

EQUIPPING
the **CHURCH**
to **STAND**
FIRM

The Book of Ephesians



a Janet Denison
Bible Study

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Lesson I

God's Holy People

Ephesians I

The book of Ephesians was written while Paul was under house arrest in Rome. The prison epistle is a concise but complete summary of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the impact of salvation upon the lives of believers. Ephesians was John Calvin's favorite letter of Paul's. Many theologians have commented that it was Paul's greatest writing. The book speaks of the greatness of God and the power of God's Holy Spirit to change a person's life. Paul began his letter by writing about the blessings of God, available for God's holy people.

Read Ephesians I

1. Glance over Acts 19 and 20. Paul spent over two years in Ephesus and revisited the city on his way to Jerusalem. Describe the ministry Paul had in Ephesus and his relationship with the people of that congregation.
2. Who were the recipients of this letter and how are they described? (Eph. 1:1-2)
3. Who is the source of every spiritual blessing, and who receives those blessings? (1:3)
4. What has God chosen us to become? (1:4) How is that accomplished? (1:5-6)
5. List the spiritual blessings for God's holy people? (1:7-10)
6. Read Romans 1:16. Who were the first to put their hope in Christ and who was included? (1:11-13a)
7. How does a person come to salvation in Christ? What is a person's confirmation that they have been saved? (1:13b)
8. What is the guaranteed promise for those who are saved? (1:14)
9. Paul, under house arrest in Rome, wrote a letter to a church he loved. Paul began this letter with a message of praise. How would you explain his joy at this point of his life?
10. Why was Paul grateful for the church in Ephesus and how did he show his gratitude? (1:15-16)
11. What were Paul's prayer requests for the church in Ephesus? (1:17-19a)
12. How should we apply his words to the church today?
13. How did Paul describe the power of the Holy Spirit? (1:19b-21)
14. The Holy Spirit is the person and power of the continued earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. Who is the continued earthly "body" of Christ? (1:22-23)

Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

Lesson 2

The Transforming Power of Salvation

Ephesians 2

Paul stood in the crowd, surrounded by the cloaks of others while Stephen testified that Jesus Christ was the long-awaited Messiah. Paul, refusing to believe, was a radical persecutor of the early Christian church. Many had been imprisoned and murdered because of Paul's violent leadership. Paul met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus and his life was radically changed by that encounter. Paul wrote about the transforming power of God's salvation in the second chapter of Ephesians.

Read Ephesians 2

1. Describe the life of an unsaved person. (2:1-2)
2. Dead in transgressions and sins; following the ways of the world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit at work in the disobedient.
3. How did Paul describe the "natural self." (2:3)
4. Why and how is salvation possible? (2:4-5)
5. What are the heavenly and earthly purposes for our salvation? (2:6-7)
6. How do we fulfill that spiritual purpose? (2:8-10)
7. Look again at verse 10. What are "good works?"
8. Those things that God has prepared for us to do – and therefore equipped us to do through his Holy Spirit.
9. What did Paul encourage the Ephesians to remember and understand? (2:11-13)
10. Read Matthew 5:17-20. What was the purpose of Christ's earthly life? (2:14-18)
11. Reread verse 18. What did salvation provide every believer?
12. What assurance did Paul want to give the Gentile, Ephesian church? (2:19-20)
13. For what purpose did God unify all people in Christ? (2:21)
14. How did Paul want the Christians to view their earthly bodies and the purpose for their earthly lives? (2:22)

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Lesson 3

God's Plan and Paul's Prayer for the Church

Ephesians 3

Paul's last moments with the Ephesian church were spent praying to God and grieving because they knew they would probably not see one other again (Acts 20). Ephesians 3 is a glimpse into Paul's compassion for and calling to the Gentile people. God insisted that Ananias visit Paul in Damascus saying, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." (Acts 9:15-16) Paul, now imprisoned in Rome, wanted the Ephesians to understand his joy and his ability to praise God for his blessings.

Read Ephesians 3

1. How did Paul view his imprisonment and his call to preach the gospel to the Gentiles? (3:1-3)
2. How did Paul understand God's love for the Gentiles when so many of his fellow Jews did not? (3:4-5)
3. What was the "mystery" that Paul was called to preach? (3:6)
4. Who are the "Gentiles" of the world today, and how might they be reached? (3:7)
5. How was Paul, a former Pharisee, uniquely equipped and usable, by God's Holy Spirit, to preach to the Gentiles? (3:8-9)
6. What was God's intention for the Church? (3:10-11)
7. What is the great blessing of our salvation through faith? (3:12)
8. Explain the "therefore" of verse 3:13.
9. What does Paul teach us about prayer? (3:14-15)
10. List Paul's prayer requests for the believers? (3:16-19)
11. Why was Paul confident that his prayers would be answered? (3:20-21)

Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

—Psalm 103:1-2

Lesson 4

New Standards for God's Holy People.

Ephesians 4-5:20

God had established a Covenant with the people of Israel. Through Moses they received his Law, through Joshua they received a Promised Land, and through the prophets they received an opportunity to repent and restore their relationship with God. God's new covenant was for all people and God's Holy Spirit was the seal that guaranteed a new believer's adoption. Ephesians, chapter four, is Paul's vision for the family of God and the new standards for living as his chosen people.

Read Ephesians 4 – 5:20

1. Paul used the word “urge” in Ephesians 4:1. The word in the original language meant “to beg.” What is Paul begging the church in Ephesus to do?
2. How did Paul define a “worthy life?” (4:2-3)
3. How is unity in the church possible? Why is unity with non-Christian religions impossible? (4:4-6)
4. Read Jesus' words in John 16:1-15. What happened after Christ ascended to the Father? (4:7-8)
5. How did Paul define the Holy Spirit? (4:9-10)
6. What was the standard, the proper measure, for all Christian service? (4:11-12a)
7. Why was it essential that the Church maintain that standard? (4:12b-13)
8. What would be the consequence to the Church if the standard was not maintained? (4:14)
9. How did Paul describe a mature faith and a mature church? (4:15-16)
10. How did Paul describe life apart from God's Holy Spirit? (4:17-19)
11. How does a person choose godliness? (4:20-24)
12. How did Paul define the standards of “holiness?”(4:25-32)
13. Why did God send Jesus to live an earthly life? (5:1-2)
14. What were and are God's standards for living as a follower of Christ? (5:3-7)
15. How did Paul describe living as “the light of the world?” (5:8-14)
16. How must we live “carefully” as believers in Christ? (5:15-20)

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Lesson 5

God's Standards For the Family and the Culture

Ephesians 5:21 – 6:24

Paul has beautifully described God's standards for holiness. He reminded the Ephesians that Christ was given to be their example and the Holy Spirit their strength. The word "holy" means "set apart." Christians were supposed to look different and live with higher standards than others in their culture. The early church experienced enormous growth because of their choices. Paul ends his epistle by providing a blueprint for living within God's standards. Our lives are the most important sermons we preach.

Read Ephesians 5:21-6:24

1. Read Philippians 2:3-4. What is biblical submission and why is it important? (Ephesians 5:21)
2. What is the standard for wives? What is the standard for husbands? (5:22-33)
3. How do those standards illustrate Christ's relationship with the church?
4. What is the promise for children who choose to honor their parents? (6:1-3)
5. How did Paul warn fathers? (6:4)
6. How should Christians act in the workplace? (6:5-9)
7. What is the only way possible for Christians to live with God's standards? (6:10)
8. Why is it difficult for Christians to live within God's standards? (6:11-12)
9. What types of protection are necessary for Christian living in an ungodly culture? (6:13-17)
10. Putting on the full armor of God is a daily choice. What will help us make that choice? (6:18-20)
11. Who was Tychicus and why was Paul going to send him to Ephesus? (6:21-22)
12. What did Paul desire for the people of Ephesus? Practically, how can we make that our motivation as well? (6:23-24)

He wants them to have peace and love because of their faith – and because of the undying love of Christ.

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.