

RED *DOORS*



UNDERSTANDING EPHESIANS

———— STUDY GUIDE ————

UNDERSTANDING EPHESIANS: PART ONE

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS AND WISDOM

READ EPHESIANS 1: 1-23

The book of Ephesians is a powerful book which offers valuable instruction in the truths of God's redemptive work in Christ, the nature and purpose of the Church, and proper conduct in the Church, the home, and the world.

BACKGROUND TO THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

The book of Ephesians is what we would call an epistle. Out of the 27 books of the New Testament, 21 of them can be categorized as an epistle. The word 'epistle' comes from the Greek word *epistolé*, which means 'letter,' 'message,' or 'dispatch.' While letters usually can be about any topic and might be informal, epistles are instructional in nature. In essence, it's a letter that carries weight, is valued, and honoured.

The Book of Ephesians is part of a collection of letters from the apostle Paul, known as the 'Prison Epistles.' As the name suggests, they were written between the years 60-62 AD, while Paul was under house arrest in Rome. The intended audience of the letter is the Church in the city of Ephesus, in modern day Turkey. The church at Ephesus was primarily founded by the apostle Paul while on his second and third missionary journeys.

While many of the other epistles in the New Testament seem to be addressing a particular theological or moral issue, the book of Ephesians is more of an encouragement to the church to mature in their faith, laying out great themes and doctrines of Christianity. The epistle can be divided into 2 main sections: the first half of the letter deals with laying out theological truths, and the latter half deals with how these truths should be put into practice.

DIVISIONS OF EPHESIANS CHAPTER 1

This first chapter can be divided into three main sections:

1. Verses 1-2: Introduction and Greetings
2. Verses 3-14: Spiritual Blessings in Christ
3. Verses 15-23: Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom and Understanding

1. SECTION 1(V.1-2): INTRODUCTION AND GREETINGS

Paul opens his letter extending the desire that “*God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace*”(v.2). Everyone in this world desires peace, but to experience true peace, a peace that surpasses all human understanding (Phil 4:7), it can only be experienced once you've received God's grace.

2. SECTION 2 (V.3-14): SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

In these verses, Paul makes it a point to state that we have access to **ALL** spiritual blessings. Through Jesus, God has blessed us with everything we need for living a godly life (2 Pet 1:3). In verses 3 to 14, while Paul lists all the wonderful blessings we have, it's interesting to note that all three Persons of the Godhead are involved: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1 is a great example of how all three Persons of the Godhead are not separate and disconnected, but they are One, working together.

THE WORK OF THE FATHER

In verses 3-6, we see that it is the Father “*Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ*” (v.3). Paul says that even before He made the world, it was the Father's good pleasure to choose us and adopt us into His family because He loved us (v.4-5). At the time Paul was writing this epistle, Roman law stated that when adoption was complete, the person who had been adopted had all the rights of a legitimate

son in their new family and completely lost all rights in their old family. In the eyes of the law, they were a new person. They were so new that all debts and obligations connected to their previous family were erased, as if they had never existed. When we come to Christ, we are now children of God Most High; a new creation!

THE WORK OF THE SON

In verses 7 and 8, the work of Jesus, the Son, is highlighted. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, He has redeemed us through His blood, and we now can have forgiveness of sin. The word redemption implies purchase, a ransom being paid so that we can be made free. Because of Jesus, the debt we owed because of our sin has been paid in full. We have been set free from the penalty and power of sin, and purchased by God!

GOD'S WILL REVEALED

In verses 9 through 12, we see that the mystery of God's will, which was once hidden, has now been revealed through Jesus. God's intention is never for you to be in the dark about anything. God desires for you to know His will, His plans, and His heart.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

In verses 13 to 14, the Holy Spirit's role in the life of the believer is revealed. He is to be a seal, marking the believer. His presence in our lives acts as a seal of ownership and a guarantee of our inheritance. This inheritance Paul is speaking about is our coming glory in eternity.

SECTION 3 (V. 15-23) – PAUL'S PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING

From verses 15 to 23, Paul prays for the Ephesian church, but this prayer and the truths found in it are applicable to all believers! The primary desire found in this prayer is for believers to know and understand their identity and authority in Christ.

There's **two main points** we can pull out from this prayer:

1. THE CHRISTIAN WALK IS ONE OF CONTINUOUS GROWTH.

Paul prays in verse 17 that he is, *“asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.”* Our walk as children of God should never be one of stagnancy, unawareness, or immaturity. We are to grow in the knowledge of God through His Word. We are to know Him more and more, being transformed everyday into His image. Knowledge and wisdom are vital in our walk. You will never experience what you have no knowledge of. What you experience of God is dependent on how much you know and pursue Him.

2. THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF THE BELIEVER.

Paul clearly explains that believers are not weak, pathetic, and vulnerable to the power of the enemy. Paul says in verses 19 and 20 that all believers carry within them the same power that raised Christ from the dead. He explains that Jesus Christ is seated at the place of honour at God's right hand and because of that, He has been give all power and authority over every ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come (v.21). While Christ has all power and authority, He is not a hoarder! He has given His Church His authority and power; we carry and have it at our disposable for our benefit!

Kenneth Hagin defines authority as ‘delegated power.’ This means that the power Jesus has, He has entrusted and given to us. Not just a select few in His Church, it's not just reserved for those in full time ministry, but it has been given and deposited in all believers!

Jesus is the Head of the Church, the leader, the One who gives the instruction; but the Church are the ones who are to carry it out on the earth today. We are the hands, feet, ears, and mouth of Jesus on this earth. And if we are to accomplish His will, plans, and purposes

in this world, we need His authority and power to do it. Whatever God asks of us, He empowers and equips us to do it!

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What makes an epistle different from any other type of letter?
2. How are all three Persons of the Godhead involved in the life of the believer?
3. What's the significance of Paul's use of adoption in verse 5?
4. Why does God reveal His will to us?
5. Why would Jesus entrust His Church with His power and authority?

INSIGHTS

- Even before He made the world, it was the Father's good pleasure to choose and adopt us into His family because He loved us.
- Jesus has redeemed us through His blood; the word redemption implies purchase, a ransom being paid so that we can be made free.
- The work of the Holy Spirit is a sealing work; His presence in our lives acts as a seal which indicates ownership, and is a guarantee of our inheritance.
- The Christian walk is one of continuous growth.
- Jesus has given His Church His authority and power; we carry and have it at our disposal for our benefit!
- The Church's mission is to accomplish the will, plans, and purposes of God in this world.

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UNDERSTANDING EPHESIANS: PART TWO

MADE ALIVE WITH CHRIST

READ EPHESIANS 2:1-22

WE HAVE BEEN MADE ALIVE WITH CHRIST.

A. SIN LEADS TO DEATH

Before coming to Jesus, all people live under the power of sin. Even if they do not realize it, they are following the devil and are a slave to sin. The Bible tells us that sin, when it is finished, brings death.

ROMANS 3:23 *“All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”*

ROMANS 5:12 *“Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, so also death was passed on to all men.”*

JAMES 1:14-15 *“Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.”*

B. JESUS BRINGS NEW LIFE

One of the most important things to understand is that when a person comes to Christ, they go from being dead to being alive! They don't become a better version of themselves, but a totally new creation.

2 CORINTHIANS 2:17 *“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”*

C. BAPTISM

God isn't interested in your death, He is interested in your life! Water baptism is a symbol of our burial and resurrection. We do this in obedience to Christ and as a public display of our unification with Him.

COLOSSIANS 2:12 *"For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with Him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, Who raised Christ from the dead."*

WE HAVE BEEN SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH.

A. MERCY & GRACE

Mercy is God's display of compassion on us when we should have instead received punishment for our sin. He didn't only show mercy but He then poured out His great grace. Jesus, the beloved only Son of God, took the punishment that should have belonged to us, so that we could be made right with God. This grace is the kindness and favour of God.

B. FAITH UNTO SALVATION

Faith alone is all that is required to receive salvation. We received this gift because of our belief in Christ. We did nothing to earn it or deserve it.

WE HAVE BEEN UNITED WITH CHRIST.

God did not want us to be separated from Him so He provided a solution in His only Son. Jesus died as an offering for our sin and in a great display of power, He rose again from the grave. We now

who have believed have been spiritually raised to new life with Him, seated in heavenly places!

Our unity with Christ speaks of our identity, our purpose, our relationship, and our authority.

1 PETER 2: 9-10 *“You are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light. Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God’s people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God’s mercy.”*

A. IDENTITY

We have been joined to Jesus, and now have received a new identity. We have been loved and chosen by God. We are His creation and He calls us His masterpiece! Now, He has made us members of His royal family, who are citizens of Heaven.

B. PURPOSE

Ephesians 2 says that God has planned good things for us long ago! We work with God in continuing the work of Jesus, calling people out of darkness and breaking the power of sin over their lives. We are to display the glory of God.

C. RELATIONSHIP

Being joined with Jesus speaks of intimacy. Christ, by His Spirit, now lives in us. God is not far off, but He is involved in every aspect of our lives.

COLOSSIANS 3:3 *“For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.”*

D. AUTHORITY

Just as Christ was given power and authority over the devil and every demonic thing, so we as believers can exercise this authority knowing the enemy is under our feet.

COLOSSIANS 2:9-10 *“For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, Who is the Head over every ruler and authority.”*

WE HAVE BEEN RECONCILED IN PEACE

A. PEACE WITH OTHERS

There is no more dividing line! God made His work available to anyone who would believe. Every person can now access all that God has to offer. Because of the work of Christ, we now can be unified with others.

B. PEACE WITH GOD

Because of Jesus’ sacrifice, the wrath of God against sin was satisfied. We can now have a relationship with God and the assurance that we will spend eternity with Him in Heaven.

WE ARE BECOMING A HOLY TEMPLE FOR THE LORD

THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Church is the Body of Christ. God has chosen to dwell in us and display His power through us. What a great privilege we have!

I CORINTHIANS 3:16 *“Don’t you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you?”*

I PETER 2: 4-5 *“You are coming to Christ, Who is the living cornerstone of God’s temple. He was rejected by people, but He was chosen by God for great honor. And you are living stones that God is building into His spiritual temple. What’s more, you are His holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.”*

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why must each person be saved?
2. What must you do to be saved?
3. What is the difference between mercy and grace?
4. What does it mean to be united with Christ?
5. What do we do to display our unity with Christ?

INSIGHTS

- The love of God is so great, that He made a way for us to be free from the power and the consequences of sin.
- Salvation is a gift of God that is free to everyone who would repent and believe.
- Our unity with Christ gives our lives a whole new meaning.

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UNDERSTANDING EPHESIANS: PART THREE

GOD'S MYSTERIOUS PLAN REVEALED

READ EPHESIANS 3: 1-21

God's plan was once a mystery but has now been revealed through Christ. In Ephesians 3, Paul explains how we, as believers, are part of this divine purpose.

1. GOD'S MYSTERY IS NOW REVEALED

KEY VERSE: EPHESIANS 3:3 – *“As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me.”*

- The Lord's plan was a mystery but is now fully revealed in Christ.
- God does not work in mysterious ways—His will is clearly revealed in His Word.
- **OLD TESTAMENT:** Christ concealed—we see glimpses of Him.
- **NEW TESTAMENT:** Christ revealed—His purpose, His plan, and His mission for us.

2. WE MUST SEEK OUT HIS PLAN

KEY VERSE: EPHESIANS 3:4 – *“As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ.”*

- God's plan is revealed in His Word.
- If His plan seems unclear to you, it's because you haven't sought Him in His Word.
- **PSALM 119:105** – *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”*
- Faithfulness to His revealed will lead to discovering His specific will for your life.

3. GOD'S PLAN IS FOR US TO BE BLESSED

KEY VERSES: EPHESIANS 3:6-7 – *“And this is God’s plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God’s children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus. By God’s grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving Him by spreading this Good News.”*

- God’s plan includes **both Jews and Gentiles** sharing in the riches of the Gospel.
- The Gospel is Good News—a message of blessing and abundance.
- **Romans 2:4** – *“It is the goodness of God that leads people to repentance.”*
- God wants us to experience His goodness and provision.

4. HIS PLAN IS FOR US TO REFLECT HIS GLORY

KEY VERSES: EPHESIANS 3:8,10 – *“Though I am the least deserving of all God’s people, He graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. God’s purpose in all this was to use the church to display His wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”*

- In Christ, we have endless treasures.
- God’s purpose is for us to display His wisdom and glory on the earth.
- The Bible is filled with promises—it’s our duty to find them and apply them.
- **PROVERBS 25:2** – *“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.”*
- When we live in His promises, we become a blessing to the world and reflect His glory.

FINAL THOUGHTS

God's plan is not hidden—it's revealed through Christ and His Word. Seek it, believe it, and walk in the riches of His blessing. When you understand His plan, you'll step into your divine purpose and display His glory to the world!

QUESTIONS

1. According to Ephesians 3:3-5, God's plan was once a mystery but is now revealed. How does this shift from mystery to revelation change the way we understand God's will?
2. In Ephesians 3:4, Paul emphasizes reading what is written to understand God's plan. How can you be more intentional in seeking out God's will through His Word in your daily life?
3. Ephesians 3:6-7 describes the Gospel as a message of blessing for both Jews and Gentiles. In what ways have you experienced the riches of God's blessings through the Gospel?
4. Ephesians 3:10 says that God's purpose is for us to display His wisdom to the world. What are some ways you can reflect God's glory in your everyday life so that others see His goodness in you?

INSIGHTS

- Through Christ, both Jew and Gentile are included in the redemption plan of God.
- We see glimpses of Christ in the Old Testament as types and shadows, but He is fully revealed in the New Testament.
- Part of God's plan is that once we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, we partake in the wonderful promises and blessings of God.

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UNDERSTANDING EPHESIANS: PART FOUR

LIVE A LIFE WORTHY OF YOUR CALLING

READ EPHESIANS 4:1-16

Many believers understand that there is a calling on their lives. And although there may be questions regarding what that calling entails, it is important that we understand and accept the challenge from the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:1.

EPHESIANS 4:1 *“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”*

The word ‘calling’ in this verse is directly referring to “the divine invitation to embrace salvation in the kingdom of God.” When you and I accepted Christ and repented of our sin, we accepted God’s invitation [or God’s calling on our lives] to be saved. In Paul’s challenge to the Church, we see five ways we can live a life that is worthy of our calling. When Paul uses the term ‘worthy,’ it means suitable or appropriate. So in essence, Paul explains five appropriate or suitable responses to a person being saved.

1. WALK IN GRACE TOWARDS OTHERS (V.2)

When we were saved, we received grace from God. If we know what it means to be a recipient of that grace, then we should be walking in a Christ-like manner, expressing grace, to the people around us.

EPHESIANS 4:2 *“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”*

BE HUMBLE: C.S. Lewis once said, “Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.” Self-deprecation is not humility.

There is a confidence we can carry as believers in Christ. True humility is seen in how we prefer to serve and promote others ahead of ourselves.

- **BE GENTLE:** this word, which is also defined as meekness, carries the idea of an individual who keeps their composure and is gentle in disposition.
- **HAVE PATIENCE:** patience is not just enduring hardship well. It more specifically describes a person who is intentionally slow in avenging wrongs.

SHOW LOVE: we are instructed not just to love people, but to be forbearing in love. The word ‘forbear’ means that we bear with others or endure in our relationships because of love.

2. WALK IN UNITY WITH OTHERS (VS. 3-6)

Not only are we to walk in virtues of grace, but we should also respond to God’s calling by walking in unity with one another.

EPHESIANS 4:3-6 *“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all.”*

MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO STAY UNIFIED (V. 3): we often agree that unity is important in the Church but where we go wrong is we often fail to “make every effort” to stay in unity.

STAY FOCUSED ON WHAT UNITES US (VS. 4-6): Paul demonstrates a principle that many of us overlook. He chooses to focus on what unites us instead of complaining about or giving attention to the things that will cause division.

3. WALK IN THE GIFTS YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN (VS. 7-10)

To walk in a manner that is worthy of your calling also means to respond by faithfully stewarding and using the gifts that God has given you to bless others.

EPHESIANS 4:7-10 *“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: ‘When He ascended on high, He took many captives and gave gifts to His people.’ (What does “He ascended” mean except that He also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very One who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)”*

WE ALL HAVE BEEN GIVEN GIFTS FROM CHRIST JESUS (V. 7):

No matter what part of the Body you are, the Apostle Paul is clear, in Ephesians, that Christ Jesus Himself has provided you with certain giftings. We see this not only in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians but also in his letter to the Romans.

ROMANS 12:6-8 *“In His grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.”*

JESUS DESCENDED TO EARTH AND ASCENDED TO HEAVEN SO HE COULD GIVE GIFTS TO HIS PEOPLE (VS. 8-10):

In John 16:7, Jesus says, “But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send Him to you.” It was through Jesus’ descending that we received the gift of salvation through His death and resurrection.

But it is through His ascending into heaven that we receive and operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

4. RECEIVE FROM THE FIVE FOLD MINISTRY (VS. 11-13)

As Paul continues with the concept of gifts that are given to the Church, he discusses what many call “the five-fold ministry.” He understood that as people are being saved, these believers needed to be intentional in receiving from the five-fold ministry.

EPHESIANS 4:11-13 *“So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”*

THE PARTS OF THE FIVE FOLD MINISTRY (VS. 11)

To better comprehend the offices within the five-fold ministry, it is helpful to look at how the Scripture defines these roles in the original Greek language.

THE APOSTLE: “A delegate or messenger; one who is sent forth with orders.”

THE PROPHET: “One who discerns and does what is best for the Christian cause, foretelling certain future events; one who is moved by the Holy Spirit to speak, having power to instruct, comfort, encourage, rebuke, convict, and stimulate the hearers.”

THE EVANGELIST: “A bringer of good news, those who herald the message of salvation through Christ.”

THE PASTOR: “A shepherd; an overseer of an assembly of believers.”

THE TEACHER: “Those who within the assemblies of believers that undertake the work of teaching, with the special assistance of the Holy Spirit.”

THE PURPOSE OF THE FIVE FOLD MINISTRY (V. 12)

The Apostle Paul clearly states two of the primary reasons for why Christ instituted the five-fold ministry.

REASON #1: to equip the Church for the work of the ministry.

REASON #2: to build up the Body of Christ.

THE PRODUCT OF THE FIVE FOLD MINISTRY (V. 13)

In verse 13, the Apostle Paul elaborates more on what the five-fold ministry produces as these offices equip and build up the Church.

THEY BRING:

UNITY IN THE FAITH: this refers to believers walking in agreement in our christian beliefs.

UNITY IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON: this again refers to believers walking in agreement, but instead focuses on correct doctrine or knowledge of things ethical and divine.

MATURITY: this literally means to be fully grown, to be ripe, and to be filled with the presence, power, agency, riches of God, and Christ.

There are some people who believe that certain offices within the five-fold ministry are no longer for today. But it is clear, when you read verse 13 and consider the original language, Paul is explaining that these offices will continue until EVERYONE reaches agreement in our Christian beliefs, our doctrine, and we are all fully grown and filled with the presence, power, agency and riches of God and Christ. This is clearly a task that will continue up to the day Jesus returns for the Church.

5. GROW IN MATURITY (VS. 14-16)

In connection with receiving from the five-fold ministry, the final appropriate response to accepting the call of Christ is to grow in maturity. We see what this looks like in verses 14-16.

EPHESIANS 4:14-16 *“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, 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. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*

As we conclude, Paul explains what maturity in Christ looks like.

Mature believers are **steadfast** in what they believe (v. 14).

Mature believers **speak the truth** in love (v. 15a).

Mature believers are **submitted** to Christ (v. 15b).

Mature believers are **dependent** on one another (v. 16).

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Out of the four virtues discussed out of Ephesians 4:2 (Humility, gentleness, patience, and love), which ones come more easily for you and which are more difficult for you to walk in? Why?
2. Do you feel like you “make every effort” to keep unity with your brothers and sisters in Christ? Why or why not?
3. Are you actively using the gifts that God has given you? If not, what have been some barriers that have kept you from using your gifts?

4. How have you been impacted personally by a person who operates in one of the different five-fold ministry offices (Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, Teacher)?
5. Referring back to Paul's explanation of maturity in Ephesians 4:14-16, are there any places where you personally feel you still need to mature (i.e. being steadfast in your beliefs, speaking the truth in love, submitting to Christ, or depending on other believers)?

INSIGHTS

- If we know what it means to be a recipient of God's grace, then we should be walking in a Christ-like manner, expressing humility, gentleness, patience, and love to the people around us.
- We should be making every effort we can to walk in unity with one another and choose to focus on what brings us together instead of complaining or focusing on what brings division.
- We must be faithfully stewarding and using the gifts that God has given us to bless others.
- As people are being saved, they need to be intentional in receiving from the five-fold ministry (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) in order to be equipped to serve and be built up in their faith.
- Mature believers prove their depth in the faith by being unwavering in what they believe, speaking the truth in love, submitting every area in their lives to Christ, and choosing to depend on their brothers and sisters in Christ.

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UNDERSTANDING EPHESIANS: PART FIVE

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

READ EPHESIANS 4:17-5:20

1. PAINTING A PICTURE

Paul begins this portion of the text by painting a picture for believers of the extent of the miracle that is our salvation.

EPHESIANS 4: 17-20 *“With the Lord’s authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against Him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity. But that isn’t what you learned about Christ.”*

Consider the language Paul is using to describe the way of the Gentiles, or, lost people. He describes their minds as full of darkness and closed, their hearts as hard, their position as lost and wandering. He goes on to say that they have no shame, living only for the lusts of their flesh, and excited to participate in impure things. This reality was once true of every single one of us, but then, just as Paul expressed - we learned about Christ. The significance of this statement points to the miracle an encounter with Jesus produces. It also highlights a strong truth, that anything that is characteristic of your old life opposes the truth of what you learned in Jesus Christ.

2. LIGHT LIVING

EPHESIANS 4: 21-22 *“Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from Him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception.”*

When we encounter the truth of Jesus Christ and what He has done for us, it should lead us to have a complete transformation; a head, heart, body, and soul transformation. In fact, the emphasis of Paul in these scriptures is that if you can still identify with any of the old realities of darkness, you aren't yet walking in the fullness of the light. Paul uses a unique example to instruct us how to do just that.

EPHESIANS 4:23 *“Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.”*

YOU MUST FIRST HAVE A CHANGE OF MINDSET.

In verse 22, Paul talks about learning the truth of Christ. The use of the word ‘learned’ is of importance as it highlights that there is a participation and action that is required of us to walk in the fullness of the light. We don't just wake up that way after coming to Jesus. We must learn, and actually, re-learn, and it begins with the way that we think. The Holy Spirit must renew our thoughts. Your old way of thinking has no room in your new self.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:5 *“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”*

EPHESIANS 5:26 *“To make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word.”*

You teach your mind to think and meditate on the Word of God, and you train your thoughts to be obedient to the knowledge of Christ Jesus.

YOU MUST THEN HAVE A CHANGE OF OUTFIT.

EPHESIANS 4:24 *“Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.”*

Once your thoughts are renewed, your outwards are next as Paul then addresses our attitudes. We have to get dressed! Again, Paul is intentionally using language that highlights the participation and partnership that is required by believers to see the fullness of the light of God shining in their lives. As children of God, we should be well dressed for every occasion. Just as certain outfits can be inappropriate, certain behaviours have no place in the children of the light.

3. HERE IS WHERE WE START

Don't let the devil discourage you by fixating on the daunting task. Paul is very intentional about how we can transform our new lives in Christ to shine their fullest.

EPHESIANS 4:25-30 *“So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, He has identified you as His own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.”*

In this passage, Paul highlights these specific sins: lying, stealing, anger and corrupt talk. There's no accident in this list. Each of these specific sins are actually the strategy used by the enemy to advance his agenda.

JOHN 10:10 *“The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.”*

Anything that brings death, destruction, or theft is demonic in nature. Lying steals from truth, and the truth exists to set you free. Anger brings destruction, and Christ came to make you whole and healed.

Theft takes what doesn't belong to it, Jesus gives freely what we don't deserve or could ever earn. Corrupt talk destroys and tears people down, Jesus came to restore and unite. The best place to start in living in the light is to make sure all of our purposes are aligned with the purpose and mission of Christ.

When we still look like and operate by our old carnal and sinful nature, it actually will lead to grieving the Holy Spirit (v.30) because His purpose alive on the inside of us is to make us look like Christ and to shine the bright light of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is a person. He is not a feeling, an emotion, or a response. As this passage presents, He can be grieved by the way that we live. The main source of His sorrow is when we look like the old man. If He can be grieved by the way that we live, then the opposite is also true. The Holy Spirit can be pleased with the way that we live; when we live in the full light of God.

4. LIVING TO PLEASE

EPHESIANS 4:31-32 *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”*

This scripture is a connected thought with its previous portion. It can be read as, since the Holy Spirit has identified us as one of His own, this is what we ought to do! We continue to see Paul using participation language as He exhorts the believers. We don't just have a responsibility to get rid of the old things, but to replace them with new and better practices. Tenderness, kindness and forgiveness are a testimony to lost people around us!

5. IMITATE & WORSHIP

EPHESIANS 5:1-2 *“Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are His dear children. Live a life filled with love,*

following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered Himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.”

Everything that we do should be as a reflection of the Father. Not only should we imitate Him, but we should do so in a way that worships Him, that pleases Him, and that acts as an offering and sacrifice unto Him.

EPHESIANS 5: 3-5 *“Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God’s people. Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world.”*

Since this imitation is a form of worship unto our heavenly Father, we should use both our bodies and our mouths to worship God. Our bodies represent what we do, and our mouths represent what we say.

In other words, everything that is on the outside, and everything that is on the inside should exist to worship the Lord.

LUKE 6:45 *“A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.”*

PROVERBS 18:21 *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.”*

We would do well not to treat Paul’s warning in verse five lightly. Both what is in the heart and what comes out of the mouth could disqualify someone from inheriting the kingdom of God if it doesn’t reflect and produce for it.

6. FOCUS ON ME

EPHESIANS 5:6-10 *“Don’t be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey Him. Don’t participate in the things these people do. For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. Carefully determine what pleases the Lord.”*

In understanding our humanity, Paul exhorts us not to be fooled, taken out, or influenced by the standard of others around us. The truth is still true even if no one professes it. The standard for right living has been set by the Word of God. That standard should always be maintained regardless of those around you.

7. UPPING THE ANTE

EPHESIANS 5:11-14 *“Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, ‘Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’”*

Paul presents a unique instruction that we must partner with in this portion of the text. Here is the first time where we aren’t just warned against taking part in the ways of darkness, but we are to actively work to expose them.

PROVERBS 4:18 *“The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, which shines ever brighter until the full light of day.”*

Wicked and disingenuous motives will always be exposed by the light of God’s Word. The Word is the way that evil is exposed.

PSALM 119:130 *“The teaching of Your word gives light, so even the simple can understand.”*

HEBREWS 4:12 *“For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*

By knowing the Word of God, committing to its instructions, and faithfully executing them in our daily light, the darkness around us will be exposed, and sleeping people will wake up to the shining light of the Gospel.

8. THE WHAT

EPHESIANS 5:15-17 *“So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.”*

Paul’s exhortation to live like the wise, and make the most of every opportunity are a reference to Jesus’ Great Commission in Mark 16:15, and refer to preaching the Gospel.

PROVERBS 11:30 *“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise.”*

Wise people prioritize living in light of eternity, win souls, and make the most of every opportunity. They know what God’s will is for the world, which is that none should perish but all should have eternal life (John 3:17).

9. THE HOW

EPHESIANS 5:18-19 *“Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit,*

singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. ”

Believers have a big task at hand, not just of transformation which requires participation, but of testifying of the transformation to a lost and dying world. We are not left on our own to accomplish such a task. You have been provided with the power of the Holy Spirit who will help you to accomplish the will of the Father as exemplified through the life of Jesus.

EPHESIANS 5:20 *“And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

You have also been provided with the power of gratitude. Gratitude is the key against discouragement, and it lightens the heaviest loads.

NEHEMIAH 8:10B *“...Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”*

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 *“I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me.”*

Grateful people are joyful people, joyful people are strong people, and strong people get the job done!

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. If you had to pick between what you say and what you do, which area would you want to commit to shining the light of God on after this session?
2. What are some practical ways we can imitate God in our daily interactions?
3. How can we guard ourselves against being influenced by the world's changing moral standards?
4. What are some practical ways we can be more intentional about using our time for God's purposes?
5. How does being filled with the Holy Spirit change the way we approach daily challenges and opportunities?

INSIGHTS

- Transformation in Christ is not automatic—it requires active participation in learning, renewing our minds, and changing our way of thinking.
- Imitating God in everything we do is a form of worship, where both our actions and words should reflect His holiness.
- The standard of truth and holiness is set by God's Word, not by the shifting behaviours or opinions of those around us. Paul calls believers not just to avoid darkness but to actively expose it through the truth of God's Word, which brings light and reveals what is hidden.
- Living wisely means making the most of every opportunity, prioritizing eternity, and sharing the Gospel with others.

- The Holy Spirit empowers believers to live transformed lives and testify to the world.
- Gratitude is a key to joy and strength, helping believers overcome discouragement and stay steadfast in their faith.

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UNDERSTANDING EPHESIANS: PART SIX

SPIRIT-GUIDED RELATIONSHIPS: HUSBANDS & WIVES

READ EPHESIANS 5:21-33

Despite often carrying a negative connotation, submission is not a dirty word. The corruption of sin has distorted the perfect order that God created. However, as redeemed children of God, we can live in harmony according to the instruction of the Word.

1. SUBMISSION MEANS TO PUT IN ORDER, AND MAKE SUBJECT TO.

Paul's instruction in **VERSE 21** is to “*submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*” Paul combined Christ's rule, and Christ's love for the church. When Paul talks about God placing all things under the feet of Jesus, he is talking about authority, and that all things are subject to Him.

This model provides the pattern for a wife's relation to her husband, as her head.

COLOSSIANS 3:17-19 “*And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.*”

2. THE WIFE'S RESPONSIBILITY IS TO SUBMIT.

In **VERSE 23**, Paul's use of the word ‘head’ refers to a “*person possessing authority.*” When Paul instructs wives to “*submit in everything*” in **VERSE 24**, it means to:

- Respect and trust her husband as the spiritual authority in the

home (**VERSE 33**).

- Pray that her husband would receive wisdom from the Lord.
- Strive for a peaceful atmosphere in the household.

It does not mean to accept abusive behaviour, or do anything that contradicts the Scripture. Authority is not exercised for personal satisfaction. If a wife feels constrained or demeaned, the relationship is not in line with Jesus' example, and so it produces the opposite effect.

3. THE HUSBAND'S RESPONSIBILITY IS TO LOVE.

VERSES 25- 29 provide a picture of how a husband is to love his wife, and care for her as his own body. Paul was concerned about husbands' abusing their authority, which is why he stressed the importance of imitating Christ. Husbands are to live out Christ's self-giving love.

THAT MEANS TO:

- Imitate Christ in how they love and serve their wife.
- Do not suppress her, or lord over her.
- Allow her to flourish in her God-given gifts.

4. GOD'S PLAN FROM THE BEGINNING.

In **VERSE 31**, Paul quotes **GENESIS 2:24** (*This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one*), to show us that God's original plan for marriage is still the blueprint for us today. We must function under a divine pattern, and it's not something burdensome. Rebelling against that pattern is what causes discord and volatility. Embracing God's way will actually feel like a burden has been lifted.

The curse of sin distorted God's perfect creation. It brought dys-

function, conflict, and pain. It has twisted God's desire for how a marriage should function. But when we come into alignment with God's good and perfect will, there will be harmony, joy and peace in our relationships.

5. OUR GOAL IS TO BE LIKE CHRIST.

EPHESIANS 5:1-2 *"Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are His dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered Himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God."*

Paul's commands to men were sacrificial. His command to women was submission for the sake of Christ. Both needed to consider what it meant to imitate Christ. Jesus taught that authority means service. Paul calls husbands to imitate the Lord by serving the needs of their wives without setting aside their authority.

But they cannot suppress their wives in order to maintain their authority. Husbands must learn that sacrificial leadership fosters the growth of others.

1 PETER 3:1-7 *"In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives. Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They put their trust in God and accepted the authority of their husbands. For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do. In the same way, you husbands must give honour to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together."*

She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered."

Wives, your conduct should reflect that of Christ. If your husband is an unbeliever, you won't win him over by nagging. You'll win him over by showing him how Jesus has changed your life. Pray for him, rather than try to change him, or usurp his authority.

Be the opposite of **PROVERBS 27:15**! *"A quarrelsome wife is as annoying as constant dripping on a rainy day."*

Husbands, recognize that your wife is an equal co-heir of God's gift of life. Though they may be weaker physically and have different emotional needs, they are not less valuable. They are not a slave, and you are not a slave master.

Be the kind of man that a woman can trust to be the authority. A husband is subject to God in everything he does. He cannot guide his family in a way that is not in line with the Word of God.

Submission is not a suggestion, but rather an instruction. The principle remains unchanged, because it has its basis in God's unchanging nature (His grace, love, morality and created order).

Love is not a suggestion, it is a covenant command, and God does not command us to do what He will not enable us to obey.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13 *"For God is working in you, giving you the desire and power to do what pleases Him."*

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the definition of submission?
2. When Paul uses the word “head”, what is he referring to?
3. Describe the meaning of sacrificial love.
4. What should a wife do if her husband is an unbeliever?
5. Is the command of submission in marriage still applicable to us today?

INSIGHTS

- A husband cannot abuse his position of authority, because he and his wife are equal co-heirs in Christ.
- The goal for every couple is to serve God together, and be led by the Holy Spirit.
- The corruption of sin has put men and women against each other, rather than living in harmony according to the Word of God.
- Marriage is not supposed to be a battle, but a partnership under the covering of Jesus.
- When both partners function in their God-given role, the family flourishes.

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UNDERSTANDING EPHESIANS: PART SEVEN

SPIRIT-GUIDED RELATIONSHIPS: CHILDREN & PARENTS

READ EPHESIANS 6:1-9

As we proceed with this passage of Scripture, it's clear that there are parallels between Ephesians 5:22-33 and this next portion in chapter six. Wives are to submit to their husbands as unto the Lord, children are to obey their parents in the Lord for this is right, and slaves obedient to their masters, as to Christ. Authority, honour, obedience, and love are prevalent themes in this passage. When people desire to reflect the heart of the Lord, heed His commands and apply them to their lives, it flows and is reflective in all their relationships. In this study, we will explore key principles in the parent/children and slave/master relationships.

1. CHILDREN

EPHESIANS 6:1 - *Children are commanded to obey.*

Obedience flows out of a love for the Lord. Paul writes in Colossians 3:20 that children are to “obey their parents in all things for this is well pleasing to the Lord.” But if you have children or have been around children, you understand that obedience is taught. Obedience to authority does not come naturally and must be instilled from a young age. Obedience is expected towards parents as it is expected to the Lord.

EPHESIANS 6:2 - *Honour starts from the top.*

Honour flows from a heart of love. The Lord is clear that honour towards parents will bring blessing through a promise; long life here on this earth. Honour is also something that is taught, many times through observation. When honour is shown between husband and wife, children will see this modelled in close proximity within the

home. However, when honour is not given between husband and wife (or other relationships), one cannot expect a child to then give honour themselves (do as I say and not as I do). When honour is modelled, it will be easier to teach children the importance of honour towards their parents and then subsequently those in authority in external relationships.

2. PARENTS

EPHESIANS 6:3A – *Do not provoke your children.*

Parents desire obedient children (as does the Lord), but there are also guidelines for fathers (and mothers). Developmentally, children do not have the same emotional, psychological, and behavioural understanding as adults do, therefore parents are to gently guide and instruct their children in the Lord. Do not confuse discipline with provoking to anger.

Discipline is biblical and for a child's well-being. Provoking is defined as “giving rise to the specific reaction or emotion” and “causing annoyance; irritating.” Parents are to love and nurture their children and exemplify the fruit of the Spirit.

EPHESIANS 6:3B,C – *Discipline (training) in the admonition of the Lord*

Discipline is something that has morphed over the years. Some of you may have attended school where your teacher struck you with a ruler or your parents grabbed the closest thing to “discipline” you...a shoe, a broom, a wooden spoon, whatever was closest. Whereas today, the pendulum has swung to what is called “gentle parenting,” where discipline is more about empathy and reasoning, where you simply speak to your children in a gentle tone and avoid the “rod.” Both extremes are not beneficial. However, if the Lord included passages that speak to discipline, it must be for a reason and the approach proper. Discipline shouldn't look like abuse, nor should it look like a child who runs the show. The Lord disciplines

those He loves, so should it be with parents towards their children. When discipline is done properly and biblically, the outcome is an obedient child who honours their parents.

3. BONDSERVANT

EPHESIANS 6:5-8 - *Obey as to Christ*

“It is Christ rather than their earthly masters that slaves should fear, although the fear of Christ will teach them to show due reverence and respect to their earthly masters...in serving their earthly masters they will bear in mind that they are primarily serving Christ.”

In a dog-eat-dog world, people are often tempted to promote themselves, look out for number one, and yet Paul writes that we are to work as unto the Lord, not trying to impress man as the Lord will judge the motives of our hearts. How we work reflects our love for the Lord. Therefore, our work ethic matters. The apostle Paul often uses this term “bondservant” and when you get a picture of the closeness it implies, you understand why as workers, our hearts should be to please our employer, working diligently, and with all our hearts.

4. MASTERS

EPHESIANS 6:9 - *Treat your workers well.*

As we end this portion of Scripture on relationships, we see that once again there is a reciprocal treatment that is required. Slaves are to be diligent workers, not doing their job for “eye-service,” knowing that what they do will ultimately be evaluated by the Lord. Paul does not move onto the next topic without reminding masters, that just like husbands and fathers, they are not off the hook for how they treat their slaves. Paul reiterates that masters cannot expect excellence and honour if they treat their workers poorly.

Wives must submit but husbands must love as Christ loved the Church. Children must obey and honour their parents, while parents should not provoke their children to anger but bring them up with discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord. Slaves obey their masters as to Christ, but masters remember that you both have the same heavenly Master.

Paul concludes this portion covering a wide range of relationships with practical and yet challenging admonitions. As we follow Christ and draw closer in our relationship with Him, this deep love and affection should be exemplified and poured out on the people we interact with on a daily basis. If we can't get these relationships right, how will we impact others?

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Do you see the value of obedience but find it exhausting having to repeatedly teach it to your children? Have you ever felt the desire to stop but then see the consequences of that decision?
2. How do you feel honour between children and parents has changed over the years?
3. Why are healthy and biblical marriages needed for the benefit of children and society at large?
4. Using only the Bible, how would you define biblical discipline? Does your approach align with the biblical approach?
5. How as Christians can we help shift society for the good through raising our children according to God's standard?
6. As someone who works, have you ever felt the temptation to do your work for man rather than the Lord? Why?

7. What can you do in your Christian walk to help keep your focus on pleasing and working for the Lord and not man?

INSIGHTS

- When you teach your children obedience, it will not only benefit you as parents but them as children. It also helps them understand how obedience is expected as unto the Lord.
- When honour is exemplified through you, children will understand the importance of it and model it.
- Discipline is still needed today and must be done the way God designed it from the beginning.
- Workers, work well as unto the Lord in all that you do.
- Masters, treat your workers well.
- Authority, honour, obedience, and love matter to the Lord so they should matter to us and be reflective in all of our relationships.

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UNDERSTANDING EPHESIANS: PART EIGHT

A FINAL WORD FOR THE BELIEVER

READ: EPHESIANS 6:10-24

In this passage, the apostle Paul is speaking specifically to believers, and he is instructing them to put on the ‘Armour of God.’ This is the first time in scripture when we hear about putting on ‘armour.’

It is important to understand that Paul is not literally asking us to put on armour that a knight or a soldier would wear. He is speaking about spiritual principles and tools that we’ve been given as children of God.

Paul is painting a picture for us about how we are soldiers in the Lord’s army. We are called to fight and stand firm on the Word of God. Paul describes this battle in Ephesians 6:12: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

We must understand that we are in a spiritual battle that affects the physical realm. The good news is that we have been equipped with the resources we need to fight back. Paul takes us through the armour of God that we’ve been given. There are six pieces of the armour that we will go through together.

1. THE BELT OF TRUTH

The first piece of the armour that Paul mentions is the *belt of truth*. He says: “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist” (v.14). This verse is telling us to wear truth around our waist. Truth is the objective standard by which reality is measured. Truth is found in the Word of God. Therefore, this means that we

should live in authenticity before God and walk in truth every day of our lives. The Bible describes the devil as a liar. John 8:44 refers to the devil as the “father of lies.” As Christians we must resist the devil, and walk in truth.

2. THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The second piece of God’s armour is the *breastplate of righteousness* (v.15). It’s important to note that our righteousness comes from God. When Satan tries to accuse you, you must guard your heart with the breastplate of righteousness, that represents our right standing with God. Unrighteousness opens the door for the enemy to infiltrate your hearts. Stay alert and guard your heart.

PROVERBS 4:23 *“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”*

As believers, it’s our responsibility to ensure that we guard ourselves from anything that would open the door for the enemy to enter into our lives. Anything immoral, sinful, and displeasing to God should not be found in our lives.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 *“And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honourable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.”*

We should do everything we possibly can to be in right standing with God.

3. BOOTS OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

I like to refer to the next piece of the armour as the “gospel boots,” however this is how Paul phrases it: “...and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace” (v.15). The Roman soldier used to wear sandals with hobnails similar to cleats, underneath their shoes, so that even during battle, they

would be able to be firmly planted on the ground under attack. The same is said for the child of God who puts on the boots of the Gospel of Peace. Regardless of the turmoil around you, remain firmly planted in operating and accomplishing God's will. Paul is also encouraging believers to be ready to share the Gospel with everyone around them. The word 'Gospel' comes from the Latin word '*evangelium*' and the Greek word '*euangelion*' meaning "good news". The Good News about Jesus can be summarized using John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Always be ready to share the good news with others.

4. THE SHIELD OF FAITH

The fourth piece of the armour is the *shield of faith*. Ephesians 6:16 says, "In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."

Putting on the shield of faith means that you activate your faith, even if the enemy is planting lies in your mind, you extinguish those lies with faith.

Hebrews 11:1 reminds us that faith is believing for things we don't yet see in the physical realm: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This means that even if we don't see things changing right away, we should stand firm in faith and believe that it will come to pass.

1 CORINTHIANS 16:13 "*Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.*"

When you hold up your shield of faith, you are actively using faith to come against any lie or deception from the enemy, and you are committing to trusting God's Word above all else.

5. THE HELMET OF SALVATION

The *helmet of salvation* is the next piece of armour that Paul speaks of, and it one of great significance. A helmet protects your mind—the control center of your whole body. If your mind is not protected, then the rest of your body is subject to injury and defeat.

Our spiritual standing in Christ must protect our thinking. As believers, it's important for us to understand that we've been redeemed and adopted into the family of God. The authority that we've been given is directly linked to our salvation.

Romans 1:16 “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.*”

Live and operate in the reality that you've been saved, and now function under God's authority. When you know who you are in Christ, the Devil's lies cannot affect you.

6. THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

The last piece of armour is the *sword of the Spirit*. Unlike the other pieces, the sword of the Spirit is the only offensive weapon in the group. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. When the Word of God is spoken, it has the ability to cut through the devil's lies.

There is nothing more powerful than God's Word. In this passage, Paul describes the Word of God as a smaller sword, one that would be used as a dagger or something intended for hand-to-hand combat. He's painting the image of God's Word being used as a weapon against the enemy's schemes.

We see an example of this in Matthew 4:1-11, when Jesus is tempted in the wilderness. The devil attempts to trap Jesus three times, and Jesus quotes scripture in response to every trap. After the third attempt, the devil leaves in defeat. Jesus perfectly demonstrated to

us the effectiveness of the Word of God, as well as its authority and power.

HEBREWS 4:12 *“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”*

We can use the Word of God to our advantage to come against the schemes and traps of the enemy. We can also be sure that when we speak God’s Word, the devil will leave us alone.

7. PRAYER

The final instruction that Paul gives, before he ends his letter, is a call to prayer. Paul tells the believers to pray in the Spirit “on all occasions”(v. 18).

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18 *“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”*

Prayer is our way of directly communicating with God. Prayer is how we make our requests known to God and access heaven’s authority over our lives. Acts 1:8 says; “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Praying in the Spirit gives us power and strength and those are the keys to finish the race strong

ROMANS 8:26 *“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”*

So, in addition to putting on the full armour of God, we must strengthen ourselves by praying in the Spirit at all times so we will be ready for battle.

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