



EPHESIANS

BIBLE STUDY

A Four-Week Study Guide for Individuals and Groups

AGES:
16+

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Introduction:

ALL ABOUT THIS STUDY

Have you ever felt that certain coworkers, friends, or neighbors are skeptical about your faith? Then you'll feel right at home with Apostle Paul, who first visited Ephesus during his second missionary journey, around 51 AD. The good news: Many people were turning their backs on the false gods of polytheism and devoting their lives to Christ in Ephesus. The bad news: Demetrius, the silversmith in town, found the situation infuriating, as the demand for his skills in making idols diminished enough to affect his livelihood. Demetrius almost started a riot at the local amphitheater, and Paul was either expelled from the city or agreed to leave until the situation quieted down. Eventually, Paul did visit again during his third missionary journey and stayed for three years!

In 60-61 AD, Paul was placed under house arrest while awaiting trial in Rome. He had been back to visit Ephesus again and missed the church body greatly. He wrote the church there a letter, one of four that are known as the Prison Epistles, also including Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

The first half of Ephesians brings the foundations of our faith into glorious light, which this study will help make more understandable. The second half of Ephesians puts the foundations into practice, and you'll have the opportunity to study what faith looks like when it is practiced well—in Paul's time and our time as well!

How this Study Works

The study is designed to be highly individualized, good for small groups and cell groups, but also works well for an individual just looking to improve their knowledge base. Ephesians only has six chapters, but nearly every passage has been gleaned for deeper meaning and broader insight. Therefore, this one-month study will be well-packed with enough background, cross-references, and extra biblical material to make you feel like you know the book nicely.

Five days of study per week: The book will be broken down into 20 study days that include the background of Paul's adventures in Ephesus from Acts 18-19 as well as their "Report Card" (the letter to the church of Ephesus in Revelation 2) about 30 years later.

Study tools bring clarity: You will also have a map and timeline to help make clear the book's context in the growth of the brand-new church.

Four Week-in-Review days: In addition to the five days of study each week, an additional day in each is dedicated to the Week in Review section, for a total of 24 days of study. The Week in Review offers one more chance to look deeply into how these concepts affect us today.

The study is the equivalent of a Monday-through-Friday work week all month, but of course you can use Saturday just by being flexible! We encourage you to take more or less time as needed—the goal is to come to love the Ephesians like Paul did, not merely finish within a specific time frame.

Despite all its comprehensive materials, the study is neither difficult nor terribly time-consuming. A day's work can be done in half an hour, but it can take longer, depending on how much time you'd like to give to the Application Questions about that day's chapter.

What's to Be Done Each Day?

Our Table of Contents, following this introduction, shows the comprehensive list of chapters that will be covered in the course. Each day of the month-long study is clearly marked so that you'll always know where to pick up.

Each day you will complete the following mini-segments:

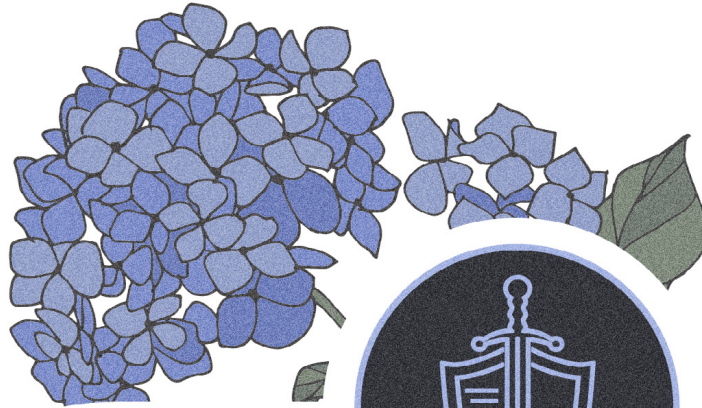
1. **DAILY READING:** You will read one or two chapters in each session, and sometimes the reading will include a study tool such as one of our timelines or our map.
2. **SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS:** You'll be given six or seven questions that require either filling in the blanks, picking a multiple-choice answer, or answering True/False. Each verse is provided where the answer can be found, and the answers are also included at the end of each day's materials.
3. **APPLICATION QUESTIONS:** You'll receive two or three longer questions requiring thought and written answers. These are often an effort to get students to think of the passage in terms of how it affects them in postmodern times. These are highly subjective, so they don't come with answers, but you'll find many are covered in the ANSWERS section under APPLICATION HELP. Some questions will not require any help while others will contain prompts, explanations, or further information.
4. **FURTHER READING:** Here scriptures are presented as recommended reading on one of the subjects covered in the day's chapter. The readings often include one passage from the Old Testament and one from the New. But sometimes both Further Reading passages are from the New Testament as Apostle Paul is busy explaining new concepts to the converts.
5. **ANSWERS & HELP:** The Short-Answer Questions are answered here, along with the bits of intrigue and insight on answering the Application Questions. Your answers to the Application Questions may be different than what is provided here. That's completely acceptable—we just encourage you to be certain you have given your answer thought and it fits your past, present, or future.

What are the MOST POPULAR VERSES, and what VERSION OF THE BIBLE do you use?

We try to create studies in ways that any version of the Bible can be used. Nonetheless, we gravitate to the two most popular so as to keep with common language to examine challenging constructs. This study was created using the KJV (King James Version) and the NIV (New International Version). The Most Popular Scriptures, found in the Week 5, Day 5 Study, are derived by software that recognizes how many times a scripture is searched in popular engines such as Bible Gateway and Google. All of the 30,000+ scriptures have a ranking number. At present, the #1 position goes to John 3:16. The lowest is likely in Leviticus, where rankings appear in the 31,000s! Note that Ephesians has one verse that ranks #6 in the entire Bible! We'll let you guess which one it is before you come upon it at the end of the study.

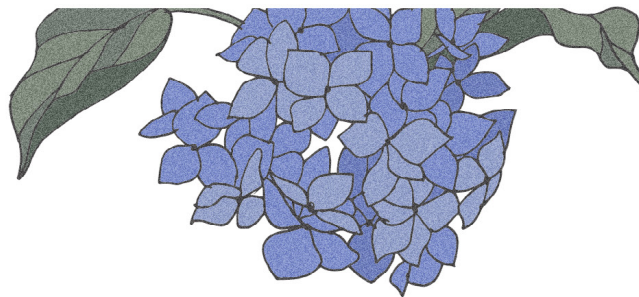
Conclusion

With just a little time each day this month, you will have a wonderful opportunity to know well the Book of Ephesians. By the end of the month, you should feel endeared to these people—and to Paul for all he endured with them and taught to them.



EPHESIANS

Study Tools





Study Tool #1:

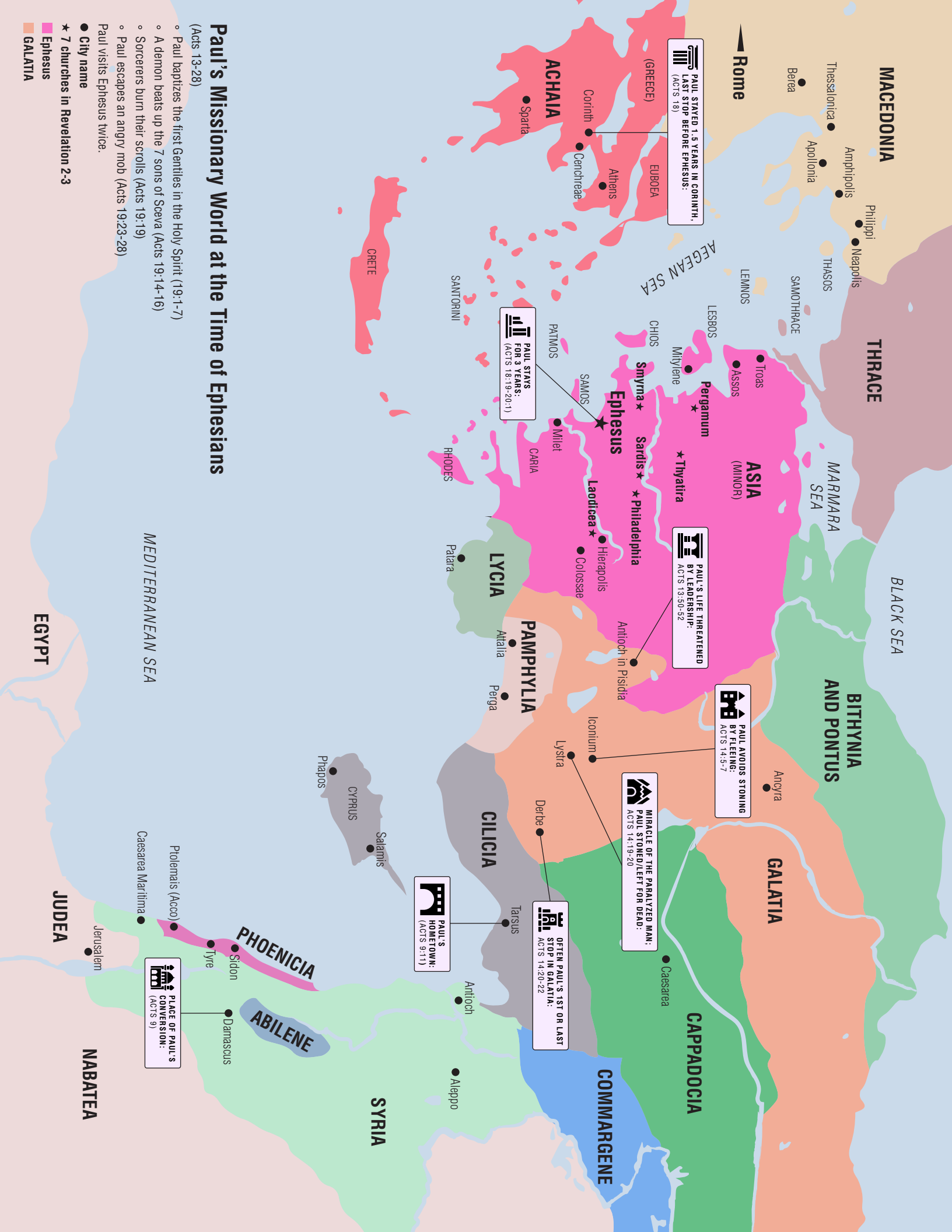
Timeline: Apostle Paul's Journeys & Writings Related to Ephesians

Here are the events from Apostle Paul's life that shed the most light on his relationship with Ephesus. Not all the stops on his missionary journeys are included—only those that precede, follow, or involve Ephesus in some way. The writing of various Epistles is included if they involved Ephesus. Use the timeline with Lesson.

#1, Day #1 to get the big picture of where Ephesus stood in Paul's travels. Use it anytime you are introduced to an event in Paul's life and you want to give it placement. You can use it in conjunction with the map showing Ephesus, which is on the next page.

***Light Green:** Major events in Paul's adult life ***Pink:** Paul's travels around Ephesus ***Light Purple:** Paul's writings.

Approx. Year AD	Event	Accompanied By	Where	Bible Reference
36	Conversion of Paul	Unnamed Men	Road to Damascus	Acts 9
46-49	Paul's first missionary journey	Barnabas	Cyprus, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and back through the same places to Antioch	Acts 13-14
51-53	Paul's 2nd missionary journey	Silas, Timothy, Luke	Antioch to Syria, Cilicia, Derbe, Lystra, Phrygia, Troas, Corinth, Ephesus (short stay of days)	Acts 16-18
52-53	Paul writes 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Galatians		Corinth, (last stop before Ephesus)	
54-58	Paul's 3rd missionary journey		Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus (long stay of 3 years), Illyricum, Corinth, Philippi, Troas, Miletus, Tyre, and Caesarea	Acts 19-20
60-62	Paul's house arrest	Tychicus	Rome	Acts 28
61-62	Prison Epistles Written: Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians,		Rome	Epistle Indicators
64	Paul writes 1 Timothy & Titus (after Titus moved on from Crete) Philippians	Titus	Crete	Epistle Indicators
65	Paul rearrested and sent back to Rome	Luke	Rome	Church History
65-67	Paul's martyrdom		Rome	Church History



MACEDONIA

THRACE

BLACK SEA

BITHYNIA
AND PONTUS

GALATIA

CAPPADOCIA

COMMARGENE

SYRIA

NABATEA

JUDEA

EGYPT

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Paul's Missionary World at the Time of Ephesians

(Acts 13-28)

- Paul baptizes the first Gentiles in the Holy Spirit (19:1-7)
 - A demon beats up the 7 sons of Sceva (Acts 19:14-16)
 - Sorcerers burn their scrolls (Acts 19:19)
 - Paul escapes an angry mob (Acts 19:23-28)
- Paul visits Ephesus twice.

● City name

★ 7 churches in Revelation 2-3

■ Ephesus

■ GALATIA

PAUL STAYED 1.5 YEARS IN CORINTH.
LAST STOP BEFORE EPHESUS:
(ACTS 18)

PAUL STAYS
FOR 3 YEARS:
(ACTS 18:19-20:1)

PAUL'S LIFE THREATENED
BY LEADERSHIP:
ACTS 13:50-52

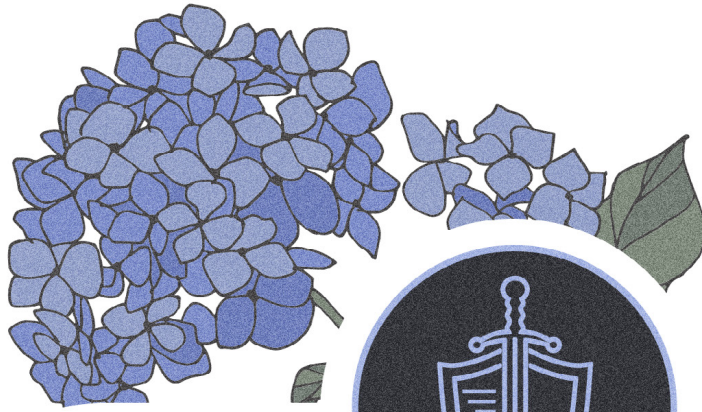
PAUL AVOIDS STONING
BY FLEEING:
ACTS 14:5-7

MIRACLE OF THE PARALYZED MAN:
PAUL STONED/LEFT FOR DEAD:
ACTS 14:19-20

OFTEN PAUL'S 1ST OR LAST
STOP IN GALATIA:
ACTS 14:20-22

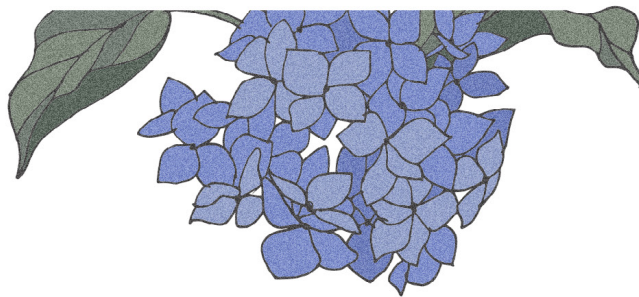
PAUL'S
HOMETOWN:
(ACTS 9:11)

PLACE OF PAUL'S
CONVERSION:
(ACTS 9)



EPHESIANS

Introduction-Ephesians 1



WEEK 1

An Ephesians FAQ

What makes Ephesians different from other Bible books, but especially other Epistles?

What did Apostle Paul have to say to the people of Ephesus that still resonates today, or does so even more today than ever? For what concepts is the book best known? We can answer these and many more important questions using the FAQ below.

Instead of reading from the Book of Ephesians today, here is a broad overview of the Epistle constructed by answering popular questions. You can answer the Short-Answer Questions at the end.

1. Where is Ephesians in the Bible?

Ephesians is the 10th book of the 27 in the New Testament, following Galatians. The book is six chapters long, making it of average length among the Epistles.

2. Can the book be broken down into parts to better understand it?

Yes. The first half, or first three chapters, of Ephesians covers some of the foundational fine points of the New Covenant, wielding a lot of influence in the defining of our Christian faith. The second half, or second three chapters, is more practical and therefore easier to understand.

3. What type of Epistle is Ephesians?

Ephesians is one of 13 Epistles written by Apostle Paul and is therefore known as a Pauline Epistle. It is also known as a Prison Epistle, meaning it was one of four that Paul wrote while under house arrest in Rome around 60 AD (the other Prison Epistles include Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon).

4. What was Ephesus like in the days of Christ?

Ephesus was the capital as well as one of the largest cities in Asia Minor at the time of Christ. It housed a 300-year-old theater that could hold 25,000 spectators. It was the largest amphitheater in the ancient world. It was also famous for possessing a temple dedicated to pagan goddess Artemis, which was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. In the first century BC, Ephesus had a population of just over 250,000, making it the second largest city in the known world, next to Rome.

5. How did the church in Ephesus start?

For centuries, opinions have differed as to the date of the Exodus. And yes, the very Apostle Paul first came to Ephesus during his second missionary journey (covered in Acts 18-20). The approximate year was 53 AD. He came having just completed a stay in Corinth for a year and a half. However, Paul's first visit to Ephesus was only for a short period. He visited the temple and preached Christ. Many Jews asked him to stay on and teach them more. However, he felt the Holy Spirit calling him to go to a festival in Jerusalem (Acts 18:18-21) yet spoke with enthusiasm of a return, the Lord willing.

6. How often did Paul revisit Ephesus?

Paul went back to Ephesus only one time that is well documented, but his second stay lasted for three years during his third missionary journey, just preceding his house arrest in Rome. This happened in the mid-50s AD. He was able to watch the church grow greatly.

7. What adventures did Paul and other disciples have while in Ephesus?

The famous story in Acts 19, where the first believers were rebaptized from John's baptism to the Holy Spirit, occurred in Ephesus. While Paul was able to stay for an extended time on his second visit, John was known to come and go from the church quite often.

Other adventures include a demon beating up the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:14-16), sorcerers burning their sacred scrolls (Acts 19:19), and Paul escaping the mob formed in the amphitheater by an idol maker (Acts 19:23-28).

As John is the author of Revelation, we find in his writing that Ephesus is one of the seven churches located in Asia Minor to be given a spiritual evaluation directly from Christ (Revelation 2-3). And Ephesus is the only church among those seven to also have an epistle written to them in the New Testament. Apostle John is thought to have resided in Ephesus after receiving the Revelation. Tradition states that he died and was buried in the city.

Finally, Timothy—Paul's traveling companion at times and recipient of the Pauline Epistles 1 and 2 Timothy—became the first Bishop of Church of Ephesus. First and Second Timothy apply to his work in Ephesus, according to scholars.

8. Where is Ephesus located in the modern world?

Ephesus is located on the west coast of Turkey, as were all seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3. All started in Asia Minor during the ministry of Apostle Paul, and today they are ancient cities protected by the Culture and Tourism Ministry of the Republic of Turkey. Jesus spoke that several of these churches could be cut down if they stayed on a spiritually declining path. You will find out in this study how Ephesus fared.

9. Why are Ephesians and Galatians sometimes called 'sister books?' How are they alike and different?

Galatians and Ephesians are sometimes called 'sister books' in the New Testament because they appear one following the other (Galatians is first) and because they are similar in length. And finally, each contains scripture verses that people in modern culture find greatly endearing. Galatians contains the Fruit of the Spirit passages in the fifth chapter, which are often compared in popularity to the Armor of God passage in Ephesians' sixth chapter.

Beyond that, the two epistles have some pretty spectacular differences.

Galatians was one of the first epistles Apostle Paul wrote (around 51 AD); Ephesians is one of the last (around 60-61 AD). Paul wrote to the Galatians because they were struggling with foundational issues including legalism; he wrote to the Ephesians because they were doing quite well and he wanted to provide encouragement. Galatia is a region farther east than Asia Minor and is also a province containing four churches; Ephesus is one large city. Ephesus lay on the Aegean Sea (see your MAP), whereas southern Galatia is landlocked, and only the upper west portion buttresses the Black Sea, but Paul is not known to have visited there.

10. Was Ephesians the last Epistle Paul wrote?

Most scholars don't think so. While Paul died just a few years after writing the Ephesians,

he likely wrote three more Epistles before he was martyred (see question #5). After being released from house arrest in Rome, Paul lived another few years and was martyred in the mid-60s AD during the reign of the evil emperor Nero. It is believed Nero had him rearrested and decapitated. It is also part of early church lore that he and Apostle Peter died in close proximity—if not on the same day, then during Nero's infamous mood swing.

INTRODUCTORY DAY 1 QUIZ

Fill in the answers to the material presented in today's introductory material, the FAQ about Ephesians:

- 01 Ephesus is **(a)** a city, **(b)** a region, **(c)** a capital, **(d)** a and c (see Question 9).
- 02 The Book of Ephesians is generally broken into two parts for teaching. The first is doctrinal; the second is (see Question 2) _____.
- 03 The four epistles Paul wrote under house arrest include Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and (see Question 3) _____.
- 04 Ephesians was probably written during one of these two years: (see Question 9) _____
- 05 In the first century AD, Ephesus had a population of this many people: (see Question 4) _____
- 06 How many churches in Asia Minor were given a spiritual evaluation directly from God in Revelation 2-3? (see Question 7) _____
- 07 Which companion and friend of Apostle Paul's became the first bishop of Ephesus? (see Question 7) _____
- 08 Paul was killed by the edict of this emperor: (see Question 10) _____



Acts 18-20: A Background for Ephesians

READ ACTS 18-20

To get a taste for the massive, polytheistic and feisty city of Ephesus, take a trip through the few chapters in the Book of Acts that covers Paul's time with them. It will be easier to appreciate the Book of Ephesians if you can see the mobs forming, fists flying, demons blazing, and Christians coping. It's all part of the story of Paul's love for these people that went so deep, he spent three years there—yet only by God's strength! Use your Map and Timeline to get the broadest view of these events.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 Paul traveled from Corinth to Ephesus with these two people: (Acts 18:19) _____ and _____
- 02 True/False: Paul agreed to stay on in Ephesus when the Jews asked him to stay (Acts 18:20).
- 03 A learned man by this name was preaching the gospel in Ephesus: (Acts 18:24)

- 04 Paul laid hands on Christians in Ephesus, knowing they would receive this: (Acts 19:6)

- 05 True/False: People in Ephesus were being healed just by touching things Paul touched (Acts 19:11-12).
- 06 Ephesians burned their sacred scrolls who had practiced this type of witchcraft: (Acts 19:19)

- 07 Sceva, whose sons were beaten badly by a demon, held this local title: (Acts 19:13-16)

- 08 The person who almost started the riot was Demetrius, who did this for a living: (Acts 19:24)

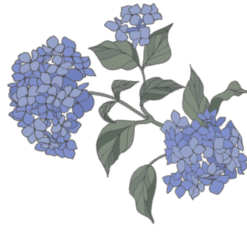
- 09 According to Acts 20:16, Paul decided to sail past Ephesus because he was trying to reach this city before Pentecost: _____
- 10 In Acts 20:25, Paul prophesied this heartbreaking news to the Ephesians elders:

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** In Acts 20:29-31, Paul gave a prophecy about savage wolves trying to destroy the flock. Although spoken to the Church anciently, these words can apply to us today. How can we be on guard against those who want to destroy our faith and lead us astray?

- 02** The trying experience with Demetrius beginning in Acts 19:24 was loud and chaotic, but pretty typical of what can happen when religion is discussed in public. How would you respond to nonbelievers when your faith is under attack?

FURTHER READING on PERSECUTION FROM NONBELIEVERS: John 15:18, 1 Peter 4:12-14



Ephesians 1:1-6: Approach this Book with Patience and Willingness

READ EPHESIANS 1:1-6

Let's break into the actual text of Ephesians now that we have a good understanding of these anxious yet well-intending people. As with most Epistles, the text is meant to be gleaned one line—sometimes one word—at a time to get the most of its meaning. Otherwise, Paul can sound esoteric, and because we see this epistle-type of language so often in Bible studies, it can lose valuable meaning. Approach the text with prayer and patience, and you will glean the most from it.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 Paul identifies himself as a believer by using this word: (v. 1) _____
- 02 Paul feels free to offer a blessing, not from himself but from whom? (v. 2)

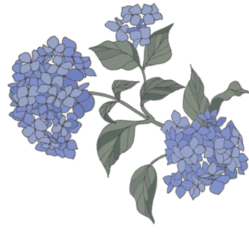
- 03 God has blessed us in these realms or places: (v. 3) _____
- 04 When did God choose us as believers? (v. 4) _____
- 05 For what did God predestine us? (v. 5) _____
- 06 True/False: God finds our salvation pleasurable (v. 5).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Upon writing this letter to the Ephesians, Paul immediately alludes to some of God's great promises. What phrases or words does Paul use that stand out the most to you? Do any of them hold personal meaning or relevance to you?

- 02** Paul calls himself an apostle in verse 1. Keep in mind the epistle was written near the end of his life, and he'd been plagued with doubters as to the authenticity of his calling for decades. Do you think using this phrase adds authenticity to his words? Why or why not?

FURTHER READING on WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN APOSTLE: 2 Corinthians 12:12, Matthew 19:28



Ephesians 1:7-14: God's Will Is Most Important

READ EPHESIANS 1:7-14

When people read Ephesians to glean some of God's most precious promises, they will often pause and reflect on what is included in today's reading. Let's see how well God's promises can be spelled out for believers such as these, who can feel insecure and doubt their worth.

TEXT QUESTIONS

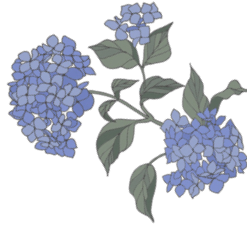
- 01 What two gifts do we receive through the blood of Christ? (v. 7) _____ and _____.
- 02 God abounded or lavished on us these two things: (v. 8) _____ and _____.
- 03 This is a mystery to most people, but believers should have a more complete understanding of it: (v. 9) _____.
- 04 God's will is to be put into effect when _____ (v. 10).
- 05 We are predestined according to one thing: (v. 11) _____.
- 06 According to verse 12, the people of Ephesus to _____.
- 07 We have been sealed with this: (v. 13) _____.
- 08 The Holy Spirit proves that we have this: (v. 14) _____.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Verse 9 states that as people come to Christ, they will have a much clearer idea of what God's will is in building His kingdom on earth. How has your vision changed, since coming to know Jesus as Lord, and God as an all-loving and all-powerful being? What are you doing now or would like to do to help that kingdom?

- 02** Paul uses terms like "sealed," "predestined," and "called since the foundation of the world" to show the assurance we can have in our calling. Why might the Christians of Ephesus have felt insecure about their beliefs? Why might we feel insecure about our salvation today?

FURTHER READING on THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION: Romans 8:38-39, John 10:28



Ephesians 1:15-22: A Person Raised from the Dead??

READ EPHESIANS 1:15-22

Here Paul is leaning hard into the Ephesians to understand and appreciate their position as believers. We often don't feel blessed when, in fact, we are. Let's see if we can apply Paul's words to our spiritual journey as well as theirs.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 The Ephesians had faith in Christ but also love of _____ (v. 15).
- 02 What does Paul pray that the Ephesians receive more of? (v. 16-17) _____
and _____
- 03 Paul wants us to see this clearly: (v. 18) _____
- 04 How does Paul define God's power? (v. 19) _____
- 05 Where is Jesus in the heavenly realm? (v. 20) _____
- 06 The power of Christ is unmatched, in this world, but also in _____ (v. 21).
- 07 To show Christ's position in heaven, Paul compares it to putting all things here: (v. 22)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Verse 20 brings up the concept of Christ being raised from the dead. We have heard this so often that it has become commonplace, even though it is a priceless concept. The Ephesians had never heard of or seen such a thing, even among their polytheistic gods. Imagine for a moment, you are hearing for the first time of a person who came back from the dead. Does this heighten your view of God's promises to us? If so, how?

- 02** Verse 15 mentions the Ephesians' love of all God's people. Many believers claim to love God, but we don't often see them doing much to help their fellow man. Why is our witness in loving others so important?

FURTHER READING on the IMPORTANCE OF SHARING GOD'S LOVE: James 1:22-27; 2:14-20



Fill-in-the-Blank Answers

FROM DAY 1

1. (d) a city and a capital
2. Practical
3. Philemon
4. 60-61 AD
5. 250,000
6. Seven
7. Timothy
8. Nero

FROM DAY 2

1. Priscilla, Aquila
2. False
3. Apollos
4. Holy Spirit
5. True
6. Sorcery
7. Jewish Chief Priest
8. Silversmith
9. Jerusalem
10. They would not see him again

FROM DAY 3

1. Apostle
2. God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
3. Heavenly
4. Before the creation/foundation of the world
5. Adoption
6. True

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

Paul's prayer for all the seedling churches springing up is that they reach maturity. The Ephesians are of particular concern because of their circumstances. Many seedling churches started in areas a bit rough around the edges and with smaller populations. This is the most highly populated city in the known world outside of Rome itself. Apostle Paul keeps returning to God's part in this passage, as opposed to man's, to give the people encouragement that they can make it to Christian maturity. You can see at the end of this month's study whether the church of Ephesus "made it" or not. The message to us is the same: We should rely on God and not obsess over circumstances because He is bigger than all of them.

Help with Question #2:

These people were in danger of being doubted by the surrounding polytheists, whose lives were easier socially and psychologically. Paul wants them to have confidence in what he is saying and, thus, in his position with God.

FROM DAY 4

1. Redemption, forgiveness
2. Wisdom, understanding or prudence
3. His will
4. When times reach their fulfillment or in the fulness of times
5. God's purposes or God's will
6. They are among the first people
7. Holy Spirit of promise
8. An inheritance

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

We are able to understand God's will more clearly as we grow in Christ. It starts with understanding His will for us daily, in making choices of where to put our love and energy to best serve Him. At some point, we must let go of the idea of "God's will for my life" and mature into the idea of "God's will for the world and how I can help." A turning point is often when we stop praying so much for ourselves and our circumstances and start praying fervently for others, even if we don't know them.

Help with Question #2:

Ephesus was prime for a blow-up of the type Demetrius the idol-maker orchestrated. We have a lot of people living in close, urban proximity, where a misunderstanding could mushroom into a riot. It's amazing how things have really not changed. In big populations where there are problems, we can often say, "follow the money." Demetrius was losing income and thereby was willing to jeopardize lives. Of course, this happens often today.

FROM DAY 5

1. All saints, or all God's people
2. Wisdom and revelation
3. The hope of His calling
4. Mighty, strong, and/or exceeding in greatness
5. At God's right hand
6. The world that is to come
7. Under Christ's feet

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

One Christian writer shares stories of her father being a funeral director. She said that the scariest thing about seeing the dead bodies wasn't how they might suddenly wake up (the way horror movies have taught us to respond). She said it is that by appearance and touch, there is simply no way that they are ever coming back. They will never get up and walk, never hold a pencil, never make a sound, never share an opinion ever again—at least not in this body. She struggled more than many Christian friends to believe a body could come back to life, and finally believing Christ's resurrection was a huge moment in her faith journey.

Help with Question #2:

Some Christians today are in grave danger, having been attacked by the "grace virus" as some call it. Grace is miraculous and beautiful; the "grace virus" occurs when believers feel that because they are saved by grace, they needn't do anything to help others. Most of these people are bored and imbalanced, missing many cues to help bring in the Kingdom. God has created a salvation message that involves us (probably because we are prone to laziness and self-centeredness, and actions help us work against it). Without us, most non-believers will not experience God's love, because it is most often shown through us.



WEEK 1 IN REVIEW

This is the first of four Weeks in Review with one following each week's five days of study. There are no right or wrong answers below. These are just another opportunity to reflect on how the book can serve you best.

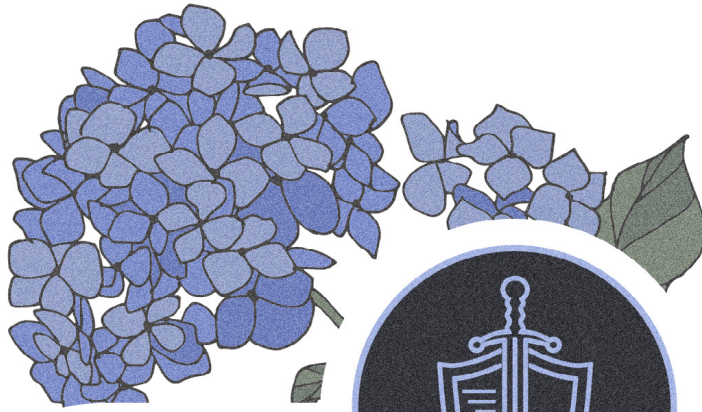
Day 1: The FAQs of Bible books often present facts that people find interesting or surprising. What fact from the FAQ did you find most intriguing? Why?

Day 2: The Application Questions brought up what happens when we discuss Jesus in public places, or in tight quarters such as the dinner table. What can we do either to prevent arguments or to make them work for God's favor?

Day 3: The loud and surly polytheists were Apostle Paul's biggest concern in establishing a church in Ephesus. What is your biggest challenge in accomplishing God's will, and what can we learn from Paul's vision?

Day 4: Question 1 dealt with God's will becoming clearer to us as we mature spiritually. Reflect on seasons and reasons your prayers suddenly became more "others-oriented" rather than "self-oriented." Reflect on your prayer life and any ways you see yourself growing through it.

Day 5: Some biblical scholars believe that while salvation comes by grace alone, we may obtain our inheritance based on what we did—on how well our actions reflected our confession of faith. Of course, we all feel we could do more, and most of us probably could. But what would you like to start, improve, or cultivate to show God's love in your community?



EPHESIANS

Ephesians 2-3:14



WEEK 2

Ephesians 2:1-7: How We Come from Flesh and Become Spirit

READ EPHESIANS 2:1-7

Chapter 2 begins with some beautiful verses that have helped the Church define our faith over the years. See what sounds most familiar to you, and try to understand concepts you may have only glanced at before.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 Before experiencing salvation, we are considered to be _____ (v. 1).
- 02 True/False: The ruler or prince of the power of the air is now at work in people who are disobedient (v. 2).
- 03 We used to follow primarily the desires of our _____ (v. 3).
- 04 We are saved by _____ (v. 5).
- 05 True/False: We are already seated with Christ (v. 6).
- 06 What are we hoping to be shown in the future? (v. 7) _____

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Christians are often concerned about ways we can become ensnared by the forces of darkness. Verse 2 specifically names disobedience. Reflect on the importance of obedience. Why is obedience to God so important? How can obedience be beneficial for us?

- 02** Paul specifically mentions that it is by grace we are saved. However, grace is a word we hear so often that we lose sight of what it means. What is grace (feel free to look up a definition)? And how can we keep from forgetting its meaning?

FURTHER READING on the GREAT REWARDS OF OBEDIENCE to God and Christ: Isaiah 1:19, John 14:23



Ephesians 2:8-15: Jews and Gentiles Are United

READ EPHESIANS 2:8-15

Pace yourself and remember to pause often to reflect—at every verse if you feel so led. We are coming into some of the most popular verses in Christianity. Let's see what they are and appreciate God attending to our needs.

TEXT QUESTIONS

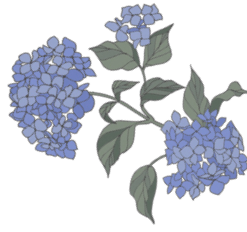
- 01 True/False: Salvation comes by faith (v. 8-9).
- 02 We are created to do good _____ (v. 10).
- 03 The Jews then often referred to the Gentiles as the _____ (v. 11).
- 04 The Gentiles were once without hope and without _____ (v. 12).
- 05 You have been brought close or nigh by the blood of Christ, whereas once you were _____ (v. 13).
- 06 True/False: God has made the Jews and Gentiles one (v. 14).
- 07 God brought the two groups together, thus creating _____ (v. 15).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Some Christians may resort to philosophical discussion, and would rather talk about their faith, rather than exercise it. But verse 10 tells us we were created to do good works. Why do you think good works are so important? And what happens when we go too long without performing them?

- 02** In Ephesus, the Jews and Gentiles were thought of as opposites and enemies. Today (with some exceptions) Jews and Gentiles get along fairly well. Who might we consider foes or opposites today as we try to build our faith? Why?

FURTHER READING on BEING CREATED TO DO GOOD WORKS: Colossians 3:23-24, Hebrews 13:16



Ephesians 2:16-22: Oneness in Christ

READ EPHESIANS 2:16-22

Some Christian teachers have said that if we could keep in our hearts all the statements of Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2, we wouldn't suffer confusion about our faith and all for which it stands. So follow along and, again, think of each verse as an incredible statement in and of itself.

TEXT QUESTIONS

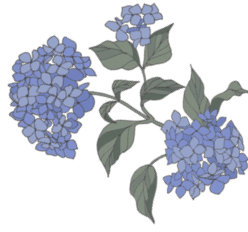
- 01 Jews and Gentiles are _____ into one body (v. 16).
- 02 Jesus preached _____ to the Jews and Gentiles (v. 17).
- 03 Each group now has access to the father by one _____ (v. 18).
- 04 While we used to be strangers and foreigners, we are now fellow _____ (v. 19).
- 05 Verse 20 introduces this famous description of Christ: _____
- 06 Paul wants the people in this church to grow into or become this: (v. 21) _____
- 07 The Jews and Gentiles are being built together to become a _____ (v. 22).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** In today's reading, Paul emphasizes the importance of unity. However, we have so much disunity among churches today. What do you think the ramifications are of discord? And how might you personally play a role in creating more unity?

- 02** The term used in verse 20, Chief Cornerstone, has become famous because of the image it creates of strength. What does the term Chief Cornerstone mean to you, and how does it strengthen your faith?

FURTHER READING on the IMPORTANCE OF UNITY: 1 Corinthians 1:10, Romans 12:4-5



Ephesians 3:1-7: Paul Attempts to Explain Our Greatest Gifts

READ EPHESIANS 3:1-7

We are entering Paul's final chapter to the Ephesians that has to do with the founding ideas or doctrines of our faith. See how many times you recognize a strong love of God in these verses, coming to people who are used to worshipping statues and idols that have no soul, no concern for them.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 Paul tells the people very simply that he is under house arrest. What word does he use? (v. 1) _____
- 02 God gave Paul the _____ of grace for the people (v. 2).
- 03 By revelation, God shared with Paul this type of information: (v. 3) _____
- 04 True/False: Paul's mystery is about Christ (v. 4).
- 05 The Ephesians had received information not revealed to previous generations, but it is now revealed to _____ and _____ (v. 5).
- 06 The Jews and Gentiles are both _____ (v. 6).
- 07 Paul's preaching is a gift from _____ (v. 7).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Paul states in verse 1 that he is a prisoner of Christ Jesus. What does this tell us about Paul's circumstances? What do you think it means to be a prisoner for Jesus? And what might we learn from Paul about living amid restrictive circumstances?

- 02** Paul speaks about sharing a mystery or secret with the Ephesians about Christ. What secrets or mysteries has God also revealed to believers, that might not be known by unbelievers?

FURTHER READING on GOD OPENING BELIEVERS' EYES: James 1:5, 3:17



Ephesians 3:8-14: God and the Love of Christ Are Immeasurable

READ EPHESIANS 3:8-14

Paul gets deep into what salvation brings to us—what treasures, what secret knowledge, what strength and reliability our God has. Epistles like this require lots of reflection. Some teachers note that there are around three ways to reflect on each and every verse! So stay with us as we proceed through more precious truths and see how much we can take away.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 Paul's gift was to preach to these people: (v. 8) _____
- 02 The manifold wisdom of God might be known to _____
and _____ (v. 10).
- 03 True/False: According to verse 11, Jesus has eternal purposes with the Church.
- 04 We can approach God with boldness or freedom and _____ (v. 12).
- 05 Paul's suffering is our _____ (v. 13).
- 06 In what position is Paul praying for the Ephesians? (v. 14) _____

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Verse 11 mentions God's eternal purposes. However, with our limited scope and understanding, we may feel God doesn't have a plan for us, or we can't see what it is. How can we learn about God's purpose, especially for each of us? And how can we keep from forgetting it?

- 02** Approaching God with boldness and freedom (verse 12) is something we might take for granted. However, the people of Ephesus were used to many gods, who displayed selfish characteristics and demanded hurtful sacrifices. How does our understanding about God's character help us approach Him with the boldness and freedom Paul mentions in this verse?

FURTHER READING on OUR GOD'S GREATNESS: Philippians 2:9-11, Isaiah 45:5



Fill-in-the-Blank Answers

FROM DAY 1

1. Dead
2. True
3. Flesh
4. Grace
5. True
6. The riches of His grace

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

Rare is the Christian who didn't have to learn the hard way in some instance that "the natural consequences of actions" await disobedience. Of course, we want to please God, but that grows from our spirit—which should be maturing—while our flesh should be receding. Sometimes we can see our growth plainly. At other times it can feel like God moved on to other projects and we are not growing at all! Be patient, as God has a way of "hiding" us while we are growing and suddenly revealing us after a growth spurt.

Help with Question #2:

Grace shares a root with "gracious." We sometimes describe our mothers and grandmothers as very gracious. While it's hard to exactly define that use of the word, we know grace as something that very special people have and as something we want. Another definition is "courteous goodwill." Do we often think of God as courteous? Probably not often enough—He is the epitome of courteous.

FROM DAY 2

1. True
2. Works
3. Uncircumcised or
Uncircumcision
4. God
5. Far off or far away
6. True
7. Peace

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

People can become toxic when their whole existence focuses on themselves. People who have spent their lives in self-centeredness often feel a deep regret as they get older. Thank goodness it's never too late to turn around. Jesus said, "It is better to give than to receive," and those who devote their lives to others experience a joy, a peace, a comfort that can spread and grow.

Help with Question #2:

It seems that our foes or biggest challenge today is not another religion, but a lack thereof. We call these people "skeptics" and they wield the most power in academia, the sciences industries, and the arts. One Christian writer attests, "I've never asked God for information where I haven't come into it within a few days." It's important to keep in our hearts that "skeptics" can be answered, just like the Ephesian polytheists could. It will take training as well as strong faith and vision.

FROM DAY 3

1. Reconciled
2. Peace
3. Spirit
4. Citizens
5. Chief Cornerstone
6. Holy temple
7. A dwelling or habitation of God

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

One thing we can do for each other is listen. We are living in an era where everyone wants to talk, and no one wants to listen. Among Christians, many may feel they will be “contaminated” by the opinions of another, which isn’t quite true. We risk less dangers in listening than in stonewalling. Another is “speak as you would like to be spoken to.” We often find we get what we want when we give what we are hoping to get. It doesn’t always work to keep peace, but as part of the Golden Rule, it gives us the best chance.

Help with Question #2:

Here are some other names for Jesus in the Bible: Almighty (Revelation 1:8), Alpha and Omega, First and Last, Beginning and the End (Revelation 22:12-13), Amen, faithful and true witness, Lord of all Creation (Revelation 3:14), Author of Life (Acts 3:15), Bread from Heaven (John 6:32), Bread of Life (John 6:35), Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4), Deliverer (Romans 11:26), Immanuel (Matthew 1:23), Faithful and True Witness (Revelation 3:14), The Gate (John 10:7-9), Good Shepherd (John 10:11), Heir of All Things (Hebrews 1:1-2), High Priest (Hebrews 7:26-27), I Am (John 8:58-59), King of the Jews (Matthew 2:1-2), Lamb of God (John 1:29).

FROM DAY 4

1. Prisoner
2. Dispensation or administration
3. Mystery
4. True
5. Apostles and Prophets
6. Heirs
7. God

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

It is telling here that Paul did not say he was a prisoner of the Romans, he was a prisoner for Jesus. Paul recognized Jesus as his sovereign and that Jesus was in control, which can be a comfort for us in times of trial. Also, Paul did not become upset, complain, or become bitter about his circumstances. Instead, he made himself useful and fulfilled a purpose and was able to still communicate and write encouragement to the different churches he had visited previously.

Help with Question #2:

Salvation in and of itself is a great secret. We don’t often think of it that way because by this point in the Age of Grace, the secret has been revealed to many people. But it is often easy to tell a person who has bought into the secret from a person who has not. Some Christians have a longer journey to get from bad behavior to avoiding even the appearances of evil, but among them is a desire and an energy or frequency that is almost unmistakable to those who share it.

FROM DAY 5

1. Gentiles
2. Rulers and authorities, or principalities and powers in heavenly realms or places
3. True
4. Confidence
5. Glory
6. On his knees/kneeling

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

Often people “find” themselves in God’s will rather than trying to dig through a mountain to get to it. God knows who His children are from the foundations of the world. He is more than capable of getting us into the center of His will. We are there. While we can always draw nearer to God, we should rest in the knowledge that He is working with us now.

Help with Question #2:

One of the greatest expectations of our God we learned all the way back in Genesis, when Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac, which he believed God wanted. God’s message to us all was that there would be no human sacrifices among His believers; the sacrifice would come from Himself. When we make sacrifices for other people with our time, finances and talents, this is the most important way we make sacrifices to God. To the Ephesians, our God would seem extremely humanitarian.



WEEK 2 IN REVIEW

This is the first of four Weeks in Review with one following each week's five days of study. There are no right or wrong answers below. These are just another opportunity to reflect on how the book can serve you best.

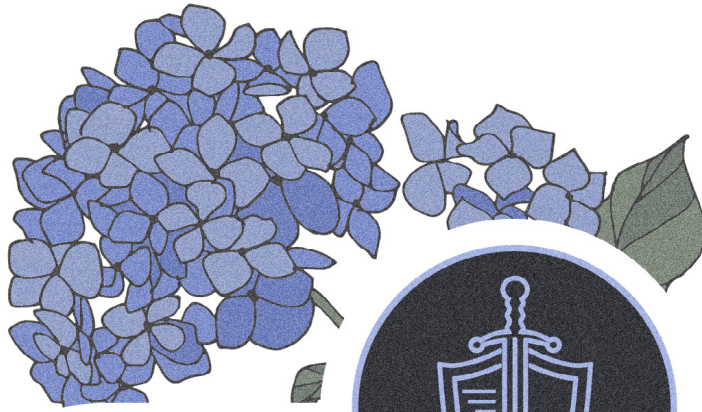
Day 1: Reflect on a time when you were praying hard but couldn't see any answers from the Lord. What was God actually doing during this period, now that you can look back on it?

Day 2: Jesus tells us to pray for our foes. Think about how you would prayer for a skeptic you know and then pray for that person with depth.

Day 3: Application Question #1 from Day #3 focuses on the theme of unity. Unity often lapses when we erroneously put "truth" as the primary focus of our faith as opposed to "love." Saying what is true can be important, but love is even more so. Why?

Day 4: Have you ever known a person for a while and then they reveal to you that they are Christian? Some believers love having this experience as it does great things to the friendship. Have you ever suddenly realized you were in the presence of a Christian? How was the conversation able to shift and your feelings grow?

Day 5: In 2 Samuel 24:24, King David made an intriguing statement to neighboring King Araunah, who wanted to provide most of the real estate and animals for a sacrifice David wanted to make. David said, "No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing." What can we learn from this about the importance of sacrificing to God?



EPHESIANS

Ephesians 3:14-5:1-20



WEEK 3

Ephesians 3:14-21: What it Means to be a Christian

READ EPHESIANS 3:14-21

Here we are coming to the end of Paul's great thoughts about what it means to be Christian, what it means to experience salvation. After today we will enter the practical second half of the book. Stay focused and let the Spirit move you.

TEXT QUESTIONS

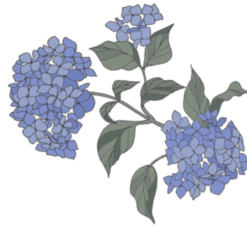
- 01 Heaven is where every family gets its _____ (v. 15).
- 02 God strengthens us with might or power for the inner _____ (v. 16).
- 03 True/False: When Christ is established in our hearts, it is through or by faith (v. 17).
- 04 We are comprehending the love of Christ together with all _____ (v. 18).
- 05 The love of Christ passes all _____ (v. 19).
- 06 God is able to do more than we ask or _____ (v. 20).
- 07 True/False: God's glory in Christ lasts until the final days (v. 21).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Paul asks in verse 16 that God strengthen these people with His power. We would all like more power from God to accomplish varying tasks in our lives. What would you want more of God's power for and why?

- 02** Verse 19 tells us that love surpasses knowledge. Has there been a time that God's love for you seemed to surpass your understanding? What were the circumstances?

FURTHER READING on USES OF GOD'S POWER: 1 John 4:12, John 14:26



Ephesians 4:1-10: Living According to Our Calling

READ EPHESIANS 4:1-10

This chapter switches from the doctrinal and foundational ideas to putting them into practice. People often like to study these next three chapters because the text is more immediately understandable. Let's try to put the words into practice in our own lives after reflecting on the contents.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 Paul wants us to walk or live so that we are _____ of the _____ (v. 1).
- 02 Three virtues Paul wants us to show are: (v. 2) _____, _____, and _____
- 03 To maintain peace, what is the most important virtue in the Spirit? (v. 3)

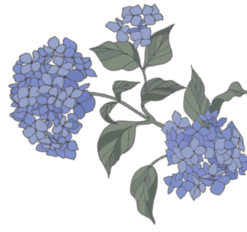
- 04 With one body and one Spirit, we are called to one _____ (v. 4).
- 05 One lord, one faith, one baptism, one _____ (v. 5-6).
- 06 We have each been given grace according to Christ's _____ (v. 7).
- 07 When He ascended on high, He took many captives and gave gifts to _____ (v. 8).
- 08 That Jesus ascended means that He first _____ (v. 9).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Living a life worthy of our calling is one of our greatest challenges. Paul gives us some examples in verses 2 & 3 of what that looks like. In what areas would you like to mature or improve? How might you work to implement these characteristics in your own life?

- 02** Often, it seems that there is a lot of division and dispute among Christians today. One famous scholar pointed out that many branches of Christianity started because of an argument that couldn't be resolved. What do you think causes believers to forget that unity, as stated here in verses 3-4? How can we resolve to do better?

FURTHER READING on OUR CALLING: Romans 8:28-30, Daniel 7:18



Ephesians 4:11-16: Don't Be Tossed To and Fro

READ EPHESIANS 4:11-16

This section includes the famous concept, “Don’t be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.” This is a challenge in today’s world, well equipped with social media and “every wind of contributor.” Look at this verse and those surrounding it to see how we can best proceed.

TEXT QUESTIONS

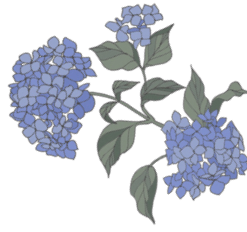
- 01 God gave us apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for equipping or perfecting us for _____ (v. 11-12).
- 02 True/False: Paul equates the unity of faith and the knowledge of Christ with maturity or perfection (v. 13).
- 03 We should not be tossed to and fro or carried by every wind of _____ (v. 14).
- 04 We should speak the truth in _____ (v. 15).
- 05 The body of Christ will only grow and increase itself in _____ (v. 16).
- 06 The Gentiles have a futility or vanity in their _____ (v. 17).
- 07 The Gentiles ultimately became ignorant because of the hardening of or blindness of their _____ (v. 18).
- 08 Nonbelievers have given themselves over to _____ - ____ (v. 19).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Reflect for a minute on the heretical “wind of doctrine” mentioned in verse 14. In what ways is this common today? How can we be on guard and share our concerns with those who may not be looking out for those dangers?

- 02** Complete this sentence: “Even though they are my brother or sister, they _____.” Fill in the blank with the most annoying patches of blindness you see in Christians today. Then underline “they are my brother or sister...” How does it make you feel to fight to hold on to them?

FURTHER READING on DOCTRINES LEADING TO HERESY: 2 Peter 2:1-22, 1 Timothy 3:1-8



Ephesians 4:17-32: Putting Love into Action

READ EPHESIANS 4:17-32

Today's reading brings us another famous verse: "Don't let the sun go down on your anger." Let this important passage bring some reflection on how we can improve in this great challenge.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 We have learned about _____ according to the truth in Jesus (v. 20-21).
- 02 We are to put off the old _____ (v. 22).
- 03 Our new self or new man is created to be like _____ (v. 24).
- 04 True/False: Paul asks us especially not to murder (v. 25).
- 05 Don't let the sun go down on your _____ (v. 26).
- 06 Paul says we must work or labor with our own hands so that we can _____ (v. 28).
- 07 We should forgive each other because _____ (v. 32).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Many Christian spouses and parents live close to the scripture in verse 26 that tells us not to go to bed angry. What are some ways we can let go of our anger? Which ways do you find the most helpful?

- 02** There is so much in this reading that people almost miss a very important statement of Paul's in verse 28. He says that dishonest people should become honest and hardworking so that they may offer something to those who have less. Why is this offering so important?

FURTHER READING on QUELLING ANGER: Proverbs 15:1, Romans 12:19



Ephesians 5:1-20: Watch How You Live

READ EPHESIANS 5:1-20

Today's reading asks us to fully understand a lot of words we are so used to seeing that we may no longer be sure exactly what they mean. Keep an electronic dictionary close at hand to get clear on words like impurity, greed, fornication and covetousness.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 We should walk in this: _____ (v. 2).
- 02 Verse 3 names these three things to avoid at all cost: _____,
_____, and _____.
- 03 True/False: Rather than foolish jesting or crudeness, we should engage in intense study (v. 4).
- 04 Describe a person who will have no inheritance in the Kingdom: (v. 5)

- 05 Instead of engaging in deeds or works of darkness, we should do this: (v. 11)

- 06 It is shameful to speak of what people do in _____ (v. 12).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** You were asked at the beginning of today's section to look up the meaning of words that are complex. What are three words that you looked up? Write down the definitions here, and how those words can be applied to our lives.

- 02** Verse 4 deceived some early Christians to believe that laughter is wrong. However, many Christians have been blessed with a sense of humor. Reflect on some boundaries while joking around. When is it acceptable for us to make others laugh? Think about at what or whom.

FURTHER READING on JOY AND REJOICING: Job 8:21, John 15:11, Philippians 4:4



Fill-in-the-Blank Answers

FROM DAY 1

1. Name
2. Man or being
3. True
4. God's holy people or saints
5. Knowledge
6. Think or imagine
7. False (it lasts forever and ever)

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

God says "yes" when we ask for power to move forward His kingdom. But we often receive an answer of "no" or "later" to our prayers. Why is this? One sign of a maturing Christian is that they know better than to ask for things that will heighten their self-interest. They don't pray things like "help my team win" (when the other team also has numerous Christians praying), or they won't ask God for things that will make them personally more important, powerful or appearance-oriented.

Help with Question #2:

Love surpasses knowledge. This is important because knowledge will never bring peace on earth, nor give you the strength to choose between good and evil. Only love does that, and we are created to show the love of Christ.

FROM DAY 2

1. Worthy, calling or vocation
2. Humbleness, gentle and patience; or lowliness, meekness and longsuffering
3. Unity
4. Hope
5. God
6. Measure or portion
7. His people or men
8. Descended

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #2:

We can tend to forget the importance of unity if we overvalue our opinions. We can wind up seeing them as more important than our brother's or sister's sensibilities. We need to remember that we are not saved by our opinions. In fact, we will get little to no credit for them unless we are acting out God's will with them, to reveal His love to others.

FROM DAY 3

1. Works of service or work of the ministry
2. True
3. Teaching or doctrine
4. Love
5. Love
6. Mind or thinking
7. Hearts
8. Sensuality or lasciviousness

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

The internet has multiplied exponentially the false doctrines and heresies to which we could be exposed. Yet, we don't want to back into a hermit-like existence to avoid exposure. We don't want to stop caring for those around us or promoting a witness for Christ. It is important to remember that we are more likely to pick up heresy with an attitude of non-caring about others than from hearing it directly.

Help with Question #2:

Today's winds of doctrine have been annoying and infectious across the board. One famous Christian writer recently said, "I wish my friends on the left cared more about the safe birth of babies, and my friends on the right cared more about their lives after they are born." C. S. Lewis said, "Every civilization has its pet virtues." A good prayer is to ask to see above the fray, to see what God wants in spite of what men are bombarding us with. God's ultimate desires can bring restoration.

FROM DAY 4

1. Christ
2. Man or self
3. God
4. False (he asks us not to lie)
5. Anger or wrath
6. Give or share with those in need
7. God has forgiven us

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #2:

God already knows our hearts, and that we are capable of incredible dishonesty under the wrong circumstances. The biggest reason to give up thievery and laziness is not to get an A in God's eyes. It is so that God's love can be revealed to others. If you haven't done anything in a while to aid our hurting world, you can likely find a situation to which God calls you. Finding it and getting involved can be cathartic to your soul and spirit.

FROM DAY 5

1. Love, or the way of love
2. Sexual immorality, impurity, greed; or fornication, uncleanness and covetousness
3. False (we should get involved in thanksgiving or giving thanks)
4. Immoral, impure or greedy; or whoremonger, unclean, covetous idolator
5. Expose or reprove them
6. Secret

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

Here is some help with definitions. However, these definitions are standard and may need to be reworded to fit Christianity specifically:

- Immorality: Lacking the principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior.
- Impurity: Morally wrong, especially in sexual matters.
- Greed: Intense and selfish desire for something—especially wealth, power, or food.
- Fornication: Sexual intercourse between people not married to each other.
- Covetousness: To yearn for something that is the property of someone else.

Help with Question #2:

We all love to laugh—including God. Have you ever taken your children to the zoo and watched them laugh at the iguana with the long tongue eating the bug? Or the orangutan smacking his lips over a scrumptious carrot? That is actually left-over love from the Garden of Eden, where God and the angels brought animals and Adam together so he could name them. What a great laugh that probably was!

We should not laugh at the expense of others. And we often get the unnerved feeling while complaining about a person...what if they were beside us listening? While laughter is good for the soul, it isn't good when divisive or when hurting someone else. If the person, especially a sibling in Christ, would be hurt if they were listening, it's a good idea to try to build them up instead.



WEEK 3 IN REVIEW

This is the first of four Weeks in Review with one following each week's five days of study. There are no right or wrong answers below. These are just another opportunity to reflect on how the book can serve you best.

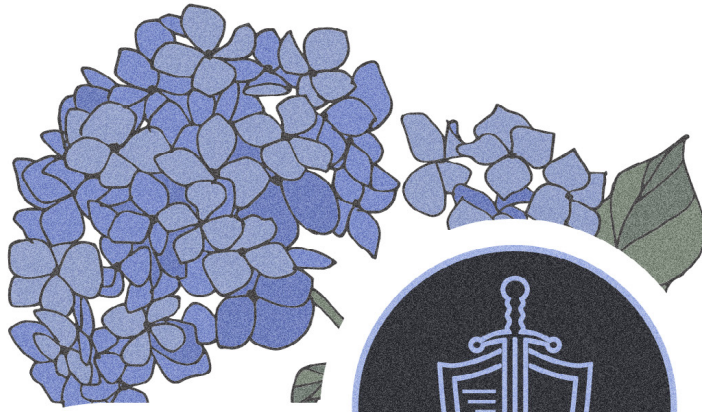
Day 1: Per application question #1, we have to be careful about wanting power. Most of the time, Christ tells us to avoid it, to empower others, but not to seek power for ourselves. Why do you think earthly power and Jesus don't often mix well?

Day 2: Per application question #2 about the amount of division that is tolerated among churches today, think of a time you or a friend or loved one were either tempted to cause dissension or actually did it. It can be something as easy as spreading a rumor or making a nasty comment with the potential to hurt. What have you learned that lends itself to more spiritual maturity?

Day 3: Per verse 15, be wary of people who have strong opinions and are saying that they are "telling the truth in love." Often these people are not very loving but are using this verse from Ephesians to say whatever they feel, even if it's uninformed or inappropriate. Think of a way the word "love" is misused in your community or culture and how you can avoid the pitfalls of being manipulated.

Day 4: You were asked in question #1 to reflect on a time you stewed about something you could have forgiven. Now think of a time when you did not let the sun go down on your anger. How has it shaped or reshaped the course of your life?

Day 5: Fornication means to have sexual intercourse with someone to whom you are not married. Today, our world has become so overrun with fornication that it is as if we've been hit by tidal wave. Reflect on ways people get hurt or hurt others by having sexual encounters outside of marriage vows. Reflect on your words, as you may be able to use them with children or other young people.



EPHESIANS

Ephesians 5:1-21-Most Popular Verses



WEEK 4

Ephesians 5:21-33: Times do Change!

READ EPHESIANS 5:21-33

Let's not beat around the bush. This chapter is getting Paul lots of bad press with modern women trying to successfully navigate their very complex lives. Was this really his fault? What are the solutions? How do we balance out?

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 Wives, submit yourselves as if your husband were _____ (v. 22).
- 02 Husbands, love your wives just as _____ (v. 25).
- 03 Christ will present the church as _____ (v. 27).
- 04 True/False: He who loves his wife loves himself (v. 28).
- 05 We are members of Christ's _____ (v. 30).
- 06 Man and woman will become one _____ (v. 31).

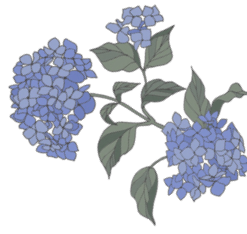
APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Try your best to answer this question: “If a ruler were entirely fair and entirely just, what would be the problem with submitting yourself to him or her?”

- 02** Modern feminists claim that Paul lacked respect for women, based on his instruction to wives here. Do you agree? How would you respond to that argument, based on Paul’s instruction to husbands? In what ways has our modern culture made the roles of women different, less divergent with men, leaving less room for men to take advantage of women?

- 03** In these verses, Paul teaches about the roles of a wife and husband in a biblical marriage. How are these roles better understood in light of his counsel in verse 21? How does this important verse help us understand and put the rest of Paul’s teaching in perspective?

FURTHER READING on GOOD LEADERSHIP SKILLS: Matthew 20:25-28, 1 Timothy 3:1-7



Ephesians 6:1-17: The Armor of God

READ EPHESIANS 6:1-17

We are entering the final chapter of Ephesians! This chapter also is loaded with great examples to put the first three chapters into practice. Let's see what advice is offered.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 "Honor your father and mother" is the first commandment with this attached to it:
(v. 2) _____
- 02 Verse 4 warns fathers not to _____ - _____ their children.
- 03 True/False: Servants or slaves are advised to treat masters as if they required extra sustenance (v. 5).
- 04 Verse 8 is very encouraging about the Lord's generosity to whom? _____
and _____.
- 05 The Full Armor of God is an important concept because it will help us stand against
_____ (v. 11).
- 06 The sword of the spirit is also known as _____ (v. 17).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Ephesians 6:5-9 has some instruction on the relationship between slaves and their masters. However, slavery is no longer lawful or permitted, so we can better apply these verses in terms of authority figures and subordinates. What do we learn about how God wants us to treat others, regardless of social standing or level of authority?

- 02** Review verses 13-17 where Paul describes the Armor of God. He describes the “full” armor and every piece in detail. Although the pieces of armor are more distant from our modern world, what is the significance of putting on the “full” armor, and not just a few pieces?

FURTHER READING on BEING A SLAVE FOR THE KINGDOM: Romans 6:22, Colossians 3:22-25



Ephesians 6:18-24: How to Pray and for Whom

READ EPHESIANS 6:18-24

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 We are supposed to pray constantly for these people: (v. 18) _____
- 02 True/False: Paul wants to fearlessly make known the mystery of why men behave so badly (v. 19).
- 03 Paul refers to himself as imprisoned like this: (v. 20) _____
- 04 Name of the person who took the letter from Paul's imprisonment in Rome to Ephesus: (v. 21) _____.
- 05 The person bringing the letter is also supposed to bring _____ (v. 22).
- 06 Grace to all in Ephesus whom _____ (v. 24).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** The reading from today contains instructions about how to pray and for whom. Read through it again. Why do you think it's important to pray for others, specifically church leadership? How might you be able to add this important concept to your prayer life?

- 02** Paul mentions the fact that he is in prison, but he doesn't belabor the idea (see verse 20). Why would it be important for people to know he has been arrested? How might this affect his preaching? Do you think this makes him look better or worse?

FURTHER READING on HOW TO PRAY: Romans 8:26, Hebrews 4:16



REVELATION 1-3: What God Had to Say to Ephesus after 30+ Years

READ REVELATION 1-3

Today we see the church of Ephesus brought up before the Throne of Heaven, where Jesus speaks to seven churches in Asia Minor about their condition. You'll be reading Christ's message to all seven churches, so you can see how the Ephesians did in comparison, and (drumroll) whether God took away their lampstand as was threatened in this passage if they didn't repent of their hardening hearts.

You're being asked to read chapters 1-3, though Christ's message to the Ephesians in chapter 2. It will give you an idea of how these passages differ from Paul's epistles. The Revelation was not only written by John (often quoting Christ), but it was written a good 30 years post-Ephesians when the culture was facing other issues. Chapter 1 especially will sound a bit strange and full of mysterious symbols. But your job here is to fixate on Christ's words and how it all affects the churches, especially the one in Ephesus.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 The seven gold lampstands are symbols of the seven _____(1:20).
- 02 Jesus tells the Ephesians that He knows their deeds, labor and their _____(2:2).
- 03 According to verse 4, Jesus holds this against the church: (2:4) _____.
- 04 True/False: Jesus asks them to repent by increasing their faith (2:5).
- 05 Jesus threatened this if they didn't repent: (2:5) _____
- 06 Per the church in Smyrna, Jesus said the devil will have some members_____ (2:10).
- 07 Per the Church of Laodicea, Jesus was very upset with them, describing them with this adjective: (3:16) _____

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 01** Jesus accused the Ephesians of losing their first love. Although love is an emotion, Christ said their redemptive power would come through works. What kind of works do you think the Ephesians may have needed to start doing again? How does this compare to a marriage when one spouse's love is waxing cold?

- 02** Have you seen any modern church that you suspect has lost its first love? Have you witnessed any churches who seem lukewarm, like the church of Laodicea in chapter 3? Some Christians in America and other first-world countries are terrified of the idea that their country's churches are becoming Laodicean. Do you agree? Why or why not?

FURTHER READING on LOSING OUR LOVE: Matthew 24:12, John 15:1-7



Ephesians' Most Popular Verses in the Modern World

Ephesians contains some extremely popular verses among today's Christians. In fact, its top-ranking scripture ranks #6 in overall popularity of the entire Bible of 30,000+ verses! Oftentimes scriptures gain and lose popularity depending on what is going on in current culture.

Try to reflect on each of the 10 most popular verses from Ephesians. Reflect on the lines provided how the verse is meaningful to you personally or how you see it working in your culture. If the verse is short and therefore unclear, look it up with the passages surrounding it to get a clearer picture of what is being written.

#1: Ephesians 2:8

Overall Bible Rank: 6

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."

Reflection: _____

#2: Ephesians 4:11

Overall Bible Rank: 35

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers."

Reflection: _____

#3: Ephesians 2:1

Overall Bible Rank: 55

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins."

Reflection: _____

#4: Ephesians 6:10

Overall Bible Rank: 81

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."

Reflection: _____

#5: Ephesians 1:3

Overall Bible Rank: 141

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

Reflection: _____

#6: Ephesians 6:12

Overall Bible Rank: 55

"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."

Reflection: _____

#7 Ephesians 2:10

Overall Bible Rank: 165

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Reflection: _____

#8: Ephesians 1:13

Overall Bible Rank: 168

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit."

Reflection: _____

#9: Ephesians 4:1

Overall Bible Rank: 183

"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received."

Reflection: _____

#10: Ephesians 5:18

Overall Bible Rank: 185

"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit."

Reflection: _____



Fill-in-the-Blank Answers

FROM DAY 1

1. Christ or the Lord
2. Christ loved the church
3. Radiant or glorious
4. True
5. Body
6. Flesh

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

Most lower positions among people are not coveted. It is only powerful positions. People would much rather tell others what to do than be told what to do. This is going to be true on earth as long as we are fallen. Not wanting to submit our will to the will of others is a cornerstone of a fallen nature. We should fight this urge within ourselves, all the while standing in defense of those who have been abused by power.

Help with Question #2:

Some church leaders will go on and on for hours trying to explain some fundamental wisdom, knowledge, or God-given position as to why men are in a better standing with God than women are, or are spiritually "smarter" somehow. It's jarring to watch them scour for something that isn't there when the truth is standing right behind them. Women have become more empowered in modern culture in many ways, including reproductive rights, equality in the voting system, ownership of property, and normalizing women in every type of workplace.

FROM DAY 2

1. Promise
2. Exasperate or provoke
3. False (we are supposed to treat masters as we would Christ)
4. Slave and free, or bond and free
5. The devil's schemes or the wiles of the devil
6. Word of God

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

The only problem with having a position of authority is that the person in charge generally takes advantage of those under them to get their needs met first. Those of us in authority should be aware of our inclinations and make every effort to avoid them.

Help with Question #2:

One comforting thought to those on the "low end of the totem pole" in this life is that Jesus promises us, "The first will be last, and the last, first." One Christian lady and her housekeeper have enjoyed imagining this role reversal up in heaven. Some days the Christian lady says she is "practicing" and serves the housekeeper lunch and beverages. They laugh and discuss how their love for each other will remain the same.

FROM DAY 3

1. The Lord's people or the saints
2. False (he wants to share the mystery of the gospel or Good News)
3. Ambassador in chains or bonds
4. Tychicus
5. Encouragement or comfort for their hearts
6. Love our Lord

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #2:

Paul's arrest is a foreshadowing of his martyrdom. Many, many people believed the gospel, surrounded as it was in mystery, because of the witness of the Apostles. With the exception of John, who was arrested multiple times along with the rest of them, all of them died horrible deaths. But what would inspire the Apostles to die in that way for Christ? Only their faith, their belief that they were going to pass through death and then get to be with Him forever and ever. Their arrests and deaths were great shows of faith in what they believed was enough to die for.

FROM DAY 4

1. Churches—the seven churches that will be written about in Revelation 2-3.
2. Perseverance or patience
3. Forsaken the love they had at first, or they left their first love.
4. False (He asks them to do works that reflected their early love)
5. Remove their lampstand or candlestick
6. Have some of them put in prison
7. Lukewarm

APPLICATION HELP

Help with Question #1:

People make all sorts of promises when they fall in love. They promise to never cheat, to be devoted parents, to become remarkable breadwinners, etc. Some husbands promise their wives to take them out to dinner every Saturday! Things start out well, but very few couples admit to keeping up with all their initial promises. The challenges of life and the cares of this world slowly start to seep into the marriage, distracting the couple from their commitments and their hearts. The Ephesians may have developed a hardness from their experiences and came to love the works themselves, and not the Being who initially inspired them.

Help with Question #2:

As for churches becoming Laodicean, this isn't just something to fear. It should be our worst nightmare. We can learn from the church of Ephesus who, by the way, did not keep their crown. It being taken away was threatened by Christ at the top of Revelation 2. In 262 AD, the Goths destroyed Ephesus, leveling their famous Temple of Artemis, and the church was not heard from again for quite some time. Some restoration of the city took place, but it never regained its splendor. Some churches exist nearby, but they are not the original, and Ephesus itself is merely ruins, which can be visited by tourists.

While this is sad, the people in the early Church of Ephesus would tell us not to lose our first love. God is kind and merciful; He isn't playing. He is slow to anger, but there is a limit. While He is kind and merciful beyond all men, He has expectations that we find or ask for the means to stay close to Him.



EXTRA CREDIT

Personalizing Ephesians for Your Life

Congratulations! You should now have a much better understanding of your brothers and sisters in Christ who raised the church of Ephesus. Below you can journal about this very popular Bible book to see how it can help in your journey toward discipleship. Fill in any questions that strike you as applicable to your life as well as studying any goals, dreams, impressions, or messages to share with others.

1. What passage in Ephesians do you find most relatable to your own spiritual journey? Why?

2. Pick four verses from Ephesians that you would like to memorize, believing the messages will give you daily strength. Write each of them here, then copy them onto a sticky note or strip of paper and place them where you'll be sure to see them every day (the bathroom mirror and the refrigerator are great choices!).

3. Which verse or verses gave you the most reflection about your past? How has God changed you?

4. Which verse or verses gave you the most reflection on your future? What things would you like God to change currently?

5. What did you learn about God or Jesus that you didn't know or didn't know well before reading Ephesians?

6. Change is challenging and can be stressful. Spiritual change can often involve a habit, desire, selfishness, or anything you feel has held you back from believing you're achieving God's best. What can you do to help you handle the challenges of change?
