

**NT Survey – Ephesians**  
**Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School**  
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**Title, Date of Writing, and Author**

Ephesians is addressed to the church in the city of Ephesus, capital of the Roman province of Asia (Asia Minor, modern Turkey).

Ephesians is the first of four letters labeled "The Prison Epistles" since they were written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome between AD 60-62. The other three were Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon and all four make reference to his plight (Eph 3:1; Phil 1:7; Col 4:10; Philemon 1:9).

Because the name Ephesus is not mentioned in every early manuscript, some scholars believe the letter was an encyclical or circular letter addressed to the church in the capital city of Ephesus, but meant to be circulated throughout the province.

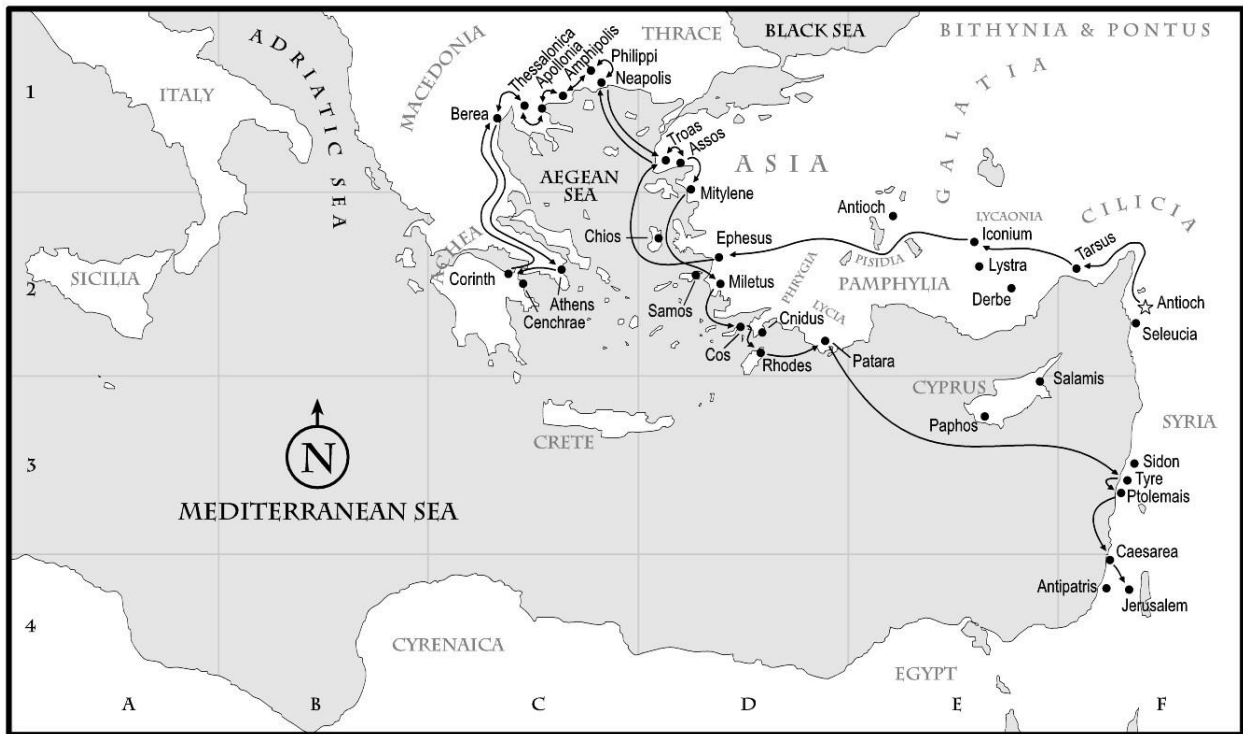
The similarity to Colossians is interesting. It seems that Paul received word of the churches in Asia Minor from Epaphras. In response, he wrote a letter to the church at Colossae. At the same time he expanded on that material in a letter sent to Ephesus but intended for all the churches in Asia Minor (Col 4:16). He sent these letters by his friend and messenger Tychicus (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7) who was also to inform them of Paul's situation as a prisoner in Rome.

The letter claims to be written by the Apostle Paul and the testimony of the early church confirms Paul's authorship. Modern scholars have made an attempt to discredit Pauline authorship, but the arguments are weak. The general literary style is Pauline and the theology is consistent with his other letters.

**Introduction**

Paul's first visit to Ephesus was during his second missionary journey when he drops Priscilla and Aquila there as he continues on to Antioch. During his third missionary journey, Ephesus was the center of the three year church planning effort in Asia.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
50-52	Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15:36-18:22)
50	<i>Timothy</i> joins Paul and Silas at Lystra (Acts 16:1-3)
50	Paul's Macedonian call at Troas (Acts 16:6-10)
50	Paul's ministry at Philippi (Acts 16:11-40), Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9), Berea (Acts 17:10-15), Athens (Acts 17:16-34), and Corinth (Acts 18:1-17)
~51	<i>1 Thessalonians written from Corinth</i>
~52	<i>2 Thessalonians written from Corinth</i>
53	Paul's journey to Antioch; stop at Ephesus (Acts 18:18-22)
53-57	Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23-21:26)
53	Paul's journey through Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23-28)
53	Paul's extended (3 year) ministry at Ephesus [Churches at Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis "all who lived in Asia", founded though not by Paul; 19:10] (Acts 19:1-41)
55/56	<i>1 Corinthians written from Ephesus</i>
	Paul's journey through Macedonia (Acts 20:1-2)
56	<i>2 Corinthians written from Macedonia</i>
	Paul's three months in Greece (Acts 20:1-2)
56/57	<i>Romans was written from Corinth</i>
57	Paul's return to Jerusalem through Macedonia and then by sea (Acts 20:3-26)



Paul's third missionary journey from classic.net.bible.org

Like most of Paul's letters, Ephesians begins with doctrine (Chap 1-3) then moves into application of those truths (Chap 4-6). Unlike many of his letters, Ephesians was not written to counteract a specific problem of heresy, but was a letter of encouragement. Ephesians expounds on the manifold blessings of God bestowed on His children through Jesus Christ. The key to living in light of those blessings is our union with Christ and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

### Outline

- I. Salutation (1:1-2)
- II. The Believer's Position (1:3-3:21)
- III. The Believer's Practice (4:1-6:9)
- IV. The Believer's Protection (6:10-20)
- V. Conclusion (6:21-24)

### Summary

#### Introduction (1:1-10)

1:1-2 – Salutation – Paul begins with a salutation indicating his authorship and the intended audience for the letter. Paul is an apostle “by the will of God”. A key doctrine in Paul's writings is the sovereignty of God. There is nothing outside of God's directive or permissive will. Paul identifies his audience as saints – those set apart from sin unto Himself and declared holy through their faith in His Son Jesus. He further describes them as the faithful in Christ Jesus. Saints are new creatures in Christ and therefore a natural behavior is that they are faithful.

❖ **How does understanding God's sovereignty impact me?**

#### The Believer's Position (1:3-3:21)

Paul begins his letter with a thorough discussion of the doctrine of redemption that will provide the basis of explaining a mystery: God's eternal purpose to establish and complete His body, the church, on earth.

1:3-23 – Sovereignly Saved – Paul gives all credit to God for His redemptive activity which involved the entire Trinity. In Greek, verses 3-14 are one long sentence of praise made up of three stanzas, each revealing an aspect of God's glorious grace and each pointing to particular works of the Trinity.

❖ **Do I give all credit to God?**

1:3-6 – Chosen (God the Father) – The Spirit through Paul starts at the beginning of God's salvation plan. The Father has the plan and He chose us for salvation according to the "kind intention of His will". This is not initiated from us because we are dead in our trespasses and sins (2:1).

God's sovereignty is sometimes referred to His decree – His comprehensive plan that includes all events that will ever occur. The Westminster Shorter Confession states: "The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." (Isa 25:1; 46:11; Eph 1:11) Grudem states that the decrees of God are His "...eternal plans whereby, before the creation of the world, He determined to bring about everything that happens."

This is a particular work of the Father within the Trinity. The Father sovereignly plans and brings about all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psa 145:8-9; 1 Cor 8:6). He is sovereign in providence and salvation (Psa 103:19; Rom 11:36). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Eph 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chron 29:11). In His sovereignty, He is neither the author nor approver of sin (Hab 1:13; John 8:38-47). His sovereignty does not absolve people of their responsibility; people are still accountable (1 Pet 1:17).

1. God's plan encompasses all things – He is sovereign over all things.
2. God's plan was formed in eternity past (Eph 1:4, 2 Tim 1:9, 1 Pet 1:20).
3. God's plan is wise, perfect, and beyond our full comprehension (Rom 11:33-36, Psa 104:24, Prov 3:19).
4. God's plan is according to His will (Dan 4:35, Eph 1:11).
5. God's plan encompasses His directive will (Isa 45:18, Dan 4:35, Dan 2:21, Eph 1:4) and His permissive will through which He brings things about through secondary means (such as the free will sinful acts of men).
6. The purpose of God's plan is His glory (Psa 19:1; Eph 1:3-12; Rom 9:23; Rev 4:11).
7. God's plan encompasses all things, yet man is responsible for his sin (Rom 3:23).
8. God, in some cases, uses man to carry out the plan (e.g. election and evangelism) (Acts 10:1-5).

Election is God's unconditioned choice before the foundation of the world of those individuals whom He would save (Matt 22:1-14; Rom 3:10-13; 8:27-30; 9:6-24; 1 Cor 1:18-19; Eph 1:3-11; 2:8-9; 2; Acts 13:48; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Pet 1:1-2; 2 Pet 1:10; 2:13; ). All whom the Father appoints to eternal life (Acts 13:48) He will call to Himself (Rom 8:30) by sovereignly causing the gospel to be told to them (Acts 10; Rom 10:8-17). God's choice is required because all people are dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1) – dead people cannot chose to come alive.

1:7-12 – Redeemed (God the Son) – For His own glory, God chose to save us through His Son. This is according to the "riches of His grace" which He "LAVISHED" on us.

❖ **Do I meditate on God's lavished riches? Am I grateful?**

1:13-14 – Sealed (God the Holy Spirit) – The presence of the Holy Spirit is God's pledge, deposit, or guarantee that our salvation will be consummated. Once saved; always saved.

❖ **Do I have security and absolute peace about my eternal destiny?**

1:15-23 – Prayed For – Having explained what God has done, Paul prays that his readers will have spiritual insight to understand those truths. He does not cease giving thanks for the Ephesians and prays that God the Father would continue work in them.

1. That He may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him (v17)
2. That the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know (v18-19)
  - a. what is the hope of His calling
  - b. what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance
  - c. what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe

The power available to believers is the same power that was displayed in Christ's resurrection, ascension, and rule. It is all about Christ who is the head over His body, the church.

❖ **Do I pray these things for myself and those around me?**

❖ **Do I avail myself of the power to walk in a manner worthy of His calling?**

2:1-10 – Saved by Amazing Grace – In chapter two, Paul continues his thoughts about God's eternal purposes in Christ. Man is sinful and deserves nothing but God's wrath. We were: dead in our trespasses and sins (v1); ensnared by the power of Satan (v2); controlled by sin (v3); and under God's wrath, cut off from Him (v3).

❖ **Do contemplate my sinfulness often?**

We were doomed, **but God...**

<sup>4</sup>... being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup>and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Eph 2:4-7

God saved us by “grace through faith”; both of these being a gift from God. Not on our own merit.

❖ **Am I grateful; what does that move me to do?**

We are saved with a purpose: we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

❖ **Am I walking in the works that God prepared me for?**

2:11-22 – Corporate Unity – When God calls us and we repent of our sin and trust Jesus alone for eternal life we are placed into His body, the church. His body is a united group of believers from all walks of life, backgrounds, and nationalities. It is comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. And now they are one.

<sup>18</sup>for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are **fellow citizens** with the saints, and are of God's **household**, <sup>20</sup>having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole **building**, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup>in whom you also are being built together into a **dwelling** of God in the Spirit. Eph 2:18-22

In response to the cross, peace exists vertically between man and God and horizontally between humans. This new united group is called the church and is pictured as a nation ("fellow citizens", v19), a family ("a household", v19), and a place for the Spirit to dwell ("building" v21).

❖ **Do I act as if I am part of the church family or am I a loner?**

3:1-21 – The Mystery – Now that Paul has completely discussed redemption and has introduced the mystery, God's eternal purpose to establish and complete His church on earth, he reveals the mystery still further. He must have known this would be hard for them to accept because he spent effort to reinforce his right and authority to make this statement: "Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." (v6)

In the midst of explaining the mystery, Paul brings it back to Christ: "the unfathomable riches of Christ." Through Christ Jesus our Lord we have boldness and confident access to the Father through faith. Since we have access to God through Christ we should avail ourselves of this and PRAY. So Paul prays for them individually and corporately.

<sup>16</sup>that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, <sup>17</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup>may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup>and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Eph 3:16-19

#### ❖ **Do I avail myself of access to God through Christ?**

Paul ends his theological section of his letter where he detailed the blessings in Christ with a magnificent doxology (an ascription of praise to God).

<sup>20</sup>Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, <sup>21</sup>to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. Eph 3:20-21

#### ❖ **Don't limit God!**

#### The Believer's Practice (4:1-6:9)

This is typical of Paul's letters, balancing doctrine and duty, theory and practice, theology and practical living. The first three chapters present the doctrine of a believer's spiritual blessings in Christ. The last three focus on their responsibility to live that doctrine out in "...a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called." (4:1)

4:1-16 – Body Life – The first area of walking in a manner worthy of our calling that Paul exhorts the Ephesians to is body life.

<sup>2</sup>with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>*There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Each believer is to exercise their spiritual gift for the building up of the body of Christ. Even though we are one, we are also unique and uniquely equipped. Paul introduces gifts given sovereignly and generously by God to the church. The gifts are to be used for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ (v12). The purpose of the equipping is that we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.

As each member of the body does their God ordained part, we will grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

#### ❖ **Am I using my gift(s) to serve the body?**

4:17-21 – Believer’s Walk – Since we are saved unto good works that we should walk in them (2:8-10), Paul spends time now looking at what the walk does not look like and then does look like.

Negatively: walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

Positively: Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Between examples of the old and new, Paul gives the pattern for how the Spirit-filled person overcomes sin: put off – renew – put on.

<sup>22</sup>that, in reference to your former manner of life, you **lay aside the old self**, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, <sup>23</sup>and that you **be renewed in the spirit of your mind**, <sup>24</sup>and **put on the new self**, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Eph 4:22-24

❖ **Am I striving to grow in sanctification?**

5:1-17 – Imitators of God – Since we are God’s children, we should be imitating Him. We must walk in love. As Christ gave Himself for us, we should give of ourselves to love others.

❖ **Do I love?**

Do not let immorality or impurity or greed be named among the body – individually and corporately.

❖ **Am I (we) above reproach?**

We are to walk as children of light who bear clearly evident fruit of all goodness and righteousness and truth with a desire to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

❖ **Is my desire to be pleasing to the Lord growing?**

Do not live like unbelievers in the unfruitful deeds of darkness.

❖ **Do I live like an unbeliever?**

We must be careful how we walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of our time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish (unwise restated), but understand what the will (God’s commands from Scripture) of the Lord is.

❖ **How is my time management?**

5:18-6:9 – Filling of the Holy Spirit – All of the previous commands are only possible as the believer is consistently filled with (controlled by) the Spirit.

“Ephesians 5:18-20 describes the Spirit-filled life. It is one of the most important aspects of the Christian walk. Without the constant control of the Spirit of God, the believer cannot live by God's standard.” *Living in the Spirit: Be Not Drunk with Wine--Part 1* by **John MacArthur** Tape GC 1936

The contrast between being drunk and being filled with the Spirit is clear. Someone who is drunk is under the influence of alcohol – they have surrendered control of themselves to alcohol. Believers should only be controlled by the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for “filled” is pleroo.

Used of the wind filling a sail and thereby carrying the ship along. To be filled with the Spirit is to be moved along in our Christian life by God Himself... MacArthur NT Commentary: Ephesians

...carries the idea of permeation, and was used of salt's permeating meat in order to flavor and preserve it. God wants His Holy Spirit to so permeate the lives of His children that everything they think, say, and do will reflect His divine presence. MacArthur NT Commentary: Ephesians

...the connotation of total control... To be filled in this sense is to be totally dominated and controlled, and it is the most important sense for believers. MacArthur NT Commentary: Ephesians

Pleroo is a passive, present tense imperative (something that we are commanded to let happen to us on a continuous basis). It is literally *let yourselves be kept being filled with the Spirit*. We are commanded to allow the Spirit to fill us and it can be repeated. The implication is that **the usual, expected position of the believer is to be filled with the Spirit**. The believer in a right relationship with God will be filled with the Spirit.

The filling of the Spirit is not some magical, super-spiritual experience. It occurs when we, in response to God and what He has done for us in Christ, bring our entire life under submission to God as He as revealed to do so in His word. The filling of the Spirit is brought about by:

1. Repent of any known sin – An attitude of the heart that is willing to always come under the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin and genuinely repent.

<sup>30</sup>Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Eph 4:30 in context of 4:29-32

2. Yield to God in every area of life – An attitude of the heart that yields to God's Word.

<sup>19</sup>**Do not quench the Spirit;** <sup>20</sup>do not despise prophetic utterances. <sup>21</sup>But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil. 1 Thess 5:19-21

3. Immersion in the Word – Comparing Eph 5:18-21 and Col 3:16-4:1 – The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to produce the will of God in a believer's life.

The Word in the heart and mind is the handle by which the Spirit turns the will. The two (being filled with the Spirit and letting the Word dwell richly in us) are the same spiritual reality viewed from two different sides. To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by His Word. To have the Word dwelling richly is to be controlled by the Spirit.

MacArthur NT Commentary: Colossians and Philemon

❖ **Am I consistently being filled with the Spirit (worshipping)?**

Just like Paul in Galatians presented what walking in the flesh and being filled with the Spirit looks like (Gal 5:16-26), here Paul gives the results of being filled with the Spirit. If we are not seeing these things (to some degree), we are not being filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is the surrendering of every area of our life to God so that the Holy Spirit is controlling our:

Words – “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”

Worship – “singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord”

Reactions – “always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God”

Relationships – “and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ... (Wives..., Husbands..., Children..., Fathers..., Slaves..., Masters...)”

5:21 – Spirit Filling Impact on Relationships – The over arching character of the relationships of Spirit-filled believers is mutual submission.

<sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; <sup>4</sup>do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Phil 2:3-4

5:22-24, 33b – Wives are to be subject (submissive) to and respect their husbands in the same way they are to Christ.

<sup>18</sup>**Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.** Col 3:18

<sup>33</sup>Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the **wife must see to it that she respects her husband.** Eph 5:33

<sup>1</sup>In the same way, you **wives, be submissive to your own husbands** so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, <sup>2</sup>as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. <sup>3</sup>Your adornment must not be *merely* external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; <sup>4</sup>but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. ... 1 Pet 3:1-6

#### ❖ **Wives, how are you doing?**

5:25-33a – Husbands are to lead through sacrificial service love and be the nourisher and protector of his wife.

<sup>23</sup>For **the husband is the head of the wife**, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. Eph 5:23

<sup>25</sup>**Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,** <sup>26</sup>**so that He might sanctify her**, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup>that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup>**So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies.** He who loves his own wife loves himself; <sup>29</sup>for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, Eph 5:25-29

Husbands are to live with their wives in an understanding way and not deal harshly with them.

<sup>7</sup>You **husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way**, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. 1 Pet 3:7

<sup>19</sup>**Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.** Col 3:19

#### ❖ **Husbands, how are you doing?**



6:1-3 – Children are to obey and honor their parents.

<sup>1</sup>**Children, obey your parents in the Lord**, for this is right. <sup>2</sup>HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup>SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH. Eph 6:1-3

<sup>20</sup>**Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.** Col 3:20

❖ **Children, how are you doing?**

6:4 – Parents are to bring consistently loving discipline to their children.

<sup>4</sup>Fathers, **do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.** Eph 6:4

<sup>21</sup>Fathers, **do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.** Col 3:21

<sup>24</sup>**He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.** Prov 13:24

<sup>15</sup>**Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.** Prov 22:15

<sup>15</sup>**The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.** Prov 29:15

<sup>17</sup>**Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; He will also delight your soul.** Prov 29:17

Parents are to view their children as a gift from the Lord to be molded and shaped to honor Him.

<sup>3</sup>Behold, **children are a gift of the LORD**, The fruit of the womb is a reward. <sup>4</sup>**Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth.** <sup>5</sup>How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; ... Psa 127:3-5a

<sup>6</sup>These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup>**You shall teach them diligently to your sons** and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. <sup>8</sup>You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. <sup>9</sup>You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deut 6:6-9

❖ **Parents, how are you doing?**

6:5-9 – This section addresses the slave/master relationship during Biblical times. This relationship is analogous to the employee/employer relationship today.

Paul's instructions to masters and slaves continues in the setting of the household. The vast majority of businesses in New Testament times were family operated, and therefore most servants were part of an extended household. In agrarian situations the servants, or slaves, worked in the fields or tended the flocks. If the master had a shop the servants worked as craftsmen or helpers. If he was a merchant they would do whatever chores were required to help in the business. In any case, the head of the household was also head of the business. He was usually the employer and the servants were his employees. MacArthur NT Commentary – Eph

The first person in each relationship is to be submissive or obedient, but the second person also shows submissiveness by Christ-like love. All relate to each other in submission and service to Christ, under His Lordship. Employees are to be obedient to their employers in the sincerity of their heart as to Christ; as slaves of Christ. Render service with good will as to the Lord. Employers act the same way as employees without threatening.

## Basic Theology of Work

1. God is a worker.

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning God **created** the heavens and the earth. ... <sup>2</sup>By the seventh day **God completed His work** which He had done, and **He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.** Gen 1:1; 2:2

<sup>17</sup>But He answered them, “**My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.**” John 5:17

2. God’s design for mankind is work.

<sup>28</sup>God blessed them; and God said to them, “**Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over** the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Gen 1:28

<sup>15</sup>Then the **LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.** Gen 2:15

3. The fall resulted in work being difficult and necessary for survival.

<sup>17</sup>Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; **Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.**

<sup>18</sup>“Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; <sup>19</sup>**By the sweat of your face You will eat bread,** Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.” ... <sup>23</sup>therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, **to cultivate the ground** from which he was taken. Gen 3:17-19; 23

4. The primary purpose of our work should be to glorify God.

<sup>31</sup>Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God.** 1 Cor 10:31

5. A secondary purpose of work is to provide for our own needs and to have extra to share with others in need.

<sup>10</sup>For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: **if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.** 2 Thess 3:10

<sup>8</sup>**But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.** 1 Tim 5:9

<sup>28</sup>He who steals must steal no longer; but rather **he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.** Eph 4:28

<sup>17</sup>Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

<sup>18</sup>**Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,** 1 Tim 6:17-18

6. Ultimately, all work is to be done heartily because it is Jesus whom we serve.

<sup>23</sup>Whatever you do, **do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,**

<sup>24</sup>knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. **It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.** Col 3:23-24

7. Work will never end. In heaven, we will continue to work even though there is no curse.

<sup>3</sup>**There will no longer be any curse;** and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and **His bond-servants will serve Him;** Rev 22:3

So what should be do?

... just work hard. Go to work tomorrow or next month or next year and do your absolute best. Be the best employee, the best manager, the best associate you can be. Be known as the most honest, most humble, most ethical, most competent person in your field. And do all that not to advance your own career, but to advance God's fame. If you desperately want to see all of your co-workers saved, but you have a habit of not showing up to work on time, people will be annoyed and your witness will be compromised and God will not be honored. There are already enough people like that. Don't be one of them. A Theology of Work by Bob Thune

❖ **How am I doing at work? Is my interaction with co-workers different than the world's?**

The Believer's Protection (6:10-20)

6:10-17 – Warfare – The believer is in a war. We are being attacked by the devil, the world system, and the flesh. Yet, God has given us everything we need to be victorious in the battle: the Word (2 Tim 3:16-17; Psa 119:9-16; Eph 5:26; John 15:7; 17:17), the intercession of Christ (1 John 2:1; Heb 7:25; John 17), and the indwelling Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39; Rom 8:9; 1 John 2:20; Eph 1:13; 4:30; Acts 1:8; Eph 5:18; Gal 6:16). God commands us to **stand firm** against the schemes of the devil. The enemy is supernatural so we need supernatural armor.

Whether confronting Satan's efforts to distrust God, forsaking obedience, producing doctrinal confusion and falsehood, hindering service to God, bring division, serving God in the flesh, living hypocritically, being worldly, or in any other way reject biblical obedience, this armor is our defense. MacArthur Study Bible page 1815

The belt of truth – The Roman soldier wore a tunic, an outer garment, which served as his primary clothing. It was draped loosely over the body. Before a battle it was carefully cinched up and tucked into the heavy leather belt. This is the idea of tucking away everything that can hinder us in the battle under the truth (Heb 12:1).

Breastplate of righteousness – The Roman soldier wore a breastplate, which was a tough, sleeveless piece of armor that covered his full torso. The purpose of the breastplate was to protect the vital organs. Righteousness here, is to be taken and wrapped around our whole being just as Roman soldiers wrapped themselves with the breastplate of armor. This is the righteousness that comes from a deep and abiding walk with Christ (Heb 5:14).

Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace – A good pair of sandals allowed the Roman soldier to stand unflinching, have firm footing, take his stand, never slip, never slide, never fall under attack. This is the peace and security we have in God because we have been brought into personal relationship with Him – we are on His side in the battle (Rom 5:1).

Shield of faith – The Roman soldier carried a large shield that protected the whole body. Our faith is the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4). This means a total dependence on God and a commitment to do His will.

Helmet of salvation – The helmet protected the Roman soldier's head. This is the assurance of our salvation (see 1 Thess 5:8 – the hope of salvation) which believers can begin to doubt as they are attacked by Satan.

Sword of the Spirit – The Roman soldier carried a 6-18 inch long sword used in hand-to-hand combat. This sword, the word of God, is used to defend against attack (Jesus in Matt 4:3-10) and as an offensive weapon in our battle with sin (Heb 4:12).

The Scriptures promise that if we resist the devil he will flee from us.

<sup>7</sup>Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. James 4:7

❖ **Am I standing firm and resisting? Am I putting on the full armor?**

6:18-20 – Prayer – Having just talked about the word of God as a part of the armor, Paul moves to a second critical discipline in our intimacy/growth with Christ – Prayer.

ALL prayer and petitions – Refers to general and specific requests. We need to be involved in all forms of prayer.

ALL times in the Spirit – For the Spirit-filled believer (“in the Spirit”), every place and every moment is an opportunity for prayer. We should pray unceasingly (1 Thess 5:17), our thoughts should be turned into prayers.

ALL perseverance and petition – We must persevere in prayer. We must be devoted to prayer (Col 4:2). We must be specific about the nature of our prayers. In context, we must persevere in prayer about spiritual warfare.

ALL the Saints – Only believers are involved in spiritual warfare with the resources to stand firm. We must pray with perseverance for our brothers and sisters.

The battle rages so Paul finishes by asking them to pray for him. He gives a specific example when he asks the Ephesians to pray for him: for utterance (the right things to say at the right time) and for boldness (to not shrink away from telling the truth in love).

❖ **Am I praying the ALLs?**

### Conclusion (6:21-24)

6:21-23 – Paul was concerned that Ephesians needed comforting about the circumstances of him and his company, so he sends the letter with Tychicus. Additionally, the Ephesians could not pray specifically without having more details about his circumstances in Rome.

Tychicus was the “beloved brother and faithful minister/servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord” (see Col 4:7 also). He most likely from Ephesus (see Acts 20:4-6 where Tychicus and Trophimus are both referred to as being from Asia and Acts 21:29 where Trophimus is referred to being from Ephesus). He was with Paul in Rome, frequently sent on missions by the Paul (2 Tim 4:12; Titus 3:12), and delivered the letter to Colossae (Col 4:7).

The Ephesians are finally reminded to love the Lord Jesus Christ with an incorruptible love.

### Homework

Read Philippians.