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**HOW TO
READ, STUDY,
AND EXPLORE
A NEW
TESTAMENT
LETTER**

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

PHONE:

CONTENTS

- 01** Overview
- 02** How to Use This Booklet
- 05** Week 1
- 09** Ephesus in the Bible
- 17** Overview of Ephesians
- 19** Week 2
- 27** The Form of Ancient Letters
- 29** Week 3
- 37** In Christ
- 39** Week 4
- 48** The Full Armor of God
- 51** Week 5
- 58** Study Debrief

WE ARE INVITING YOU TO READ, STUDY, AND EXPLORE A BOOK OF THE BIBLE

Ephesians is an ancient letter in the New Testament section of scripture. Our hope is that this booklet will guide you to a deeper exploration of God's Word—wherever your starting point might be.

- If you've wanted to spend more time in the Bible, this booklet will guide you into deeper study and exploration.
- If you've read and studied the Bible before, you are likely familiar with the book of Ephesians. Don't let that stop you from exploring it more and inviting God to show you a more detailed view of this part of scripture! God's Word is rich and alive. We can always learn and experience more.



SCAN THE CODE

Some words we use to refer to the Bible:
scripture, God's Word, the Word

How to Pray and Read the Bible – Need
some more help getting started reading the
Bible? We have a resource for you!

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

We suggest you **work through this booklet in 5 weeks with 5 reading sessions each week**. However, feel free to adjust your pace and schedule as needed. If you get off schedule, jump back in where you left off.

Don't do this alone. While you can study independently, we strongly recommend finding a few friends who can do this with you. The accountability and opportunity for discussion will help you in many ways.

Write the name of someone you want to invite to work through this booklet alongside you.

As you read, study, and explore God's Word, remember that he is with you. Pause as you begin each session. *Ask God to guide you and open your heart to meet with him in his Word.*

Write a short prayer asking God to meet you as you read, study, and explore God's timeless and relevant message.

Consider printing a copy of the book of Ephesians without chapter and verse markings. Keep it with this booklet. We will prompt you occasionally to make notes as you study.



Scan the code for a *printable version* using the New Living Translation.

Reading a New Testament Letter

An “epistle” is the literary term used for the letters to churches and individuals included in the New Testament section of the Bible. (Other epistles from that historical period exist that are not part of scripture.)

“In the days the Bible was written, letters were the only forms of permanent and historic communication. Though word of mouth was a trustworthy and essential communication tool for centuries, only letters and other written documents could capture the heart of a culture and give it a life beyond the years of its members. Writing materials were scarce, few people knew how to write and it took a long time to compose documents. Letters were treasured, especially those written by the apostles speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to the church. The New Testament Epistles fanned the flames of faith for Christ-followers and were copied and circulated from one church to another, eventually bound together in “books” for ready reference.” — Bill Donahue

You might be used to reading scripture in short segments. However, because Ephesians is a letter, it was intended to be one complete message. Several times, **you'll be prompted in this booklet to read and listen to the full book and longer sections.** (The full letter takes under 30 minutes to listen to in audio form.)

- This is how you'd read a letter you received in the mail!
- The New Testament letters were intended to be heard and read aloud, because most people in the 1st century couldn't read. The letter of Ephesians was read and circulated to people in the churches in the surrounding region.

Before you begin this study, watch two videos from *The Bible Project* that provide helpful context for reading New Testament letters.

New Testament Letters: Historical Context (5:20)



New Testament Letters: Literary Context (5:30)



A PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Pray this for yourself and for people in your life, adjusting the language to add names when possible:

“I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers, oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him—endless energy, boundless strength!”

Ephesians 1:15-19 (The Message)

SUNDAY WORSHIP NOTES

Date: _____

Message Title: _____

(Write down some specific things from today: a song lyric, a scripture, a quote, a chat with someone or a question for later.)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

This week, I sense God wants me to:

READ, STUDY, EXPLORE

DAY 1

Today, read the full book in one sitting (which should take approximately 30 minutes).

You can read it in a hard copy or on a device. If you can, try to listen to it. (The *YouVersion Bible* app has an audio version.)

Don't be concerned with writing notes or analyzing anything yet. Simply take it in.



Read & listen to the full letter of Ephesians.

What stands out to you from hearing this letter?

Did you notice any repeated words or themes? Write them down.

DAY 2

To understand a letter, you must know who is involved (the author, the audience, the setting, the occasion, etc.).

Paul is the author of Ephesians. If you're unfamiliar with Paul, he is an important leader in the early church whose broader story is found in the New Testament history book of Acts. Paul took several trips around the ancient world to spread the good news of Jesus and to plant churches. On one of these journeys, he visited the important city of Ephesus. (While it's not a major world city currently, the city of Ephesus was prominent in the 1st century. Important context for the city and culture of Ephesus is included in the next few pages of the booklet. To understand the setting of this letter, spend some time learning about Ephesus.)



Read Acts 19 & 20.

What stands out to you about Paul's connection to the people and church community in Ephesus?

What conflicts occur in Ephesus in these two chapters (Acts 19-20)? List them.

EPHESUS IN

The city of Ephesus in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) is an important location throughout the New Testament.

ACTS 19

Paul visits Ephesus on his third missionary journey. He begins baptizing, teaching, and challenging their false worship (especially of the goddess Artemis).

EPHESIANS

Paul writes to the new church and the believers in the region of Asia Minor.

[Early 60s A.D.]

ACTS 20

Paul sends a message to the elders of the church in Ephesus. He tells them to watch out and protect the church from false teaching.

N THE BIBLE

REVELATION 2:1-7

A letter from Jesus to the church in Ephesus (recorded by the apostle John).

[Mid 60s A.D.]

[Late 90s A.D.]

1 TIMOTHY & 2 TIMOTHY

Paul writes letters to Timothy, a younger pastor who is a leader in the church at Ephesus.

VISIT EPHEBUS

Step back in time to understand the original audience



Ephesus was an incredibly influential city in the 1st century. (Scholars say that only Rome had more power and influence in the Roman empire.)



Spotlight: *Bible Backroads* Video Series

This lighthearted series has two episodes that will help you “visit” the ancient city of Ephesus. Watch “Ancient City of Ephesus” and “Paul in Ephesus” in this video series.



To view videos on RightNow Media, sign up for a FREE account through West Side. Visit wschurch.org/RNM or scan the QR code to create an account. *If you have an account, but can't login, reset your password.*

In the centuries between the writing of the New Testament and modern day, the ancient city of Ephesus was abandoned. If you visited it today (in modern-day Turkey), you'd find archaeological ruins. The people in the 1st century would have associated Ephesus with some important places and influential ideas:

- A center of political and economic influence in the empire of Rome because of its location as a port city and a hub on the Roman highway.
- Important landmarks: The Great Theater (amphitheater seating for 24,000 people), Town Hall, Agora (gathering place and market), Stadium, Medical School, and many Roman temples.
- Temple of Artemis: one of the seven wonders of the ancient world; four times larger than the Parthenon in Athens.
 - Used for worship of Artemis and the cult associated with her.
 - Artemis was the Greek goddess of hunting, fertility, and nature (Roman name: Diana).
 - Artemis was believed to be the mother goddess. Her cult was led by women, and they believed in the superiority of women over men.
 - Artemis' followers practiced magical incantations, believed in astrology and fate, and especially wanted to appease the goddess and seek her help during childbirth and warding off evil forces.
- It was home to a Jewish synagogue and a population of Jewish Christians.
- Paul visited, lived, and taught there for three years building up the church (See Acts 19-20).

DAY 3

Ephesians is a letter in two sections. Today, you'll read through the first half. Before you do, look at the final word of chapter 3 (Eph. 3:21). This entire section may be one large prayer of praise to (and about) Jesus!

Try to think in paragraphs and sections rather than zooming in on sentences and verses.

When you read the word “you,” remember that refers to the listeners of this letter—those in the 1st century.

In his letters, Paul tends to put a key that unlocks the letter's main theme. One possible key for Ephesians is in Eph. 1:9-10.



Read Ephesians 1:9-10.

What words and phrases stand out?

Keep the words in this theme in mind as you read the larger section.



Read Ephesians 1-3.

Notice and name the prayer language throughout this section.

DAY 4

In the original Greek language of this letter, the verses you'll study today are one long run-on sentence. Sense Paul's enthusiasm and excitement about his message!



Study Ephesians 1:1-14.

The Trinity (three persons in one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is present throughout these verses. ***Underline each person of the Trinity when mentioned. What do you notice?***

Paul reminds them of the incredible work done by, in, and through Jesus. ***What are some of God's specific actions (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in this passage?***

What do you learn about our identity (those who are “in Christ”) in these verses?

DAY 5

Today's passage is another single long sentence in Greek.



Study Ephesians 1:15-23.

Read this passage in the NASB translation (use the Bible app or biblegateway.com). How many times is the word “all” used in this section?

Notice how Paul describes God's power at work in Christ. ***How does he describe this power?***

Important Note: The phrase “the heavenly realms” or “the heavenly places” is used throughout Ephesians. It describes the unseen spiritual realm (where good and evil are presently at war). ***Pay attention and note when this phrase is used (throughout the whole book – in chapters 1, 2, 3, and 6) and how it is described.***

Look at the Ephesians outline chart on page 17. Write down some words and phrases to describe the main themes of Ephesians 1 in the chart.

Application: After reading about who God is and what he has done, how do you want to respond? What can you thank and praise God for? Can you match Paul's energy and enthusiasm?

OVERVIEW O

This chart offers a structure of the letter.
In the blank spots provided, add your notes of what
you observe as key themes and verses as you study.

OUR IDENTITY

Who we are in Christ
Chapters 1-3

1:1-23

Theme:

Key Verse:

2:1-22

Theme:

Key Verse:

3:1-21

Theme:

Key Verse:

1:1-14

2:1-10

3:1-13

1:15-23

2:11-22

2:14-21

F EPHESIANS

OUR MISSION

How we live in Christ
Chapters 4-6

4:1-5:21

Theme:

Key Verse:

5:21-6:9

Theme:

Key Verse:

6:10-20

Theme:

Key Verse:

4:1-16

5:21-33

6:10-17

4:17-5:21

6:1-9

6:18-20

A PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Pray this for yourself and for people in your life, adjusting the language to add names when possible:

"I am kneeling down before the father, the one who gives the name of 'family' to every family that there is, in heaven and on earth. My prayer is this: that he will lay out all the riches of his glory to give you strength and power, through his spirit, in your inner being; that the Messiah may make his home in your hearts, through faith; that love may be your root, your firm foundation; and that you may be strong enough (with all God's holy ones) to grasp the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the Messiah's love—though actually it's so deep that nobody can really know it! So may God fill you with all his fullness.

So: to the one who is capable of doing far, far more than we can ask or imagine, granted the power which is working in us—to him be glory, in the church, and in Messiah Jesus, to all generations, and to the ages of ages! Amen!"

Ephesians 3:14-21
(New Testament for Everyone)

SUNDAY WORSHIP NOTES

Date: _____

Message Title: _____

(Write down some specific things from today: a song lyric, a scripture, a quote, a chat with someone or a question for later.)

[illegible]

This week, I sense God wants me to:

READ, STUDY, EXPLORE

DAY 1

We are continuing the practice of reading and digesting scripture in longer sections.

As you read through the book's first half again, notice the repeated action of God filling things. (See the end of each chapter: Eph. 1:23, 2:21-22, and 3:19.)

There is only one command in the first half of Ephesians. See if you can identify it as you read (halfway into chapter 2).



Read & listen to Ephesians 1-3.

What words, phrases, or themes stand out as you hear this message today?

The first half of Ephesians emphasizes that as believers, our identity is in Christ and what he has done (not in what we do). How do you see this to be true?

DAY 2

The chapter and verse markings in the Bible are not in the original text. They were added later to make it easier to navigate. The heading descriptions were added by translators and editors. A good reading habit is to read a little before and after the chapter breaks to stay connected to the larger flow of thought.



Study Ephesians 2:1-10.

Paul compares things in the past to current reality—the difference between before and after being “in Christ.” **List the differences:**

OUR LIFE BEFORE	OUR LIFE IN CHRIST

Look at Ephesians 1:20. ***Where is Christ now?***

Now read Ephesians 2:5-6. ***Where are we now?***

How do you react to this?

DAY 3



Study Ephesians 2:11-22.

Notice the command in Eph. 2:11. (This is the only command in the first half of the letter.) ***To whom (in 1st-century Ephesus) is Paul addressing this command?***

Write out the comparisons between the past and the present in this section. (Look at Eph. 2:13-14.)

One of the key concepts in Ephesians (from Eph. 1:9-10) is that God will unite everything together under the authority of Christ. ***How do you see this theme in these verses?***

In Ephesians 2:19-22, Paul compares the church to a temple. Ephesus had a giant temple to Artemis. The Jews had a temple in Jerusalem. These were incredibly significant places of worship. ***How might the original readers have reacted to this analogy as they heard it?***

Look at the Ephesians outline on page 17. Write down some words and phrases to describe the main themes of Ephesians 2 in the chart.

DAY 4



Study Ephesians 3:1-13.

Remember to start by looking at the verses before this section and stay connected to the flow of thought.

How does Paul describe his task in these verses?

What is the church's task? How does he connect his task to the church's?

DAY 5



Study Ephesians 3:14-21.

Underline each mention of the Trinity in this section (Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit).

What do you notice about how each are described?

What action is associated with each person?

Spend time considering the closing of this prayer (which is also the closing of the first half of the letter).

Why does Paul say that he prays for the church?

How do you want to echo this prayer today?

Look at the Ephesians outline chart on page 17. Write down some words and phrases to describe the main themes of Ephesians 3 in the chart.

Application: After reading about who God is and what he has done, how do you want to respond? What can you thank and praise God for?

THE FORM OF ANCIENT

In the same way you likely learned about how to structure a letter in English class in school, epistles (ancient letters) follow a typical form. Look at the different sections of the letter of Ephesians and compare it to some of the other letters in the New Testament.

SECTION	EPHESIANS
Name of the writer	Eph. 1:1
Name of the recipient	Eph. 1:1
Greeting	Eph. 1:3-3:21*
Prayer & Thanksgiving	Eph. 4:1-6:20
Body/Teaching	Eph. 4:1-6:20
Final Greeting & Farewell	Eph. 6:21-24

*On page 13, we mentioned that the first three chapters of Ephesians could be one long prayer. It does appear that Paul waits to give his instructions until chapter 4. Ephesians is unique in how long the prayer and thanksgiving section is for an epistle.

What do you think?

IT LETTERS (EPISTLES)

COLOSSIANS

PHILIPPIANS

GALATIANS

If one of the letters does NOT follow this form, why do you think the author chose to do so?

A PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Pray for yourself and for people in your life, using the themes and concepts from this scripture:

“You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly. You have one Master, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who rules over all, works through all, and is present in all. Everything you are and think and do is permeated with Oneness.”

Ephesians 4:4-6 (The Message)

SUNDAY WORSHIP NOTES

Date: _____

Message Title: _____

(Write down some specific things from today: a song lyric, a scripture, a quote, a chat with someone or a question for later.)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

This week, I sense God wants me to:

READ, STUDY, EXPLORE

DAY 1

We are continuing to read and digest scripture in longer sections, including re-reading the same section. This practice allows us to solidify the overall themes and integrate our study of individual pieces into the whole.

Quickly look at your notes so far in this booklet and in the printout of the book of Ephesians.



Read & listen to Ephesians 1-3.

Are there new connections or clarity in the message as you take in this section of the letter today?

Pause to revel in the mystery of God made known to the church to unite all things in heaven and earth together under the authority of Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:9-10).

DAY 2

Today, you'll read and listen to the full letter to the Ephesians again. Remember, this is how the original recipients would have experienced this message.

Before you do, remember the key theme from Eph. 1:9-10 (God's plan to bring everything together under the authority of Jesus). Try to notice when it appears throughout the letter.



Read & listen to the full letter of Ephesians.

How does having an accurate understanding of God and our identity in him (in chapters 1-3) allow the church to be a new kind of community in Christ (in chapters 4-6)?

What stands out to you as you hear the Word today?

DAY 3

Before you begin, look at Ephesians 4:1. The words here are a transition that remind us to stay connected to everything Paul has already said, pointing to what comes next.

If chapters 1-3 are about our calling and identity “in Christ,” chapters 4-6 are about walking and behaving with others “in Christ.” The word for worthy (*axios* in the Greek) can be defined as reaching balance or equilibrium, where two things are equal. That’s a way to view the entire letter, with the reality of being “worthy” found right in the middle. Our way of living (chapters 4-6) finds its worth in our identity (chapters 1-3).



Read & listen to Ephesians 4-6.

What words, phrases, or themes stand out as you hear this message today?

While the first half of the letter contains only one command, the second half contains 40 commands. Paul is directing the church to obey and live in Christ. ***How do you observe the shift in Paul’s language as you take in these words today?***

DAY 4



Study Ephesians 4:1-16.

In Ephesians 4:1-6, how does Paul urge believers to live? Why?

In Ephesians 4:7-11, what leadership gifts are given to the church?

In Ephesians 4:12-16, Paul explains why these leadership gifts are given and the goal. ***How do we grow and mature in Christ? How do we know this is happening?***

DAY 5



Study Ephesians 4:17-5:17.

In Ephesians 4:17-5:2, Paul lists commands for living life together in Christ:

- Stop telling lies. Tell the truth. (4:17-25)
- Don't sin in your anger. (4:26)
- Don't let your anger be used for evil. (4:27)
- Don't steal. Instead, work hard and be generous. (4:28)
- Watch the way you talk. Use your words to encourage. (4:29)
- Don't grieve the Holy Spirit living in you. (4:30)
- Avoid and get rid of hate speech. (4:31)
- Be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving. (4:32)
- Imitate God by walking in love. (5:1-2)

In Ephesians 5:3-14, Paul lists two key habits of imitating God:

- Avoid the shameful behaviors associated with evil and hiding (5:3-6).
- Walk in openness and light, bearing the fruit of what is good and right and true (5:7-14).

Do any of these ways of living convict you as you live as part of the church and contribute to the health of the community?

This key phrase (or variations like “in Him” or “in Jesus”) is used over 35 times in the book of Ephesians. Look at how this phrase is used in some of the references listed. (The translation used is the NASB; it translates word-for-word, rather than phrase-by-phrase.)

What do you think Paul is conveying as he uses these words repeatedly?

1:3 – “who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Christ**”

1:1 – “To the saints who are at Ephesus and are faithful **in Christ Jesus**”

1:7 – “**In Him** we have redemption through His blood”

1:4 – “just as He chose us **in Him**”

1:9 – “His kind intention purposed **in Him**”

IN CH

1:10 – “the summing up of all things **in Christ** in the heavens and on earth in Him”

1:11 – “**In Him** we have obtained an inheritance”

1:12 – “the first to hope **in Christ**”

1:13 – “**in Him** you also believed, were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise”

1:20 – “and having seated **in His right hand**, in the heavenly

2:7 – “surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us **in Christ Jesus**”

2:6 – “seated with Him in the heavenly places **in Christ Jesus**”

2:10 – “His workmanship, created **in Christ Jesus** for good works”

2:13 – “But now **in Christ Jesus** you who formerly were far off have been brought near”

2:15 – “so that the two He might create **in Himself** one new man”

2:21 – “(Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone), **in whom** the whole building, being fitted together”

2:14 – “abolishing the enmity **in His flesh**”

2:16 – “through the cross having killed the hostility **in Him**”

2:22 – “**in whom** you also are being built together into a dwelling of God”

2:21 – “growing into a holy temple **in the Lord**”

3:6 – “co-inheritors and co-members and co-partakers of the promise **in Christ Jesus**”

CHRIST

3:11 – “the eternal purpose which He carried out **in Christ Jesus our Lord**”

3:21 – “glory in the church and **in Christ Jesus** for all generations”

3:12 – “we have confident access through faith **in Him**”

4:1 – “Therefore, I encourage you, the prisoner **in the Lord**”

4:15 – “we are to grow up **into Him** who is **the head**, even **Christ**”

4:32 – “forgiving each other, just as God **in Christ** also has forgiven you”

4:21 – “if indeed you heard and **in Him** you were taught”

5:5 – “has an inheritnace **in Christ’s Kingdom**”

5:20 – “giving thanks for all things **in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ** to the God and Father”

6:10 – “be strong **in the Lord** and in the strength of His might”

A PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Pray this for yourself and for people in your life:

“Wake up, you sleeper!

Rise up from the dead!

The Messiah will shine on you!”

Ephesians 5:14 (New Testament for Everyone)

SUNDAY WORSHIP NOTES

Date: _____

Message Title:

(Write down some specific things from today: a song lyric, a scripture, a quote, a chat with someone or a question for later.)

[illegible]

This week, I sense God wants me to:

READ, STUDY, EXPLORE

DAY 1

Quickly look at your notes so far in this booklet and in the printout of the book of Ephesians.

Look at the Ephesians outline chart on page 18. ***Write down some words and phrases to describe the main themes of Ephesians 4 in the chart.***



Read & listen to Ephesians 4-6.

Are there new connections or clarity in the message as you take in this section of the letter today?

DAY 2

Look at your study notes from last week on Ephesians 5:1-17.



Study Ephesians 5:1-33. Pay extra attention to Ephesians 5:18-33.

In Ephesians 5:18, Paul gives the command to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The believers have already received the gift of the Spirit, but Paul encourages them to allow themselves to be controlled and led by the Spirit (rather than being out of control with drunkenness). He lists several practices connected to being filled with the Spirit:

- Singing and speaking to one another in spiritual songs (5:19)
- Always giving thanks to God for everything (5:20)
- Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ (5:21)

Verse 21 bridges the larger theme to the exploration of how this is expressed in a Spirit-infused, Christ-centered marriage.

Note the instructions to wives (5:22-24) and husbands (5:25-30). Write them out in two columns.

WIVES	HUSBANDS

Look at Ephesians 5:32. How does this section of the letter apply not only to marriage but also to the relationship between Christ and the church?

DAY 3

In yesterday's study, we read Ephesians 5:21 as a connecting phrase. Keep it in mind as you read and study the next section of the letter.



Study Ephesians 5:18-6:9. Pay extra attention to Ephesians 6:1-9.

Look at each group addressed in this section. ***How are they to submit to one another in awe and reverence for Christ (Eph. 5:21)?***

- Wives and husbands (5:22-33)
- Children and fathers (6:1-4)
- Slaves and masters (6:5-9)

Look at the Ephesians outline chart on page 18. Write down some words and phrases to describe the themes of Ephesians 5.

Important cultural note:

As you read these verses about household relationships, you likely have questions about what Paul says regarding marriage relationships and slavery. Over the centuries, these verses have been used well and they have also been misused. **Biblical submission is always chosen, not required or forced.**

If you'd like to learn and study more about the background needed to understand the world of Paul and the Ephesian Christians, we recommend the following resources:



Ephesians Session 9: Participating at Home and Work – Michael DeFazio

“Homes (and households) in the ancient world encapsulated both family and what we think of as work. This is where Paul goes next...he goes home. If the gospel hasn't taken root at home, then the gospel hasn't taken root. If your spiritual formation doesn't significantly impact the way you treat the people closest to you, then it isn't Christian or it is very incomplete.” — Michael DeFazio



Ephesians for Everyone – N.T. Wright

“Paul could no more envisage a world without slavery than we can envisage a world without electricity. The way Paul's world worked was through slaves taking a vital place in most households except those of the very poor. If Paul were writing this letter today, he would address his instructions to employees and employers.” — N.T. Wright

DAY 4



Study Ephesians 6:10-17.

This section begins with “A final word” or “Finally,” indicating that the letter is building to a conclusion.

A spiritual battle is happening in the heavenly realms (see page 15), and Paul wants the believers to be aware, equipped, and connected to the Lord, who is ultimately victorious. ***Write down the two commands in Eph. 6:10-11.***

In Ephesians 6:12, how does Paul describe the enemy?

Look at the full armor of God on page 48 and look up some of the verses listed.

Paul is using the metaphor of preparing for battle by putting on different attributes of God. ***What are some simple, practical things a believer might do to put this into practice?***

DAY 5



Study Ephesians 6:10-24.

Write out the commands in this section.

Notice that the soldier's armor is worn on the front so they can move forward in battle. In this analogy, God's people can continue to advance the good news of the kingdom of Jesus. Ephesians 6:18 includes prayer as part of the spiritual warfare preparation. ***How does this align with or challenge your understanding and practice of prayer?***

DAY 5 CONTINUED

The practice of continual prayer...

- Keeps the church looking forward, ready for Christ's reappearance.
- Gives us spiritual solidarity, covering one another's backs in prayer (since no armor protects the backside, prayer does).
- Helps us set our faces forward to live fearlessly as we manifest the gospel.

“The word Paul uses in verse 20 for ‘boldly’ could almost mean ‘brazenly.’ He is settled in his mind that he will go on talking about King Jesus, his victory over death, and his present and future kingdom, no matter what happens. But he knows that unless people are praying for him he won’t be able to do it, and it wouldn’t mean anything if he did. So having begun the letter with an extended prayer, and then an extensive report of his own prayers for the young Christians in the area, he now finishes it with the urgent request that they join him in this ministry.” — N.T. Wright

Look at the Ephesians outline chart on page 18. ***Write down some words and phrases to describe the main themes of Ephesians 6 in the chart.***

THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD

In Ephesians 6, Paul encourages believers to put on the armor of God. The protective equipment used by soldiers would be familiar to them, living in an area occupied and guarded by Roman soldiers. However, there are biblical references and allusions to each part of the armor from the Old Testament that some readers might have heard and associated with key identifying traits of God.

The six character traits are in direct opposition to six magical incantations an Ephesian worshiper of Artemis (the mythological goddess) could say to receive her assistance in warding off evil demons. The six words were inscribed on the image of Artemis outside her mammoth temple in Ephesus.

Look up some of the other Bible verses that align with God's character traits on the next page.

The Lord of truth (belt)

- Isaiah 11:5
- Hebrews 6:17-18
- Ephesians 1:13; 5:7-10

The Lord of righteousness (breastplate)

- Isaiah 59:14-17
- Philippians 3:8-9
- Ephesians 4:20-24

The Lord of peace (footwear)

- Isaiah 52:7
- Ephesians 2:14-16

The Lord of faithfulness (shield)

- Deuteronomy 33:29
- Psalm 3:3, 28:7, 84:11, 91:4 (used over 20 times in the Psalms)

The Lord of salvation (helmet)

- Isaiah 59:17

The Word of God (sword of the Spirit)

- This part of the armor is different from the others. Rather than describing a characteristic of God, it is the gospel message of God—the living and active Spirit of God.
- Through the written Word (scripture), God's spoken Word is the instrument by which his power is shown:
 - o for creation
 - ◇ Psalm 33:6
 - ◇ Genesis 1:3
 - ◇ Hebrews 1:3
 - o for healing—Psalm 107:20
 - o for judgment—Isaiah 11:4

How does reading these additional scriptures deepen and enrich your reading of Ephesians 6?

Notice how different translations all work to describe the complete nature of the armor:

Ephesians 6:11

- “all of God’s armor” (New Living Translation)
- “the full armor of God” (New American Standard Bible)
- “God’s complete armor” (New Testament for Everyone)

Ephesians 6:13

- “put on every piece of God’s armor” (New Living Translation)

A PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Pray this for yourself and for people in your life, adjusting the language to add names when possible:

“Pray on every occasion in the spirit, with every type of prayer and intercession. You’ll need to keep awake and alert for this, with all perseverance and intercession for all God’s holy ones—and also for me! Please pray that God will give me his words to speak when I open my mouth, so that I can make known, loud and clear, the secret truth of the gospel...Pray that I may announce it boldly; that’s what I’m duty-bound to do.”

Ephesians 6:18-20
(New Testament for Everyone)

SUNDAY WORSHIP NOTES

Date: _____

Message Title: _____

(Write down some specific things from today: a song lyric, a scripture, a quote, a chat with someone or a question for later.)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

This week, I sense God wants me to:

READ, STUDY, EXPLORE

DAY 1

Quickly look at your notes so far in this booklet and in the printout of the book of Ephesians.

Remember the two sections of this letter: the opening (chapters 1-3) reminding us of our identity in Christ and the remainder (chapters 4-6) equipping us on how to live out that identity.



Read & listen to Ephesians 4-6.

What stands out about how to live in Christ as you hear God's Word today?

Application: How do you want to respond? How is God calling you to live in Christ?

DAY 2

The story of the church in Ephesus shows up in several other places in scripture that we'll explore. In a different letter in the New Testament, Paul writes to his apprentice and younger church leader, Timothy, who spent time in Ephesus after Paul left.



Read & study 1 Timothy 1:1-11.

What challenges does Timothy face as he leads and serves in the church in Ephesus?

What themes from your study of Ephesians appear in these verses?

What stands out to you as you read today?

DAY 3

Today we'll read from a second letter Paul wrote to Timothy. Hear how he encourages and works to help Timothy continue in his good kingdom work in Ephesus. As he wrote this, Paul was imprisoned in Rome, knowing that he would likely be killed there.



Read & study 2 Timothy 1:1-18 and 2 Timothy 4:9-18.

What are some of the challenges that Timothy and the church in Ephesus are facing?

Imagine Timothy (a younger church leader in a difficult and dangerous culture) receiving these words from Paul (a mentor and friend in imminent danger). What emotions, thoughts, and questions might Timothy have experienced as he read Paul's final words?

DAY 4

The final mention of Ephesus in the New Testament is written by the apostle John in the book of Revelation. He has a vision where he receives a message from Jesus to the churches in Asia Minor. The first church named is Ephesus.



Read & study Revelation 2:1-7.

Remember the things we know from scripture chronologically about the church in Ephesus:

- In Acts 19, they are influenced by magic and the cult of Artemis.
- In Acts 20, Paul warns the elders about false teachers and encourages them to protect the church.
- In the letter of Ephesians, Paul emphasizes the work of God in Christ that shapes their identity and calls them to live into their calling, united in Christ.
- In 1 & 2 Timothy, Paul coaches a younger leader in Ephesus to address teachings that contradict Jesus' teachings and his way.
- Now, in Revelation, Jesus offers a harsh truth to this church: "you have lost your first love." (Revelation 2:4)

What does Jesus say to this church?

DAY 5

To wrap up this study, listen and take in the full letter of Ephesians one more time. You can review your notes, but before you listen, pause and invite God to speak to you.



Read & listen to Ephesians.

What do you want to say to God in response to his Word?

STUDY DEBRIEF

Take a moment to reflect on this study.

What was this study like for you?

What was new, challenging, helpful, or surprising to you as you studied Ephesians?

Are there themes or topics you'd like to explore more?



Thanks for using this booklet to read, study, and explore Ephesians!

If you need help taking a next step or want to talk to someone, please reach out at

wschurch.org/talk.

WANT SOME WAYS TO KEEP LEARNING AND GROWING?



Sermon Guide – If you'd like to receive a guide that helps individuals and groups reflect and discuss the Sunday sermon, sign up at wschurch.org/discussionsubscribe.

VIDEO RESOURCES:

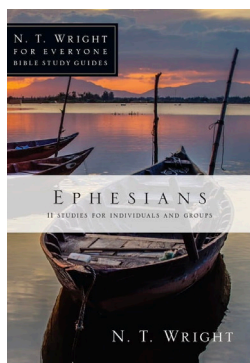


[The Bible Project](#) overview video

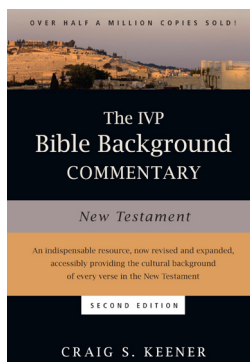


[Next Level Study](#) — Michael DeFazio

BOOKS:



Ephesians for Everyone — N.T. Wright



***The IVP Bible Background
Commentary: New Testament
— Craig S. Keener***

