “make visible,” will help us understand the motivation to follow Paul’s exhortations which follow. As a group Christians are to make the LORD visible to those around us who don’t yet know him. It’s a tall order to say the least! Refer again to verse 20 of the preceding chapter.

1. How is it going to be possible for us to “glorify” the LORD as a church group?
2. How does Paul make his plea obviously associated with the grace emphasis of the first half of his letter?

Paul begins with listing four qualities which will glorify the LORD through his church. “*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*”

3. How are we “completely humble” as we deal with one another?

How is that humility visible to others outside the church?

4. How are we “gentle” with one another and how is this visible outside the church?

*“ . . . be patient, bearing with one another in love.”*

5. Explain what these two qualities mean and how they will make themselves visible in our lives.

*“ . . . be patient,”*

*“ . . . bearing with one another in love.”*

6. What’s our purpose, according to Paul, in being humble, gentle, patient, and bearing with one another in love?

7. And why would that be important?

**vv 4–6** These verses explain how it’s possible for us to maintain that unity and bond of peace. Prof. Panning explains, “(Paul) constructs three sets of three items each—one set for each person of the Trinity. He reverses the order from what we’re used to seeing. He places the persons into this sequence: Spirit, Son, and Father.”

8. List the 3 sets of 3 as Paul does and explain how they clearly indicate the activity of the Triune God on our behalf.

**vv. 7–10** The word grace is here used as a synonym for “Spiritual gifts.” Christ decides who does what and how they will be used within the service of his church. Paul then proves his point by quoting Psalm 68:18.

9. Read Psalm 68:18 and explain what the context was of the original hymn and why Paul used it here.

**vv 11–13** Prof. Panning writes, “An ‘apostle’ is someone sent out or commissioned. A ‘prophet’ was one . . . who brought God’s message to others... ‘evangelists’ are people who share the gospel.”

10. The office of apostle no longer exists today, since one of the qualifications for an apostle was that he be an eyewitness of the ministry of Christ. Yet in a certain respect Christians today have a similar function to perform that Christ's apostles did. What is that function?

How might Christians today function as prophets and evangelists?

11. How is that different from one who is a “pastor and teacher?” (According to both Prof. Panning and Prof. Habeck those two words belong together and are not describing separate callings.)

12. According to these verses, what is the purpose of these wonderful gifts?

**vv 14–16** Prof. Panning explains that not growing up spiritually can have serious consequences. For instance, “spiritually immature people are like unsophisticated buyers being ‘worked’ by a slick salesperson. Because they don’t know the product, they’re taken in ‘*by cunning and craftiness of men in the deceitful scheming.*” By virtue of their ignorance they don’t know what to believe and will be taken in by anything that sounds good. Paul then lets us know how to avoid such a sad state for us as individuals and as congregations.

This section is then closed with a wonderful description of the purpose of Christ as the “head” of the church.”

13. How do we determine if we’re in danger of being one of the “infants” being blown about and tossed about?

When can we be contented that we are “adults” and no longer worry about being an infant in spiritual matters?

14. Verse 15 is a good explanation of why Christians gather together in congregations. Why is that, according to this verse?

15. Read John 14:5–7. How will we grow up spiritually?

To whom will we speak and how?

How does this apply in our everyday lives and congregations?

16. Verse 16 is a very good Scriptural definition of what Christ as “head” is and does. How would you word it so it would make sense to another Christian?

Remember this definition as it will help us understand Chapter 5:25–33 much better.

*Holiness is to show itself in living a pure life.* There are major changes that are worked within us by the Holy Spirit who calls us. These changes can't help but be visible in our daily lives. Paul in Chapters 4:17–5:20 shows us where the bar is now set. He also makes it very clear how this drastic change is possible. Remember this is in the section of his letter in which he's explaining how Christians, through the church, glorify God and Jesus Christ.



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ENACTED IN TIME (CHAPTER 2)

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**THE BLESSED EFFECTS OF GOD'S SAVING GRACE – A LIFE OF HOLINESS TO:**

SHOW ITSELF IN UNITY AMONG BELIEVERS (CHAPTER 4:1-16)

**SHOW ITSELF IN LIVING A PURE LIFE (CHAPTER 4:17-5:20)**

In this entire section Paul is writing that the grace which has been showered on the called is to be visible in our lives and congregations. The fruit of the Spirit shows! James goes so far as to write to the congregation in Jerusalem, *“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead”* (James 2:14–17). Paul is communicating the same thought to the Ephesians and to us. Grace, when understood through the work of the Holy Spirit will show. In this section Paul addresses the very way we, as individuals conduct our lives which are visible in the everyday world.

**vv 17–19**     *“So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, . . .”* Paul makes it very clear that this change in life is very important. Note the words, *“insist on it in the Lord,”* and *“you must no longer . . .”* He also explains where the source of the problem is and what the result will be if one continues to *“live as the Gentiles do . . .”*

1. Why do the Gentiles have a problem?
  
2. What does that mean for us:  
as individuals?  
  
as we reach out to others?
  
3. To what can this lead and what does it mean?
  
4. What danger is there for Christians in today's society? Think of examples where we see clearly, *"indulg(ing) in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more."*

How do Christians either follow the crowd or glorify God in this setting?

**vv 20–24** Prof. Panning writes, "We'll catch the point of these five verses if we reduce them to the main line of thought: *'You were taught . . . to put off your old self . . . and to put on the new self.'*" Paul tells us we don't come to know Christ by living like the pagans do. We came to know him through God's grace and the work of the Holy Spirit. Now we are to, *"keep in step with the Spirit . . ."* as he writes to the Galatians.

5. What is the old self we are to *"put off?"* Apply this to today's world and the area in which you live.

What's the deceit all about and who's behind it?

6. What does it mean to be made *“new in the attitude of your minds?”*
  
7. How does verse 24 explain what the image of God is?

**vv 25–5:20** This entire section is contrasting the “old man” which is to be put off with the “new man” which is to “daily arise and live before God in righteousness and purity . . .” As Paul puts it in his letter to the Romans in Chapter 6, *“Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.”*

Prof. Habecq heads this section with the summary, “Specific admonitions in contrasts.” He then further divides the verses as follows:

1. Not lying, but truth 4:25
2. Not ruthlessness, but kindness 4:26–5:2
3. Not filth, but light 5:3–14
4. Not folly, but wisdom 5:15–17
5. Not drunkenness, but spiritual exhilaration 5:18–20.

Now let's go back and look at each section individually.

**v4:25** Not lying, but truth

8. Why is lying or falsehood such a big deal that it should head the list?

How would this apply in our lives?

**vv4:26–5:2** Not ruthlessness, but kindness

9. What does Paul list that Prof. Habeck refers to as “ruthlessness” and what does each mean?

a.

b.

c.

d.

- 
10. What is the “kind” contrast that comes from the “new man” and what does each mean in our lives?
- a.
  
  
  
  - b.
  
  
  
  - c.
  
  
  
  - d.

**vv5:3–14** Not filth, but light

11. What does Paul list that Prof. Habeck refers to as, “filth” and what does each mean?
- a.
  
  
  
  - b.
  
  
  
  - c.

12. How does the new man, with his life show that he's in the "light" in contrast?

a.

b.

c.

13. How does the new man decide which is "light" or "dark?" (5:7–14)

**vv5:15–17** Not folly, but wisdom

14. What defines folly or "unwise" versus wisdom?

15. How do we "*make the most of every opportunity?*"

16. Why do we want to do so?

**vv5:18-21** (Translation by Prof. Irwin Habeck, *Ephesians*, NPH, 1985, p. 109, 112):

**“And do not get drunk on wine in which there is profligacy, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming in your heart to the LORD, thanking God and the Father always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, subjecting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.”**

17. What does the word “profligacy” mean?

What’s the underlying problem with drunkenness? Why does a person get drunk?

18. What are other ways to get “drunk” in today’s society?

19. Where is the new man to find joy, exhilaration, and happiness?

20. How is that going to happen in my life?

21. How can we be “. . . **speaking to (ourselves) with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming in our heart to the LORD?**”(It’s interesting to note that each of these verbs is a “present progressive” (I think) in that in the original it’s a continuous process. Prof. Panning writes it would be more accurately translated, “speaking, singing, making music,” and in verse 21, “submitting.”

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**SHOW ITSELF IN ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITIES (CHAPTER 5:21-6:9)**

*This familiar and often quoted section of Ephesians helps us understand what the responsibilities of the new man would be as well as how on earth it's possible for us to fulfill them.*

Beginning with chapter 4:17, Paul began his exhortation to live as sanctified children of light rather than children of darkness. Chapter 5:15 is shifting the focus entirely to what the Holy Spirit can work in us in spite of the "evil" days in which we live. Paul further injects the thought of making use of "opportunity." Colossians written at the same time and being carried by Tychicus is similar in content to Ephesians. Colossians 4:5–6 helps us understand what Paul is leading into here. Look it up and indicate how that is so.

Paul now goes on to instruct the Ephesians and us as to the result of thanking God. We'll want to glorify God with our lives. Paul here is continuing his emphasis on God's grace through the church which is communicated via our individual lives. Much of making God visible to the unbelieving world around us involves how we treat one another.



1. Read Acts 2:42–47. How does Luke describe how the Lord used the behavior of Christians toward one another in the growth of the early Christian church?
2. Paul begins by instructing his readers to “**Submit yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.**” Paul knew his audience well. He knew he was speaking to a group very familiar with the Roman military. Ephesus was a city in the Roman Empire “ranking with Rome, Corinth, Antioch, and Alexandria among the foremost urban centers of the empire,” (Concordia Study Bible, page 1801). As a harbor the Roman Empire made sure it was well protected by its renowned military. Paul therefore uses a word translated as “submit” which is a military term used to describe the troops lining up for battle.
3. For each of the following sections discuss how the army of God will benefit from Christian families, employers, employees, and congregations who order themselves according to Paul’s and the Lord’s instructions:

*Ephesians 5:22–24* as a wife

*Ephesians 5:25–33* as the husband

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***Ephesians 6:1–3*** as a child

***Ephesians 6:4*** as a parent but note the father is the one held responsible

***Ephesians 6:5–8*** as an employee

***Ephesians 6:9*** as the employer or the “supervisor”

# Ephesians

## God's Eternal Plan of Salvation

A PLAN DEVISED BY THE TRIUNE GOD FROM ETERNITY (CHAPTER 1)

ENACTED IN TIME (CHAPTER 2)

PREACHED TO THE GENTILES BY PAUL (CHAPTER 3)

**THE BLESSED EFFECTS OF GOD'S SAVING GRACE – A LIFE OF HOLINESS TO:**

SHOW ITSELF IN UNITY AMONG BELIEVERS (CHAPTER 4:1-16)

SHOW ITSELF IN LIVING A PURE LIFE (CHAPTER 4:17-5:20)

SHOW ITSELF IN ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITIES (CHAPTER 5:21-6:9)

**GOD'S SAVING GRACE WILL GIVE US COURAGE TO CONTEND AGAINST EVIL—  
WEARING GOD'S ARMOR (CHAPTER 6:10-20)**

**6:10–13** *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this dark world, against the spiritual forces of the evil in the heavenly realms. For this reason 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.”*

1. Where is the strength of the Christian army?
2. What will make it possible for us to stand against the devil's schemes?  
Prof Habec uses the word “panoply” rather than “full armor” to describe the covering we Christians are to use. The dictionary uses phrases like “entire equipment” and

“magnificent covering” to define the word panoply. Keep in mind this panoply has been prepared by the Lord for us. How does all of this add to our understanding of this verse?

3. Give some examples of devil’s schemes that we need armor against.
4. What’s significant about the phrase, “**when** the day of evil comes?”
5. What’s so important about standing that it’s mentioned a couple of times?

**6:14–17** *“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all of this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**”*

Prof Panning writes that these five defensive pieces of armor and one offensive piece of armor are listed in the order the Roman soldier would put them on. He also relates that the “belt” was large enough to cover the midsection and thighs, the breastplate covered the upper body, the fitted feet meant the boots, the helmet protected head, and the round shield was used to ward off sword, spear thrusts as well as to deflect flying missiles, like arrows or javelins.

6. List each of the 5 pieces of defensive armor that God covers us with and explain why they're so valuable in our fight against the devil's schemes.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.

**vv6:18–20**    *“And **pray in the Spirit on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly as I should.**”*

7. What's the difference between offensive and defensive weapons?

What would that tell us about prayer?

8. We often hear about the “power of prayer”. Passages such as, *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed”* and *“The prayer*

*of a righteous man is powerful and effective,”* (James 5:16) point us to a power involved with prayer. What’s the power source of prayer according to Ephesians 6:10-20?

9. How would you “*pray in the Spirit?*”
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. List other passages from Scripture where we find encouragement for prayer. (Don’t miss the obvious ones.)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. Now go back to Ephesians 6:18–20 together with the passages listed above and explain how they are offensive in nature.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. Martin Luther wrote a book for his friend who was in prison which was titled, “A Simple Way to Pray.” He lists 4 questions to help us structure our dedicated prayer time. They could be helpful for the “pray without ceasing,” we are privileged to engage in too. After spending time reading a portion of God’s Word Luther encourages his friend to structure his prayers around:
  - a. What is this section of God’s Word saying to me personally?

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- b. For what does this lead me to give thanks?
  
  - c. What sins does this section of God's Word lead me to confess, knowing that my heavenly Father already knows them?
  
  - d. For what does this section of Scripture lead me to ask of my God and LORD?

Apply this "simple way to pray" to Ephesians 6:10–20.

Now apply this "simple way to pray" to your "pray without ceasing" prayer life.

# Ephesians

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### **FINAL GREETINGS (CHAPTER 6:21-24)**

Paul concludes his letter to the congregation at Ephesus as many of us conclude letters and correspondence. He refers to a mutual friend and then concludes with prayer for God's richest blessings for his friends in Ephesus.

1. Tychicus is mentioned in 3 other letters written by Paul and by Luke in Acts. Find these other references and list what we know about Tychicus from them.

Why would this information about Tychicus be so important that he's referred to 5 times in God's inspired Word for the ages?



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Is there application for our lives?

2. List everything Paul is praying for the Ephesian congregation in verses 23–24 and indicate how it applies to our lives as part of the body of Christ in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.